

Theology for Every Christian

A Systematic Theology
in the
Reformed and Premillennial Tradition
of
J Oliver Buswell
by
Timothy Tow and Jeffrey Khoo

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Dedicated
to
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for the
Word of God
and for the
Testimony of Jesus Christ

PREFACE

There are many textbooks on Christian theology but J Oliver Buswell's *Systematic Theology* published in 1962 by Zondervan is, as far as we know, the only one that expresses a Reformed and yet Pro-Israel Premillennial system of theology.

The Bible Presbyterian Church as founded by Carl McIntire in 1937 is the ecclesiastical representative of the Reformed and Pro-Israel Premillennial system of theology. Timothy Tow, the father of the Bible-Presbyterian Church and movement in Singapore and Southeast Asia, studied Buswell's *Theology* under Buswell himself at Faith Theological Seminary (1948-50), and Jeffrey Khoo in turn learned it from Tow at the Far Eastern Bible College (1985-9).

Besides Calvin and his *Institutes*, Buswell—our teacher and grand-teacher—has been our guide in the Reformed tradition, and we hereby acknowledge his contribution herein. But let it be known that the Holy Scriptures are the rock foundation of our studies, and the sole and supreme authority of our faith and practice.

Satan hates God's Word, and from the beginning has tried to undermine it. This he did by demoralising our first parents, "Yea, hath God said?," and they succumbed. The theologians before us have done well in declaring the Bible to be verbally and plenary inspired, infallible and inerrant. This has confirmed our faith in the Scriptures. But in order to spoil us again, Satan tries to erode the foundation of our faith by subtle new tactics. This he does by questioning the verbal and plenary preservation of the Holy Scriptures, casting doubt on the text of Holy Scripture through Westcott and Hort. He cunningly contrives rules for interpreting, yea, rather misinterpreting, Scripture which he hides under a big word "hermeneutics," and "historical criticism," and "textual criticism." Last but not least, he twists the meaning of Scripture, right and left, by a new method of translation called "dynamic

equivalence.” In order to unmask Satan’s masquerading, this book is not only didactic but also polemic, in obedience to the apostolic injunction, “that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

Reformed Theology is known for its emphasis on the sovereignty and faithfulness of God. On this account, this book does not shun to teach the special providence of God in preserving (1) the inspired words of the Holy Scriptures in the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus on which the Reformation Bible—the Authorised/King James Version—is based, (2) the Church universal comprising all the elect who have been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and (3) the chosen nation of Israel which will see greatness when Christ returns to rule on this earth for a millennium.

Appreciation is hereby expressed to the Evangelical Theological Society for permission to reproduce herein Jeffrey Khoo’s paper—“Dispensational Premillennialism in Reformed Theology: The Contribution of J O Buswell to the Millennial Debate”—originally published in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 44 (2001): 697-717.

Our sincere thanks to the Rev Dr Prabhudas Koshy—the editor of *Bible Witness*, and the staff of Bible Witness Media Ministry, for their kind assistance in getting this book ready for publication. If this book will accomplish the Pauline exhortation—“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim 2:2)—its publication will not have been made in vain.

Timothy Tow and Jeffrey Khoo
Singapore, 2007

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PART I
THEISM
Knowing God



PREREQUISITE TO KNOWING GOD

Theology is the study of God. It is the study of God's dealing with man whom He had created, but fallen into sin. The study of God and the study of man (which is inseparable from the study of God) is true wisdom, says Calvin. We would add to the statement that they are the apex of all knowledge. They are the two highest strata of learning, way beyond "mosquitology," though that is important in the quelling of malaria and dengue. The study of God and the study of man lead us to God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, Mediator between God and man, by whom we are saved (1 Tim 2:5). The Bible is God's book for man, the textbook of our salvation (2 Tim 3:14-17).

Theology is not like any other science. It is not to be studied like any branch of scientific learning. It cannot be put under a microscope for the seeing eye to examine. Rather it is to be studied by putting on the eye-glasses of faith. Not "seeing is believing" but "believing is seeing" is the theological method (John 20:29).

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb 11:1-3). By faith, the doctrine of creation, not evolution, is to be received. By faith, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity transcends the principles of mathematics. By faith, the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of Christ cannot be taught but by worshipful reverence. Theology is not only a science, but a "metascience," if we may coin a new word.

No man can intrude into the study of theology unless he is born again. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). "But the natural man receiveth

not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor 2:14). “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17). Faith is taking God at His Word.

Nominal Christians can go through a liberal and modernistic seminary and obtain a PhD in theology. But they will come out preaching themselves, not Jesus Christ the Lord. They will lord over their congregations with their own conceited ideas, “even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (2 Pet 2:1). “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor 4:5) is our devout emphasis. So, it is of utmost importance that we examine the credentials of the teacher of theology. Not only must he be born again, he must also have received a mandate to teach, like Timothy from Paul, “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim 2:2).

It is of the utmost importance for a teacher of theology to be thoroughly scrutinised before he can be taken on the faculty of any fundamental Bible college or seminary. “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” (1 Cor 5:6). Fuller Seminary which was founded in 1947 by Charles Fuller of the Old-fashioned Revival Hour succumbed to liberalism in a matter of years. Princeton Seminary, though a proven stalwart of the faith from its founding in 1812, finally fell in 1929, J Gresham Machen notwithstanding.

What makes theology far above any brand of scientific learning is the higher teaching of the Holy Spirit. “But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things” (1 John 2:20). “But the anointing which ye have received of

him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 John 2:27).

How do we receive the unction of the Holy One? How do we get the anointing that we need, not that any man teaches us? It is by being a devout student of the Bible, by being a regular reader of the Bible day and night, and by meditating therein, that we might be enabled to compare “spiritual things with spiritual” (1 Cor 2:13). Dr John Sung read his Bible 11 chapters a day and 13 chapters on the Lord’s Day; hence the power of his preaching that brought several hundred thousands to Christ. (To know more about John Sung, read *John Sung My Teacher* by Timothy Tow.) So testifies the Psalmist, “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation” (Ps 119:97–99).

How does Calvin excel all other students of theology? By the superior knowledge of the Bible that shines throughout his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. He outshines all other theologians because he is a Biblical theologian.

Dr William Lyon Phelps of Yale University has said, “A knowledge of the Bible without a college education is better than a college education without the Bible.” We would encourage you, though not having a college degree, to launch right into the study of theology. In Paul’s words of encouragement to young Timothy, “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 3:15). “The Bible has in it all that the Christian needs” (McIntire).

EXISTENCE OF GOD

In presenting the Gospel, there is no need to prove the existence of God. The Christian message is not dependent upon the arguments of God's existence, but in the convicting and converting power of the Holy Spirit. Christ promised the convincing power of the Holy Spirit who will convict "the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment," and will convict specifically "of sin, because they believe not on me" (John 16:8-9). The Holy Spirit not only convicts but regenerates, and imparts the gift of faith, which is "the gift of God" (Eph 2:8). God "worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil 2:13).

God has revealed His existence through His creation. This is clearly stated in Romans 1:19–20, "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 [Deity]; so that they are without excuse." From this Scripture, we see that fallen and sinful though we are, we can conclude when we see the world around us, that it must have come from a Creator. How come the cosmos, this "great, wide, beautiful, wonderful world?" To believe that God created it, *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), is far more logical than to believe in evolution and the eternity of matter. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb 11:3). Everything must have a beginning from "out of nothing," except God.

The created universe reveals God's design and purpose. "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?" (Ps 94:9). The implicit argument is quite transparent. Can we believe that the purposiveness of

our sensory organs can be explained without an intelligent Purposer? If there is a design, there must be a Designer.

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge” (Ps 19:1–2). “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” (Ps 8:3–4). The Apostle Paul used these arguments in his epistle to the Romans: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Rom 1:18–22). In these words, we have the plain statement that the created universe is sufficient evidence for the eternal power and divine character of God.

CAN FALLEN, SINFUL MAN KNOW GOD?

Not only is God made known to man by the invisible powers He has displayed in the creation, He is very near him, even as he is conscious of Him. Paul said to the Athenians, “That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring” (Acts 17:27–28).

The knowledge of God in man is innate—we are born to know Him. Atheistic communism’s efforts to suppress it have totally failed. The knowledge of God induces man to seek after God, which distinguishes him from animals. Being made in the image of God and likeness of God (Gen 1:26), we should yearn after Him as children their Father. It makes us aspire to immortality.

Paul discusses the workings of the innate knowledge of God in man in Romans 2:7–16. In a word, the conscience in man which witnesses to whether he has done right or wrong, is that knowledge that subdues man to God. The conscience tells us that God rewards the good and punishes the bad.

To those who seek after God, like Bishop Augustine of Hippo, “O Lord thou hast made us for thyself and our souls are restless till they find rest in thee,” life everlasting is given (Rom 2:7). In order to lead Augustine into life, God caused a child to say, “Take, read. Take, read.” And the seeker for Truth was further led to read Romans 13:11–14, whereby he was gloriously saved. So was Cornelius the Centurion led to the Saviour by the preaching of Peter (Acts 10). Natural revelation is insufficient to lead a soul to salvation but the Word of God is able.

Man has no excuse not to know God. Being fallen into sin, however, instead of worshipping the Creator, he has turned to worship the things God has created. The Bible says this is the result of his wilful ignorance and vain imagination. For rejecting God, man has fallen deeper and deeper into darkness and the grossest idolatry (Rom 1:21–23). And idolatry is condemned in the strongest possible terms: “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them:

for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments” (Exod 20:4–6; Second Commandment).

Now, idolatry can be classified under polytheism, that is, the worship of many gods. Alongside polytheism, we have other forms of idolatry, and the other extreme to polytheism is atheism. For to say there is no God, man is flouting his Creator, and he prides himself to be a “free thinker.” Agnosticism which says that God cannot be known is no different from the Athenian altar on Mars Hill, “TO THE UNKNOWN GOD” (Acts 17:23). Deism which says God exists but is no more exercising control over His creation is another form of Epicureanism, and pantheism which says God is all and all is God is a Hindu concept. Humanism is the exaltation of man and worship of himself. Materialism, which is mammonism, makes the dollar sign the Almighty.

The knowledge of God through creation indeed is not sufficient to lead sinful man to the true worship of God Almighty the Creator.

JUDGEMENT OF GOD AGAINST ATHEISTS

There is really no need to argue. The existence of God is a fact. If man denies this fact, the judgement of God he will face. “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful;

but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgement of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Rom 1:18-32).

WHAT IS GOD?

The best description of God is found in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 4: “What is God?” Answer: “God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.”

An inspiring story behind the answer to this question is told by William M Hetherington: “There is one anecdote connected with the formation of the Shorter Catechism, both full of interest and so very beautiful that it must not be omitted. In one of the earliest meetings of the committee, the subject of deliberation was to frame an answer to the question, ‘What is God?’ Each man felt the unapproachable sublimity of the divine idea suggested by these words; but who could venture to give it expression in human language! All shrunk from the too sacred task in awestruck, reverential fear. At length it was resolved, as an expression of the committee’s deep humility, that the youngest member should make the attempt. He modestly declined, then reluctantly consented; but begged that the brethren would first unite with him in prayer for divine enlightenment. Then in slow and solemn accents he thus began his prayer:—‘O God, thou art a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in thy being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.’ When he ceased, the first sentence of his prayer was immediately written by one of the brethren, read, and adopted, as the most perfect answer that could be conceived,—as, indeed, in a very sacred sense, God’s own answer, given to prayer and in prayer, descriptive of himself. Who, then, was the youngest member of the committee? When we compare the birth-dates of the respective members of the committee, we find that George Gillespie was the youngest by more than a dozen years. We may, therefore, safely conclude that George Gillespie was the man who was thus spiritually guided to frame almost unconsciously this marvellous answer.”

GOD IS A SPIRIT

The statement, “God is a Spirit,” comes from our Lord Himself. This, He said in answer to the woman of Samaria that since God is a Spirit, the true worshippers “shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him” (John 4:23). The words of Jesus imply that

God is not a corporeal being, like a man, as the Mormons imagine.

In the first five books of the Bible, the incorporeal nature of God is the basis of the Second Commandment which prohibits the worship of “any likeness of anything” of a corporeal nature (Exod 20:4). Before Moses cited the Ten Commandments again in Deuteronomy 5, he spared no effort to emphasise the commandment which forbade the worship of any physical or material object. “Ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice” (Deut 4:12). “Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire; lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, the likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth; and lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven” (vv 15-19). “Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee” (v 23; see also vv 25, 28, etc.). The many denunciations of idolatry throughout the Old Testament are based upon the truth that God is a Spirit, not a corporeal being. Calvin rightly said, “Whenever any image is made as a representation of God, the Divine glory is corrupted by an impious falsehood.”

INFINITE, ETERNAL, AND UNCHANGABLE IN HIS BEING

God is said to be “infinite, eternal, and unchangeable” in seven specified aspects of His subsistence, in His “being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.”

God’s omnipresence is the meaning of the words, “infinite in his being.” The Scriptures explicitly teach this truth: “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee” (Ps 139:7–12).

The presence of God is spoken of in the Scriptures in absolutely universal terms. “The LORD’s throne is in heaven; his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men” (Ps 11:4). “The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry” (Ps 34:15). “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good” (Prov 15:3). “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?” (1 Kgs 8:27). “Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD” (Jer 23:24).

The Biblical doctrine of prayer argues for the omnipresence of God. That man can pray to God at any time and at any place vividly and naturally assumes the omnipresence of God. Jonah prayed from the belly of the whale (Jon 2) and

the Lord heard him. “The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth” (Ps 145:18).

The Bible writers clearly teach and always assume the eternity of God’s being. God is always God and will never cease to be God. He never began to be. He never will cease to be.

The eternal being of God is explicitly taught in many passages of Scripture. “Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God” (Ps 90:1–2). “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever ... Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thy hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail” (Heb 1:8–12; cf. Pss 45:6–7; 102:25–27). “Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God” (Isa 44:6; cf. Rev 1:8, 11; 21:6; 22:13).

After the most exalted declaration, “Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place” (Isa 57:15), God immediately adds, “[I dwell] with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” God’s omnipresence assures us that He is not a distant God, but a God who is very near us, and works actively in time and space. God inspires; He never expires.

The immutability of God (i.e., God is unchangeable) is clearly taught in the Scriptures. “I am the LORD, I change not;

therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed” (Mal 3:6). By these words, we are instructed that the God of the Bible is most trustworthy for He can never change His mind or His plan. Our salvation is filled with hope because our Saviour is unchangeable and He keeps His promises.

Our unchangeable God is absolutely trustworthy. This truth is clearly taught in Hebrews 6:17–18, “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” Hebrews 13:7–9 says, “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace.” The constancy of the character of our Lord Jesus Christ is the reason for our confidence in His gospel of salvation.

Many other scriptural verses may be quoted to prove the immutability of God. God is “the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (Jas 1:17). “The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations” (Ps 33:11). “There are many devices in a man’s heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand” (Prov 19:21). “The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; as I have purposed, so shall it stand” (Isa 14:24). “I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” (Isa 46:9–10).

INFINITE, ETERNAL, AND UNCHANGABLE IN HIS WISDOM

The statement that God is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His wisdom is intended to teach (1) that God is all-knowing, (2) that His omniscience has always been His and always will be His, (3) that He knows all things without exception, and no one can add to or subtract from His knowledge.

Psalm 147:4–5 says, “He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names. Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.” Acts 15:18, “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.” Matthew 10:29–30, “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” Proverbs 15:3, “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.”

Since God knows everything, we ought to be very careful not to sin against Him in our thoughts and feelings. Man may not know what we think or feel, but God knows. Even in our actions, nobody may know that we have committed theft, or cheated in our business transactions or in our school examinations, but God knows, and He will punish all who have broken His Law. We can hide from man, but we can never hide from God.

The doctrine of God’s omniscience has practical value. It provides us with every reason to pray. We pray because we do not know, but God does. He knows everything, the end from the beginning. That is why the Lord constantly exhorts us to present our petitions before Him, “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil 4:6). “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all

men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (Jas 1:5). God said to Ezekiel, “Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock. As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I am the LORD” (Ezek 36:37–38). In other words, God says, “I will bless them and I will bless them in answer to prayer.”

Christians who know the Lord call upon Him freely and spontaneously, “casting all your care upon him” (1 Pet 5:7). As parents, we can often tell what our children want from us even before they ask us. With our limited knowledge, we can know something of the future. For example, a father knows his children need pocket money before they go to school. He has their pocket money all prepared for them, but gives it to them only when they come to him. He delights to have his children come to him for their needs.

Buswell says, “God has anticipated our prayers before the foundation of the world. He has built the answer to our prayers into the very structure of the universe. He knows that we will pray and that we will pray in a spontaneous manner as a child cries to his father. God has put the universe together on a principle of personal relationships in which He answers prayer, and we can, in a measure, understand His loving provision only on the basis of His omniscience.”

INFINITE, ETERNAL, AND UNCHANGABLE IN HIS POWER

“And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth” (Rev 19:6).

The omnipotence of God is gloriously presented in the Scriptures from beginning to end. The God of the Bible is called “the Lord God Almighty” repeatedly in the book of Revelation. In 2 Corinthians 6:18, His omnipotence is closely linked with His love and care for His people who are separated unto Himself; “I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

It is only the Judeo-Christian religion that teaches the omnipotence of God. The Judeo-Christian religion teaches that there is but one living and true God who created heaven and earth, and that He created all things from nothing. Such a doctrine of creation out of nothing by an omnipotent God can only stem from a monotheistic faith that is found in the Judeo-Christian tradition or derived from it. There are only three monotheistic religions in the world, Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism. Christianity is an outgrowth of the Jewish Scripture, and it is quite obvious that Mohammed, in the seventh century AD, derived his concept of one, and only one, supreme God from Judaism and Christianity.

Polytheism could not possibly teach a doctrine of God’s omnipotence, for since there are many gods, each one having a share of power or a sphere of power, no one god could ever claim to have all power.

The Christian Faith, on the other hand, teaches the existence of only one God, the living and true God who is the thrice holy God, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty” (Rev 4:8). One God in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (1 John 5:7).

Omnipotence does not mean that God can do anything. God will not and cannot do anything which is against His nature

and will (2 Tim 2:13). For instance, it is impossible for God to lie or to sin (Heb 6:18, Gal 2:17).

There is a question that is often asked by sceptics to cast doubt on God's omnipotence: Can God make two plus two equal six? Buswell answers this question with a question, "We reply by asking how much power it would take to bring about this result. The absurdity of the question is not too difficult to see. Would the power of a ton of dynamite make two plus two equal six? Or the power of an atom bomb? Or of a hydrogen bomb? When these questions are asked, it is readily seen that the truth of the multiplication tables is not in the realm of power. Power has nothing to do with it."

The omnipotence of God is such a simple truth and yet so profound. His omnipotence does not require many words to express. Simply, the God of the Bible is our God, our Heavenly Father, and we have committed our all to Him. "Be still, and know that I am God" (Ps 46:10).

INFINITE, ETERNAL, AND UNCHANGABLE IN HIS HOLINESS

The holiness of God is His central moral attribute. The common word for "holy" in the Old Testament is *qadhosh*. The root meaning seems to be "separation from, and hostility to, all evil and defilement." In the New Testament, the most common word is *hagios*, which conveys the same essential meaning.

God is of course perfectly holy from all eternity past to all eternity future. God's holy will expresses His holy character. When we say that God is holy, we mean that God's will is perfectly holy, and that His will is the expression of His perfectly holy character.

The holiness of God is a theme constantly emphasised and reiterated throughout the Scriptures. “... ye shall be holy; for I am holy ... ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy” (Lev 11:44–45).

According to His holy nature, God must hate sin. “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity” (Hab 1:13). “Our God is a consuming fire” (Heb 12:29). “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb 10:31). “Ye must pursue ... holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord” (Heb 12:14).

Although our only visible standard is the revealed will of God (i.e. the Word of God), we conceive the ethical norm as ultimately derived from the holy character of God Himself. Right is right and wrong is wrong, ultimately, because God is holy. We have knowledge of what is right and what is wrong because God’s holy character has been revealed by His holy will in His holy Law as found in the Holy Scriptures.

INFINITE, ETERNAL, AND UNCHANGABLE IN HIS JUSTICE

The justice of God naturally stems from His holiness. The Hebrew word *tsaddiq* means “straight,” and the Greek word *dikaios* means “upright.” Both words refer to the justice of a holy God. God’s justice is the outward expression of His holiness and is seen to apply to the believer as well as to the non-believer. Buswell explains, “If a man is walking uprightly in harmony with God’s holiness, it would follow from God’s justice that that man would be in perfect fellowship with God; but if the person is, as we know he is, fearfully self-corrupted, it follows that God must be hostile to his corruption. Since this world is unholy and unjust, it follows that God in His justice must be hostile to all things in it which are in violation of His own holiness. If there is any difference between right and wrong, God in His

righteousness must be hostile to the wrong.” “The wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23).

Charles Hodge says, “The knowledge of God is eternal life. It is for creatures the highest good. And the promotion of that knowledge, the manifestation of that manifold perfection of the infinite God, is the highest end of all his works. This is declared by the apostle to be the end consummated both in the punishment of sinners and in the salvation of believers. It is an end to which, he says, no man can rationally object. ‘What if God, willing to shew his wrath (or justice), and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory’ (Rom 9:22–23). Sin, therefore, according to the Scriptures, is permitted that the justice of God may be known in its punishment, and His grace in its forgiveness. And the universe, without the knowledge of these attributes, would be like the earth without the light of the sun.”

INFINITE, ETERNAL, AND UNCHANGEABLE IN HIS GOODNESS

The word “goodness” here refers to the outgoing of God’s grace and love and mercy towards man in his sin and need. It is the goodness of God that leads a person to repentance (Rom 2:4).

The goodness of God or the grace of God is the most amazing theme in all the Bible. The most astounding truth ever proclaimed is that the God of justice and judgement is the same God who justifies and declares righteous the sinful and the wicked when they place their faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 3:26). Surely, the cross of Jesus Christ is the supreme demonstration of the goodness of God.

The redemptive work of Christ on the Cross was an act never performed before and never to be repeated. The Cross was the central purpose of God from all eternity. We might even say it is in principle the heart of the Gospel. Christ is called “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev 13:8). The purpose of the atonement in the Triune Godhead from eternity past may be seen in the words of Christ, “that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24).

Buswell rightly points out that Christ is not a “third party” at Calvary. The “Mediator” (1 Tim 2:5) is both God and man, Himself without sin. He is the One against whom we sinned. Representatively, every man must say, “I was one of those who spat on His face. I was one of those who made the crown of thorns and mocked Him and challenged Him to come down from the cross. The act of crucifying the Son of God was representatively, my act. I, with the whole race of humanity, should have been swept into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. The twelve legions of angels should have charged down over the battlements of heaven and poured out the vials of God’s wrath upon this sinful humanity. But Christ bore my sin as my substitute. The words, ‘Father, forgive them,’ where He might have said, ‘Angels, destroy them,’ show something of the way in which he took my place and died for me.”

INFINITE, ETERNAL, AND UNCHANGABLE IN HIS TRUTH

“It is impossible for God to lie” (Heb 6:18). The Scripture says that we have a “God that cannot lie” (Tit 1:2), and “he cannot deny himself” (2 Tim 2:13).

The God of the Bible is a God of Truth. His laws of truth are supreme in every area of life on earth. That divine and heavenly truth which is essential to God’s character is above

the laws of human logic and includes His entire revelation is evident from the words of Christ. “As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:30–32). We are told that “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). It should be noted here that John does not mean that there was no grace and no truth before the earthly life of Christ, but that all God’s grace and all God’s truth, as revealed by Moses and the prophets as well as in Christ’s earthly life, are mediated by Him as the eternal Word (John 1:1).

The earthly life of Christ was directed towards the revelation of God’s eternal truth. “Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice” (John 18:37). In His high-priestly prayer, He said, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy Word is truth” (John 17:17).

Without God’s Truth in His Holy Word, sinful human beings would be blind to the living and true God and the only Saviour of the world—the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

“GOD REPENTED”

There are some difficult passages of Scripture which state that God “repented” or changed His mind, and they seem to contradict the passages which speak of His immutability. It must be made known that the passages that speak of God’s “repenting” are actually instances of the figure of speech called “anthropomorphism.” For example, in the book of Amos, the sermons are interspersed with visions, some of

which predict dire calamity. In Amos 7:1–2, the prophet has a vision of the total destruction of the land’s productivity by a plague of locusts. He then pleads, “O Lord GOD, forgive, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise?” In verse 3, we read, “The Lord repented for this: It shall not be, saith the LORD. Then was given to the prophet a vision of destruction of the sea and land by fire” (v 4). In verse 5, Amos again pleads, “Then said I, O Lord GOD, cease, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small.” Again, “The LORD repented for this: This also shall not be, said the Lord GOD” (v 6). Clearly these two visions should be taken as a whole. The teaching is not that God changes His mind, but that such disasters are *certainly* a just punishment for sins; and that the God who is ready to execute judgement is also the God who can *show mercy*.

The conditional nature of the warning of punishment, which is often not expressed but nonetheless clearly understood, can be seen in the way we discipline our children. We sometimes threaten our naughty children, “I will punish you in about a minute,” whereupon the mischief ceased. Both children and adults recognise the distinction between a conditional warning and a final decision. Such anthropomorphic language is clear in the passages that speak of God’s “repenting.”

ONE GOD IN THREE PERSONS

The Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 5 asks, “Are there more gods than one?” Answer: “There is but one only, the living and true God.” Question 6: “How many persons are there in the Godhead?” Answer: “There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.”

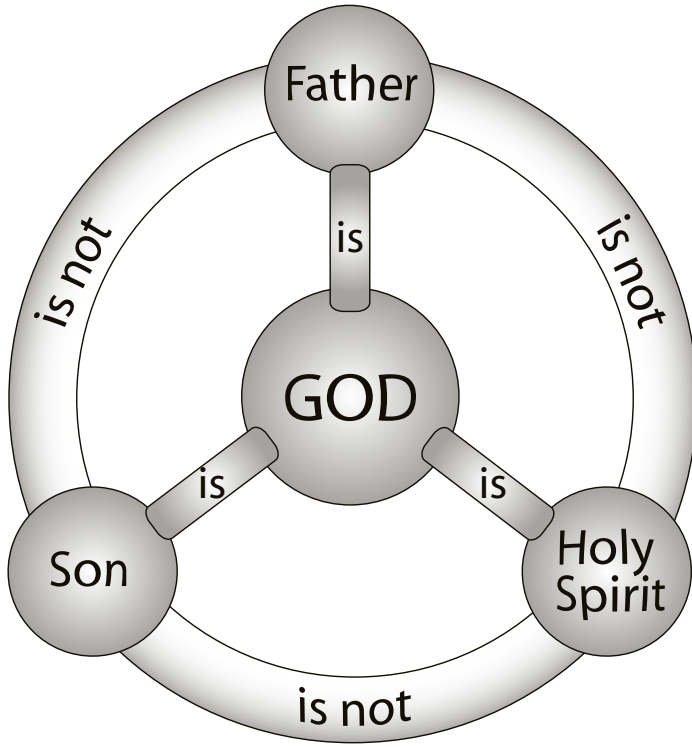
The oneness of God is an essential tenet of the Christian Faith. But in the oneness of God, there is a threeness. The Bible teaches that the one living and true God subsists in three persons, each of whom is God. The triune nature of God is a mystery, but unbelievers ridicule it as a contradiction. The notorious modernist, Harry Emerson Fosdick, for instance is quoted as saying, “The doctrine of the Trinity is a contradiction in arithmetic.” This of course is not a true statement, for no Trinitarian holds that one plus one plus one equals one ($1+1+1=1$). However, the Bible does teach that there is one God, not three, and that there are three Persons, each of whom is God. One times one times one equals one ($1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$) is true.

The Being of God is complex. As finite human beings, we can never fully comprehend God. Spurgeon rightly said, “As well might a gnat seek to drink in the ocean, as a finite creature comprehend the Eternal God” (Deut 29:29, Ps 145:3, Isa 55:8–9, Rom 11:33).

It is the history of revelation which gives rise to the doctrine of the Trinity, not speculative philosophy. The Biblical doctrine of the Trinity may well be outlined by four propositions. (1) God is one. (2) Jesus is God. (3) The Holy Spirit is God. (4) These three persons are in the subject-object relationship, each to the others within the Godhead.

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” (Textus Receptus and KJV).

We see clearly the three distinct persons of the Trinity in action at the baptism of Jesus: (1) God the Son on earth, going through the waters of baptism, (2) God the Father in heaven, commending His beloved Son, and (3) God the Spirit



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descending from heaven to earth in the form of a dove (Matt 3:16–17).

The Biblical teaching is clear. There is only one God. In this oneness, there is a threeness. There are three Persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three Persons are not divided but distinguished; the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit, the Spirit is not the Father; but the Father is God, the Son is God, the Spirit is God (i.e. the same living and true God who is only One). One God in Three Persons is divine, not human, arithmetic.

GOD IS ONE

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” (Deut 6:4–5). “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Exod 20:3; cf. Deut 5:7). “I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else” (Isa 45:5–6). “Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God ... thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else” (Isa 45:14, 18). “Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me” (Isa 46:9).

The unity of the Godhead is just as emphatically taught in the New Testament as in the Old, and that, in direct conjunction with the Deity of Christ. “As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called

gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him” (1 Cor 8:4–6). “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph 4:4–6).

JESUS IS GOD

When Thomas, the doubter, saw the risen Lord, he cried out, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28). There can be no doubt that the early disciples regarded Jesus as God in the most absolute sense of the word without limitation or subordination. Paul describes the saints as “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit 2:13). That the name “God” applies to Jesus in this text is clear. It is clear from the entire New Testament that it is Christ whose glorious appearing is expected. Christ Jesus is our great God and Saviour.

In a similar form of expression, Peter refers to those who have obtained faith “in justification by our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.” And he continues, “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord” (2 Pet 1:2). Paul referred to Christ with the words, “Christ ... , who is over all, God blessed for ever” (Rom 9:5). Again Paul refers to “the grace of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ” (2 Thess 1:12). It is evident that the names Christ and God are interchangeable in Paul’s mind.

Other powerful proofs that Jesus is none other than God Himself are John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;” and 1 Timothy 3:16, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the

Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

JESUS IS YAHWEH

Not only is Jesus called God in the New Testament but He is called LORD in the Old Testament where the Old Testament word is Yahweh. In the prophecy of Zacharias (Luke 1:76), it is said of John the Baptist, “And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways.” It is obvious that Luke understood this prophecy as referring to John as the forerunner of Jesus. But Zacharias was alluding to Malachi 3:1 in which the word “the LORD” is Yahweh. “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: ... saith the LORD (Yahweh) of hosts.” Thus “the LORD,” whose way John was to prepare, is none other than Yahweh Himself.

Paul gives great emphasis to the prophecy of Joel. “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom 10:13). It is clear in the context that Paul is calling Christ “the Lord,” but in Joel 2:32, in the phrase, “whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered,” “the LORD” in the Hebrew text is Yahweh. In the Romans 14:10 reference to the judgement of the saints, Paul adds a quotation from Isaiah 45:23, “I have sworn by myself, ... every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.” That Yahweh is the speaker in Isaiah’s words is evident from verses 24 and 25. These passages indicate that Christ and God and Yahweh are one. Jesus Christ is not only the Saviour of New Testament saints but also Old Testament saints.

CHRIST THE SON OF GOD

Christ is called “Son of God” scores of times in the New Testament. The key passage on this subject is John 5:18. “Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he ...

said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." In Jewish usage, the term "son of ..." does not generally imply any subordination, but rather equality and identity of nature. "Son of Man," especially as applied to Christ in Daniel 7:13 and constantly in the New Testament, essentially means "The Representative Man." Thus for Christ to say, "I am the Son of God" (John 10:36) was understood by His contemporaries as identifying Himself as God, equal with the Father, in an unqualified sense.

The occasions on which Christ's divine Sonship was proclaimed from heaven, according to the gospel records, are of great significance.

(1) At His baptism. "And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1:10–11; cf. Matt 3:16–17; Luke 3:21, 22; John 1:32–34).

(2) On the occasion of His transfiguration, "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matt 17:5; cf. Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35; 2 Pet 1:17).

(3) Again, on an occasion of His public teaching, shortly before His crucifixion, Jesus said, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." (John 12:27–28). In this instance, the word "Son" is not used, but the filial relationship is clearly implied in the words of Jesus addressed to the "Father."

Jesus has only one Father, not Joseph but God the Father in heaven, the First Person of the Holy Trinity (cf. Luke 2:33, 43, 48, 49).

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD

If God is one, and Jesus is God, the proposition that the Holy Spirit is God is not difficult to accept. That the early church so understood is evidenced by such passages as Acts 5:3–4, “But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost. ... thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.”

That the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, “The same in substance, equal in power and glory” with the Father and the Son, is manifested throughout the Scriptures. The references to the Spirit in the gospel according to John should make the matter abundantly plain. The first mention of the Holy Spirit in the fourth gospel is found in chapter one, verses 32–34. “And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptise with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.”

The thought of these verses is closely connected with that expressed in 1 Corinthians 12:13, “For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body ... and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” In these references, we see that the Holy Spirit is compared to the refreshing and life-giving power of God, under the metaphor of the water of baptism, and the water of drinking. In the “form of a dove” in the vision which occurred at the baptism of Jesus, we have symbolised the quiet, non-showy character of the mode of operation of the Holy Spirit.

LIFE-GIVING POWER OF THE SPIRIT

The life-giving power of the Spirit is brought to a focus in Christ's conversation with Nicodemus. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:5–8). It is through the life-giving Spirit that the miracle of regeneration is wrought.

The life-giving power of the Spirit is vividly set forth in the account of the conversation between Christ and the woman of Samaria. "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:10–14).

The same thought is amplified in the Lord's public address a little later. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive)" (John 7:37–39).

THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The streams of living water flowing forth from the hearts of believers evidently signify the power of the Holy Spirit in the missionary programme for this age. The glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ, from a study of the word “glory” in John’s gospel, means His offering of Himself upon the cross, and the completion of His earthly work. The missionary programme for this age, and the giving of the Holy Spirit in this respect, the streams of living water, began at the day of Pentecost.

In the farewell discourse, the Lord had much to say about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. “If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14:15–17). In these words the personal presence of the Spirit is particularly prominent. His invisible presence is to take the place of the visible presence of Jesus among His disciples.

There is a popular cliché, based upon a misunderstanding of these verses, to the effect that the Holy Spirit since the day of Pentecost dwells in believers, whereas in the Old Testament times He dwelt only with or upon them. The facts give no support to such a view. The Spirit dwelt in Joshua (Num 27:18). It is said of Israel under Moses’ leadership that God “put his holy Spirit within him” (Isa 63:11). “My Spirit remaineth among [“in,” the same preposition] you; fear ye not” (Hag 2:5). In all three of these passages the preposition is “in,” Hebrew *beth*, the equivalent of the New Testament word *en*. The Holy Spirit of God, as a Personal Presence, is and always has been and always will be in the midst of God’s people, in their hearts and in their minds.

When Christ completed His earthly ministry, He resumed His place at the Father's right hand as our Mediator and Intercessor. The Holy Spirit took His place on earth as our Counsellor and Guide. Jesus comforted His disciples in His farewell speech, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16:12–15).

Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, "And when he is come, he will reprove [convict] the world of sin, and of righteousness [justification], and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness [justification], because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world [Satan] is judged" (John 16:8–11).

This entire passage is rich in its implications: (1) As we preach the Gospel we may have confidence that the Holy Spirit Himself, personal Deity, will produce conviction in the hearts of those who hear. He will convict the world of sin and of not believing in Christ. (2) Justification is contingent upon the finished work of Christ. (3) The final judgement is coming with absolute certainty. The Lord here selects from those features of final judgement predicted in the Scriptures, the ultimate judgement of Satan himself (Rev 20:10). A Christian lives under the view of definite, specific, revealed end-time events – finite, but of worldwide proportions. The judgements of God will certainly come.

Jesus promised His people the guidance of the divine, personal Spirit who would reveal to them the "things to

come.” The revealing of things to come, and the special guidance promised in these verses, refer to the special work of the Holy Spirit in inspiring the writers of the New Testament Scriptures. The Apostle Peter commented, “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet 1:19–21).

Finally, after His resurrection, evidently on the evening of the resurrection day, Jesus appeared to His disciples and said, “Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained” (John 20:21–23).

Putting away or retaining sins by the disciples of Christ is more fully explained in Matthew 16:19; 18:18. The thought is that the disciples of Christ on earth have no power in and of themselves, but when motivated by the Holy Spirit, they preach the Gospel and souls accept the forgiveness offered them in the Gospel. The disciples of the Lord may be assured that the forgiveness of sins on earth has already had its counterpart from the heavenly point of view in the eternal election of God.

GOD CREATED ALL THINGS OUT OF NOTHING

“What is the work of creation? The work of creation is, God’s making all things out of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good” (Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 9). The material universe

and man, as well as the angels and whatsoever anywhere anytime other than God may exist or may have existed, have been created by an act of God, not from previously existing materials. This is continuously assumed throughout the Bible. Genesis 1:1 states, “In the beginning [when there was nothing] God created the heaven and the earth.” And He created all things in the space of six literal days, “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day” (Exod 20:11).

The New Testament likewise teaches that God created all things out of nothing. Hebrews 11:3 clearly states, “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” John 1:3, “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” Colossians 1:16–17, “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.” The world came into existence not by evolution, but by creation.

CHRIST THE CREATOR

The Bible writers consider creation as an act of the Triune God. In several striking passages, the Second Person of the Trinity is presented as the special agent of the Godhead in the work of creation. It is the “Son,” “by whom also he made the worlds” (Heb 1:2). Speaking of Christ, Paul says, “... 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” (Col 1:16). Speaking of Christ as the eternal *Logos*, John says, “All things were made by him,

and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3).

It should be clear that these references to the Son as the Creator do not exclude the Father, but they do indicate that the Son is just as truly the Creator as the Father. The words of the Apostles’ Creed, “I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth,” are certainly correct, for creation is an act of the Triune Godhead; but in the work of creation, the Son has a special and distinctive function.

The Holy Spirit is not excluded from the work of creation. It seems to me that His activity is implied particularly in the coming of light into this world. “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light” (Gen 1:2–3).

The whole universe was created by the Triune God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

CREATION NOT ACCIDENTAL BUT INTENTIONAL

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.

The world was created, not evolved. Genesis 1:1 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. Psalm 19:1 says, “The heavens declare the

glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.” Romans 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? Romans 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.”

In Genesis 1:3 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. Psalm 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).

IN SIX LITERAL DAYS

We have a young earth of about 10,000 years of age 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 so-called. 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.

There are three reasons why they must be literal and not figurative days. 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. Second, the qualifying phrase, “evening and morning” suggests the beginning and ending of a day within a 24-hour cycle. Third, the fourth commandment in Exodus 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 (see day-by-day chart below).

Gen 1:1-5	First Day	Heaven and Earth (Empty), Darkness, Light, Day, Night
Gen 1:6-8	Second Day	Water Canopy (“Firmament”)
Gen 1:9-13	Third Day	Dry Land, Vegetation
Gen 1:14-19	Fourth Day	Sun, Moon, Stars
Gen 1:20-23	Fifth Day	Sea Creatures, Birds
Gen 1:24-31	Sixth Day	Land Creatures, Man
Gen 2:1-3	Seventh Day	Cessation of Creation

CREATION OF MAN

God created human beings special, in His image. Psalm 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.

Genesis 2:7 tells us that God “formed man of the dust of the ground.” Man was formed by special creation from materials

originally inorganic, and not by derived creation through some previously living form.

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 symbolising 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).

Then follows the record of the creation of woman as a suitable help for man. Eve was also a special creation by a special miraculous act of God. She was made from a rib taken from Adam’s side (Gen 2:21-23). 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. Man would not be complete without the woman.

CREATION OF ANGELS

The words for angel in Greek and Hebrew, *aggelos* and *mal’ach*, mean “messenger.” The words describe the primary function of such spirit creatures.

When were the angels created? The Scripture does not clearly say. What we do know is that Lucifer, the leader of the

angels who fell, makes his appearance as a creature already fallen, while man is still in the Garden of Eden (Isa 14:12–15, Ezek 28:12-19). If the phrase, “every thing that he had made,” in Genesis 1:31 means everything without exception, then we must infer that the angels had been created within the six days of creation, but that the fall of Satan and the evil angels took place after God’s pronouncement that “everything he had made” was “all very good” (Gen 1:31). So far as the teaching of the Scripture is concerned, the creation of the angels may have taken place at any time during the six days. The fall of Satan must have taken place between the end of the sixth day and the temptation of man in the Garden of Eden.

The angels are ministering spirits. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews says, “Are they [the angels] not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb 1:14). Although the status of man in this life is in a way “lower than the angels,” yet essentially the angels are of lower rank than redeemed humanity in the overall view of God’s redemptive programme. They are, as indicated above, “ministering spirits” for God’s elect, and when Christ comes in His kingdom, the saints, who are to reign with him, will be judges over the angels (1 Cor 6:2–3).

MINISTRY OF ANGELS

The question may be asked, if we are not to worship the angels, or in any way pray to them, what is the value of the doctrine that they are “ministering spirits”? In answer we can say at least that the Scriptural teaching in regard to the ministry of the angels is a beautiful enrichment of our conception of God’s government of the world.

In the phrase translated “which things the angels desire to look into” (1 Pet 1:12), the “things” are things of salvation (v 10), and the word “look into” is the same word used to

describe John's act of stooping down and looking into the empty tomb (John 20:5). It may be translated, therefore, "The things of salvation, the angels desire to stoop down and watch!" "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10). Calvin said, "Under Christ as Head, angels are the guardians of the Church."

An especially beautiful thought is the relationship of guardian angels to children, suggested in the words of the Lord in Matthew 18:10.

The ministry of the angels in connection with the birth, the suffering, the resurrection, the ascension, and the glorious Second Coming of Christ, greatly enriches the Scriptural presentation of these events. In general it may be said that God governs not only by automation, but also by cosmic impersonal forces. Furthermore, God's government over the universe includes a vast amount of personal relationships, very beautiful and stimulating to our imagination.

ETERNAL DECREES OF GOD

"What are the decrees of God? The decrees of God are his eternal purpose according to the counsel of his will, whereby for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass" (Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 7).

"What are God's works of providence? God's works of providence are, his most holy, wise and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions" (Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 11).

The decrees of God are His sovereign decisions made before time concerning everything that will happen in this world that He has created and presently sustains. That the eternal decrees of God are as stated in the above quotation from the

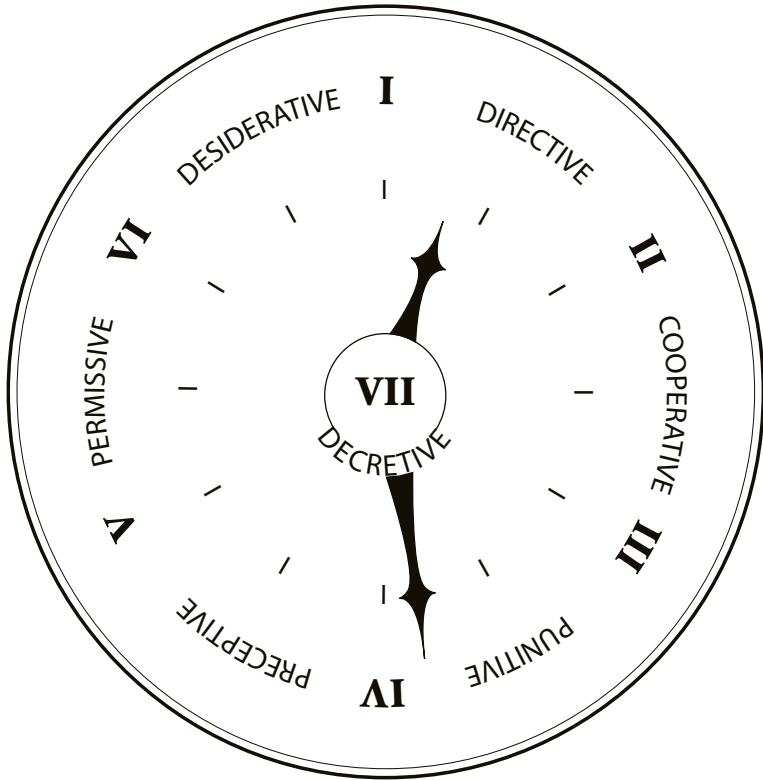
Westminster Shorter Catechism is made evident by many Scriptures. “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will” (Eph 1:4–5). “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will” (Eph 1:11). These verses clearly teach not only the doctrine of election by which God’s people are eternally saved, but the total universal doctrine of God’s all-inclusive decrees. He is the One “who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”

With infinite power and infinite wisdom, God has from all eternity past, decided and chosen and determined the course of all events without exception for all eternity to come. God is in control. Nothing happens by chance.

THE SEVENFOLD WILL OF GOD

Calvin, the great French Reformer, has probed most deeply into the mysteries of God’s decrees. It is hereby presented more graphically as “Calvin’s Clock of the Sevenfold Will of God.” A clock tells time by its three hands: the hour hand, the minute hand and the second hand. But these are out-workings of the mechanism beneath the face of the clock. The moving hands are simple to read, but not the inner workings of the clock.

In this brief study of the complex will of God from Calvin’s teaching, we can classify them under four headings: **The General:** (1) Preceptive, (2) Desiderative. **The Specific:** (3) Directive, (4) Cooperative, (5) Punitive and “Chastitive” (Chastitive is a new word coined here from the word “chastise”). **The Extraordinary:** (6) Permissive. **The Predetermined:** (7) Decretive.



The Clock of the Sevenfold Will of God

PRECEPTIVE WILL

Preceptive comes from the word “precept” (i.e., command, moral instruction). God’s commands and moral instructions are given to us in an open Bible. The more Bible we read the more we know of His holy will for our lives. The Bible is a torchlight to shine on our pathway through this dark world here below (Ps 119:105). It is a road map to guide us to our destination (Ps 119:35).

Calvin believes in verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, infallible and inerrant, in the strongest possible terms. In book I chapter VII, paragraph 1 of his *Institutes* he says, “It is only in the Scriptures that the Lord hath been pleased to preserve His truth in perpetual remembrance. It obtains the same complete credit and authority with believers, when they are satisfied with its divine origin, as if they heard the very words pronounced by God Himself.”

DESIDERATIVE WILL

The second aspect of His general will is His desiderative will. When Jesus gave us John 3:16, He was offering the whole mankind His saving grace. It is of His character, loving and merciful, to desire all men to be saved. “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” (Ezek 33:11). “Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?” (Ezek 18:23). “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:3–4). “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet 3:9).

Now, the hyper-Calvinists will retort that God's love is only to the elect. So John 3:16 is directed to the elect, not to all mankind. Those who so say try to out-Calvin Calvin. For if you read Calvin's commentary on John 3:16, he says God's saving grace is extended to the whole world. But not all will believe. Here comes Augustine's famous diction, "Sufficient for all, efficient for the elect." To say John 3:16 is offered only to the elect is like holding a grand Christmas sale with a proviso "Only buyers need enter"! But "God invites all indiscriminately to salvation through the Gospel" (Calvin). Are you saved? Believe in Him now, elect or not elect. Indeed, if you truly trust Him, love Him, you are elect and you will be saved (Rom 8:28–30).

DIRECTIVE WILL

The revelation of God's will is progressive. Before the Bible was written, God came to man in theophanies (i.e., God appearing as Man to man). The encounter of the three heavenly visitors with Abraham, eating the sumptuous meal laid before them as the Lord confided in Abraham what He was about to do to Sodom, is well known to students of the Old Testament (Gen 18). God appearing to Abraham, whether by vision or theophany, to direct him in the way he should go, is only one of the many appearances He had made to the Patriarchs. And when these holy men of old received God's direction, without a doubt to do His Will, they obeyed, yea, even Abraham, who left his home country though not knowing where he was to go (Heb 11:8). For, he walked by faith, and not by sight. For his quick obedience to do God's will as directed, Abraham received the honour of being called the "Friend of God" (2 Chron 20:7, Isa 41:8, Jas 2:23).

Does God come to us in theophanies or visions today? Does God direct us today by speaking in our ears as He did to Samuel (1 Sam 9:15)? Well, now that we have God's Final Revelation in His Written Word—the Holy Scriptures, we

must reject the claims of Charismatics today who profess to hear voices and see visions frequently.

There was a young pastor who told a young lady in his congregation, “Thus saith the Lord, I am to marry you.” Succumbing to such a high-powered claim this young girl married the pastor. But they were divorced in a matter of weeks. Young ladies of Charismatic churches, take heed to this advice: If any young man should propose to you because he claims to have received a directive from God, may you reply him squarely: “But as for me, I did not hear Him tell me to marry you last night, nor this morning.”

COOPERATIVE WILL

Having been assured of the Lord’s direction for our life, and we seek to do His will to the best of our ability, He will surely bless us and lead us to good success. This Divine help we call the cooperative will of God.

A classical example of the cooperative will of God bringing success to our endeavours may be taken from Genesis 24. Here, we see Abraham commanding his eldest servant to go to his own country to find a wife for his son, Isaac. When the servant came to Abraham’s people, being a stranger in a foreign land, he prayed for two things to happen as a confirmation from the Lord: “And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master” (v 14). Sure enough, Rebekah, the daughter of Abraham’s brother, came upon the scene and did exactly as the servant had prayed. At this the servant bowed and worshipped the Lord. “And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his

truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren" (v 27). "Self help with God's help is the best help" (Timothy Tow).

How many a time in the course of our service to God have we not met with such good speed and success? In finding a life-partner we surely need God's help. How? When we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, all these things shall be added unto us (Matt 6:33).

PUNITIVE/CHASTITIVE WILL

Every servant of God must be attentive to the Master's command. To take lightly His Word and to question Him is death.

Balaam was a Gentile prophet. He was asked by Balak, king of the Moabites, to curse Israel who were a threat to Moab as they gathered to enter the Promised Land. When Balaam brought up the matter to the Lord, he was told not to go with the king's emissaries nor curse Israel at all.

When Balak sent more honourable princes to Balaam, offering the prophet more rewards, Balaam brought the matter before the Lord again, being motivated by his lust for gain. He should never have done that. God, having spoken once, Balaam should have heard, with his two ears, twice (Ps 62:11). God, who is unchangeable, immutable in His character cannot be influenced like fickle man (Num 22:19) to do otherwise than what He has already said. Since Balaam was moved by material gain, he had set his heart to go to Balak. To serve him right, the Lord said "Go" to him, this not to his promotion, but punishment. Though the Lord said to him, "Go," it was rather this: "Go and die!" Balaam was ultimately punished with death (Num 31:8). We call this His punitive will.

We have a New Testament counterpart to Balaam. It is Judas. Though Jesus loved him and desired his repentance, his mind was set to betray his Master. So the Lord said to him, “That thou doest, do quickly” (John 13:27). Judas, by selling his Lord for 30 pieces of silver, ended up on the gallows, and when he fell to his death, his bowels burst to his further condemnation (Acts 1:18). Oh the severity of the punitive will of God! What a warning to us, the story of Balaam and the betrayal of Judas.

A corollary to God’s punitive will is His chastisement. His “chastitive” will against David for his sin is a corrective from a loving father. So David was taught a grim lesson, but he did not go into perdition like Balaam. Those punished under God’s punitive will are lost. Those under His paternal chastisement are spared. A father’s cane is a sugar cane (Heb 12:6).

PERMISSIVE WILL

God’s permissive will is clearly seen in the life of Job. Normally God will not allow Job to be hurt. Since Satan’s accusation of Job insinuated that God’s servant loved Him because of material gains, God permitted Satan to take away all his possessions including the lives and properties of his ten children. Job underwent the test and came out with flying colours. Satan was defeated. Now, when God permitted Satan to bring misery to Job, He purposely permitted from His Omnipotence. He did not permit because He was too weak to resist Satan like an old indulgent father giving way to his wayward son. How do we react when God allows troubles to overwhelm us? Let us say with Job, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15). Calvin is most emphatic on suffering for Christ’s sake. His emblem is a hand holding a heart with these words, “My heart I offer to You, Lord. Promptly and sincerely.”

This is my (Timothy Tow) testimony. Years ago the Lord tested me with a trauma that brought me back to Job. The Lord took away my wife and youngest daughter in a motor accident that involved 50 Lifers heading towards Cameron Highlands. This was Easter Monday, 1965. Though it shocked me white, the grace of God sustained me. The words of Job came to me to comfort and strengthen me in the hour of darkest gloom. “The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD” (Job 1:21). “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15). I, through learning the doctrine of the sovereignty of God, had no doubt this tragedy had come by His permissive will. He would work out good from evil.

How comforting is the doctrine of the permissive will of God, of a God who brings good out of evil. So could Joseph in his old age forgive his brothers who out of a wicked heart had sold him to Egypt. But God used their wrath to bring up His praise (Ps 76:10), for through Joseph’s ordeal in Egypt, the lives of the big family of Jacob were preserved in the famine. Joseph’s words to his brothers indicate the permissive will of God, “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive” (Gen 50:20). Neither Satan nor man can thwart the good plan and purpose of God.

DECRETIVE WILL

The seventh and last aspect of God’s will is the deepest and most wonderful, like the mechanism of the clock. It is the Predetermined or Decretive will.

The decretive will of God is clearly taught in Romans and Ephesians. The Westminster Shorter Catechism says, “The decrees of God are His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His own will, whereby for His own glory, He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.”

Ecclesiastes 3 tells us that our birth, death and marriage or singlehood are predestinated of God. So is our salvation. From a reading of Romans and Ephesians we discover that our salvation is entirely of the Lord, for except He had chosen us from before the foundation of the world, we would not be what we are today. If God did not elect us to be saved before the creation of the world, we would not be saved. Now, when He planned to save us, it was entirely “according to the good pleasure of his will” (Eph 1:5). Nor did He choose us because He foresaw we would be better than others. This is proved by Paul’s statement on Esau and Jacob (Rom 9:11–13): “(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”

Therefore no man can believe in Christ if he had not been predestined, foreordained, pre-chosen by God the Father. Calvin’s motto is, “Salvation is of the LORD” (Jon 2:9). Thus we are saved by grace, through faith, not of works lest any man should boast (Eph 2:8–9). Once saved always saved. But make sure you are truly saved.

NATURE OF GOD’S DECREES

The decrees of God never had a beginning. If His decrees had been arrived at in the process of time and events, He would not have been all-knowing. Thus we are told that our calling in Christ is “according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began (i.e., before eternal times)” (2 Tim 1:9). Similarly, Isaiah says, “The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand” (Isa 14:24). “Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and

from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” (Isa 46:9–10).

God’s decrees are unchangeable even unto eternity future. “The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations” (Ps 33:11). God’s purpose in giving us our standing in Christ is “in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:7).

Since God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in all of His perfections, it follows that the greatest good that could be conceived within the finite creation is that He should be glorified. That His love, His goodness, His holiness, and His justice should be infinitely magnified among all His creatures is the highest conceivable goal of all finite events. As the Westminster Shorter Catechism states, “he hath for his own glory foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.” Whatever happens on earth and in history, all things and events will ultimately redound to the glory of God.

GOD’S PURPOSE IN HISTORY

God has always known what He would know when tomorrow becomes yesterday, so from all eternity past, God has been glorified by the fact that the praise of His people will ascend before His throne today and tomorrow. When we glorify Him we do not add to the sum total of His eternal glory, for His eternal glory includes the glory of all events in time, past, present, and future, for the future is just as certain as is the past. All our glorifying of the Lord is eternally and fully included in His decrees.

We should conceive of the glory of God as chronologically and geographically spread over the earth in the process of time, in exactly that missionary programme which God has

decreed from all the ages past. As we preach the Gospel day after day, and week after week; as souls are led to the Lord Jesus Christ; as children grow in the faith and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, God is being glorified among His creatures. This dynamic, moving glory of God through His creation is already in His decrees from before the foundation of the world.

When our Lord Jesus Christ in His high priestly prayer said, “Glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5), He referred to the glory of the cross which was now to be accomplished in time, once for all, that glory which was absolutely fixed and certain “before the world was” in the eternal decrees of God.

Peter brings out this thought when he says, “ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, ... But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1 Pet 1:18–20). The atonement of Christ was eternally in the decrees of God, and was accomplished once for all as an historical fact. “Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and, by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:23).

PROVIDENCE OF GOD

“God’s works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful, preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions” (Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 11).

God is not only the Creator of all things, but He continuously sustains and rules all His creation. Christ is spoken of as the

One who is “upholding all things by the word of his power” (Heb 1:3). The one “by him all things consist,” or in whom all things have their orderly integration (Col 1:17). Nehemiah states in magnificent phrases God’s preserving and governing all things—“Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee” (Neh 9:6).

Job ascribes the same praise to God. “But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of LORD hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind” (Job 12:7–10).

God not only created but also maintains and sustains this whole world. After His work of creation, He did not go on vacation.

SPECIAL PROVIDENCE AND COMMON GRACE

God’s general providence in sustaining the processes of nature and caring for His non-human creatures is used as an argument for faith in God’s special providence toward His children. “Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?” (Luke 12:24). “Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? ... If God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?” (Matt 6:26, 30).

God's general providence is included in His common grace and is impartially available for all men, "for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth the rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt 5:45). "He left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17). "He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:25–28).

"MY TIMES ARE IN THY HANDS"

God's providence includes complete power to bring to pass His will among the nations of the earth, whether by miracle or by natural causes. "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few ... Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood" (Isa 10:5–7, 15). "He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves" (Ps 66:7). "He changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding" (Dan 2:21).

Nebuchadnezzar had to learn “that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will” (Dan 4:25); and he finally acknowledged, “... him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?” (Dan 4:34, 35).

The Lord said to Cyrus, “I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me” (Isa 45:5). To Sennacherib God said, “Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest” (2 Kgs 19:28). “For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another” (Ps 75:6–7). “My times are in thy hand” (Ps 31:15). God rules and overrules the rulers of this world.

GOD IS IN CONTROL EVERY DAY

The providence of God includes the reactions of human minds. “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain” (Ps 76:10). “Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness” (Ps 119:36). “Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established ... A man’s heart deviseth his way: but LORD directeth his steps” (Prov 16:3, 9). “The king’s heart is in the hand of LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will” (Prov 21:1).

God’s providence through day-to-day activities and in natural events is of such a nature that His servants can give testimony, “Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.” “And the

children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Bethcar. Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us” (1 Sam 7:8-12).

BIBLICAL MIRACLES

The word “miracle” (Latin *miraculum*) literally means a marvellous event or an event which causes wonder. In the Christian context, it is (1) an extraordinary event, inexplicable in terms of ordinary natural forces, (2) an event which causes the observers to postulate a supra-human personal cause, and (3) an event which constitutes evidence (a “sign”) of implications much wider than the event itself.

Most of the miracles of the Bible are found in three main periods of Biblical history. The first period came in the time of the exodus: The time of the exodus was a time of great spiritual depression. The people under Egyptian bondage had forgotten the name of Yahweh their God. The Lord their God graciously delivered them from slavery and brought them into the promised land. During this great period of miracles (e.g., the burning bush, the ten plagues of Egypt, the numerous miracles between the parting of the Red Sea and the crossing of the Jordan, the fall of Jericho, the battle of Gibeon, etc.), the first five books of the Bible (i.e., Torah or Pentateuch) were written. All the miraculous events were

recorded to prove that the God of Israel was the only, living and true God, and there was none like Him.

The first period of miracles was followed by a long period of spiritual declension under the judges, and very few miracles were found during this time. Despite the scarcity of miracles, God did not leave Himself without a witness. There was at least a time of spiritual revival under David and Solomon.

The second period of miracles came at a time of rampant apostasy and idolatry. The names of Yahweh and Baal were hyphenated, and even the good king Jehoshaphat formed an unholy alliance with idolatrous Ahab (1 Kings 21:25-26, 22:1-49). So God sent Elijah and Elisha, and through their prophetic ministry, many miracles were done. By mighty miracles and works of grace, God restored and confirmed His pure worship during the time of His servants, the prophets. During this time, many of the historical and prophetic books of the Old Testament were written.

There were very few miracles during the days of the Babylonian captivity, and the return to Jerusalem. By that time, enough revelation had been given for the spiritual life of God's people until the time of the coming of Christ.

The greatest period of miracles in Biblical history occurred in the days of Christ and His apostles. Israel was at its lowest ebb in terms of true spirituality and godliness, for the people during the Roman period, were steeped in self-righteousness and hypocrisy. Although they read the Hebrew Scripture diligently, they did not do so with a heart of faith, but of pride and unbelief (2 Cor 3:13-16). In their religious pride and stubborn unbelief, they crucified the Lord of glory, their Messiah. It was to this kind of dark and cruel world that God sent forth His only begotten and beloved Son.

The Gospels contain nearly 40 demonstrative sign-miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord did many more miracles, but those were selected and recorded by divine inspiration for our instruction and edification. The Apostle John says, “Many other signs [miracles] truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:30–31). The whole New Testament was written by the miracle-working Apostles of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:19-20, Acts 2:43).

WHY MIRACLES

The ministry of the apostles began after Christ’s ascension. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit filled the apostles in a most powerful way so that they were miraculously enabled to speak in different languages and dialects which they had not previously known (Acts 2:1-11). This miracle of tongues-speaking was given to the church until it was properly organised throughout the Roman world with both Jewish and Gentile congregations. There were numerous other demonstrative miracles. As the author of the epistle to the Hebrews puts it, this “great salvation ... at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will” (Heb 2:3–4).

The purpose of miracles is revelation and edification. Not all the miracles of Christ are recorded in the Scriptures, but all that have been recorded are for us to know who the Saviour truly is: “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:31). Christ, several times, expressed His purpose in working miracles and He dismissed the mere desire to see the spectacular.

“An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign” (Matt 12:39; cf. Luke 23:8). Nonetheless, the miracles were a powerful witness of who He was, the Son of God Himself, whose words were truth and life. “The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me” (John 5:36). Jesus intimated that it was better to see miracles with a heart of faith than merely to seek free food (John 6:26). Jesus no doubt preferred that man would accept His message for its intrinsic worth, but to believe Him because of His miracles was not wrong. “If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him” (John 10:37–38).

MIRACLES TODAY?

The charismatic phenomenon is causing a lot of confusion in the church today. Like the Montanists of old, the charismatics insist that miracles and predictive prophecy must be perpetual gifts. With their “faith healing,” “demon-casting,” and “tongues-speaking,” they zealously convince themselves that demonstrative miracles frequently occur.

On the other hand, competent Christians have published investigations proving that many of the alleged miracles are instances of psychotherapy, or self-deception, or even fraud. Warfield’s *Counterfeit Miracles* is excellent for criticism of alleged miracles in the Church today. Jesus had already warned of false Christs and false prophets who will arise in the last days to perform fake miracles in order to deceive the ignorant, and if possible, the elect (Matt 24:24).

It is clear from Biblical history and Biblical revelation that God does not choose to reveal Himself by demonstrative miracles at all times. On the contrary, there have been long periods of history, even in Biblical times, when God has not

used miracles (except the “miracle of grace”) in His dealings with His people.

Christ pointed out that miracles do not occur with any uniform regularity (Luke 4:25-27). In fact, if miracles were regular occurrences they would cease to be regarded as miracles.

In the New Testament period, the ability to perform miracles was given to a special group of people, namely the Apostles for the purpose of authenticating their God-given message and ministry (Mark 16:16–20, Acts 2:43, 5:12, 2 Cor 12:12). Thus, the sign gifts of miracles, healing, demon-casting, tongues-speaking, prophesying and the like have been withdrawn after the Apostles passed away, and the Holy Scriptures completed.

TONGUES-SPEAKING TODAY?

Paul’s rules for the restriction of the use of foreign languages (1 Cor 14) might be applied by analogy to all miracles. Evidently the miracle of languages which occurred on the Day of Pentecost had been confused in the minds of devout people in Corinth with mere ecstatic, meaningless ejaculations. Paul points out, “Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not” (v 22). And he commands that in Christian assemblies not more than two or, at the most, three, in turn, should be allowed to speak in a foreign language, and “if there be no interpreter, let him [the one who wishes to speak in a ‘tongue’] keep silence in the church” (vv 27-28).

If Paul’s restrictions were literally carried out in the modern church, making sure that the translator is a genuine translator, following known rules of grammar and syntax and vocabulary, the actual miracle of languages as it occurred on the Day of Pentecost would never be interfered with. Rather

it would be the better attested; but the counterfeit “miracle” would be eliminated.

If analogous methods were used in examining reports of alleged miracles, genuine miracles would never be hindered but would be the better attested. At the same time, delusions and exaggerations would be prevented.

History confirms the cessation of tongues. The famous Church father—Augustine—wrote in the fourth century, “In the earliest time the Holy Ghost fell upon them that believed: and they spake with tongues, which they had not learned, ‘as the Spirit gave them utterance.’ These were signs adapted to the time. For there behooved to be that betokening of the Holy Spirit in all tongues, and to shew that the Gospel of God was to run through all tongues over the whole earth. That thing was done for a betokening and it passed away.”

What we need today is not tongues in confusion but tears of confession.

MIRACLES TODAY BUT BEWARE

It is a mistake to say that God cannot, or will not work miracles in our day. God performs miracles today, no more through men, but directly from heaven if He so wills. However, it is a reasonable opinion, not against any clearly attested fact, that God generally ceased to work through sign-miracles or the spectacular gifts of signs and wonders when the New Testament was finished; and that it is His will that the “miracle of grace,” the witness of the Spirit, answered prayer, and supremely, the written Word, shall be the chief sources of knowledge of Himself for His people during this age. It should be clear to all that the most godly, sacrificial, competent ministers, missionaries, and laymen today do not experience demonstrative “sign” miracles.

A healthy mind, full of faith in God's power and in God's wisdom, without denying God's miracle-working ability, expects to learn foreign languages by regular processes of study and hard work. A healthy Christian mind expects to observe the ordinary principles of bodily health and sanitation, using such physical provisions of food, shelter, and medicine as divine providence may make available. In spreading the Gospel we do expect the convicting ministry of the Spirit and the evidence of transformed lives, but we do not expect, unless God should so choose, that the sudden healing of a man born with twisted feet and ankle bones, will gather a crowd to hear us preach the Word. We are prepared to serve the Lord, to experience wonderful answers to prayer, and to find that the Word does not return void, regardless of "signs and wonders."

Christianity is indeed a "supernatural" faith. But again, beware the counterfeit miracles and miracle-workers (Deut 13:1–3, Matt 7:15–23, 24:24). Indeed, beware!

FROM THE WORLD BOOK TO THE WORD BOOK

We have learned from Romans 1 that the light of natural revelation (i.e., the created world) is insufficient to lead fallen, sinful man back to God. By his wilful ignorance and vain imaginations, man's foolish heart is darkened. Instead of worshipping the Lord God Almighty, he turns rather to worshipping the things He has created. This is gross idolatry. This is utter abomination in the sight of the Almighty. In order to lead man in the right path, God must specially reveal Himself. He does this by opening His mouth to speak to man. This is the light of special revelation (i.e., the Word of God).

God first spoke to Adam. Though man became separated from Him by sin, God continued to speak through chosen holy men—to Enoch, to Noah, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,

to Joseph, to Moses, to kings like David and Solomon, and to the sixteen prophets. Whether He spoke to them mouth to mouth as He did with Moses (Num 12:8) or by theophanies and visions as to Abraham (Gen 15:1; 18:1–15), or by dreams as to Joseph (Gen 37:5), or in the ear to Samuel (1 Sam 9:15), they who received these revelations were convinced they came from the Almighty God. They received them in reverential awe.

In order to preserve God’s Word given progressively to man through the ages, God first appointed Moses to write the Pentateuch, the Torah or Law (of Moses). Other holy men like David wrote the Psalms and Solomon the Wisdom Literature. The rest of the Old Testament were penned by four Major Prophets and twelve Minor Prophets. These made up the 39 Books of the Old Testament. These 39 Books of the Old Testament were received not only by the Jews to be God’s Holy Word but also endorsed by our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 5:17-19, Luke 24:44).

The 27 Books of the New Testament were written by the Apostles and Apostolic men. They were received at par with the Old Testament Books as declared by the Apostle Paul that the Church is “built upon the foundation of the apostles [New Testament] and prophets [Old Testament], Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Eph 2:20). The Church’s one Foundation is Jesus Christ and His Word.

INFALLIBLE MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLES

Not only are the writings (2 Tim 3:16) and preachings (1 Thess 2:13) of the Apostles infallible and inerrant, but also their pattern of work. Paul says to the Corinthians, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor 11:1).

How did the prophets and Apostles write the Holy Scriptures?

1. By receiving directly from the Lord the pattern of the Tabernacle “which was shewed thee in the mount” (Exod 25:40) in the case of Moses.
2. In the case of David, “the LORD made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern [of the temple]” (1 Chron 28:19).
3. By writing down first hand that which Moses was bidden by the Lord according to the formula, “Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, ...” (Lev 1:2), or “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ...” (Exod 6:10, etc). Moses wrote down as it was said (dictated) to him. The whole Book of Leviticus from beginning to end, as it is clearly stated, was recorded directly from the mouth of the Lord.
4. The Seven Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia (Rev 2-3) were similarly recorded by dictation. For that matter, except for the introductory remarks to the Book of Revelation, the rest of the Book was transmitted to John by Divine audio-visual, a sort of pictorial dictation.
5. So was the scroll Baruch wrote against Israel and Judah dictated by the mouth of Jeremiah the prophet, which Jehoiakim the king cut up with a penknife, and burnt in the fire. But it was restored by Jeremiah dictating a second scroll, “and there were added besides unto them many like words” (Jer 36:32).
6. The early chapters of Genesis on Creation, we believe, were also by direct dictation to Moses, for He spoke to His servant, mouth to mouth (Num 12:8). Logic demands such a conclusion since no man saw the creative processes but God Himself. Should anyone say that Moses used those grotesque, hideous, heathen Babylonian tablets—the Enuma Elish and Adapa Myth—to write Genesis by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it will be illogical, unholy speculation, to say

the least. It is tantamount to extracting oil out of rock, turning stone into bread.

7. Superseding the dictation process, there are the Ten Commandments which God “gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God” (Exod 31:18).

While we have brought out these dictated portions of the Bible to light, hitherto buried by prejudice and ignorance, we recognise there are the epistles of Paul and Peter, which they wrote, each from himself. And there is the Gospel of Luke penned from the accounts of eyewitnesses. Nevertheless, these wrote by the higher hand of God what God would have written Himself. There is the human element and there is the Divine element, but the Divine element so worked in the human element that the finished product was kept from error. “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet 1:21).

The finished product is indeed the infallible and inerrant Word of God, verbally and plerarily inspired (VPI). “All scripture is given by inspiration of God [God-breathed]” (2 Tim 3:16), and this inspiration extends not only to the ideas behind the words, but the words themselves (Mark 13:31) and to every letter. “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot [the Hebrew letter yod] or one tittle [like the cross of a “t” or the dot of an “i”] shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matt 5:18).

HOW DO WE KNOW THE BIBLE IS GOD’S WORD?

The Bible is an encyclopaedia. It is not only a source book on matters of faith but also a source book on matters of knowledge. The Bible is the one and only storehouse of true

knowledge which Calvin has defined to be the knowledge of God and of man (not of mosquitoes)!

The Bible is Truth unchanging. It requires no new edition (did you realise that?) like secular books, whether they be of art or science, to keep abreast of the times. It is the oldest book, yet ever new.

The Bible contains the greatest statement made on knowledge. Jesus says, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). If you have believed the Lord Jesus and know but a tenth of the Bible, you are more enlightened than the unbelieving scientist or educationist. Dr William Lyon Phelps of Yale University has made this observation, “A knowledge of the Bible without a college education is better than a college education without the Bible.” What is it that made the distinguished educator say so? It must be due to the fact that he recognised the Bible to be a super Book, a supernatural Book, a Book God has given to man.

How do we know the Bible is God’s Word? When we say the Bible is God’s Word, we mean not as the New Evangelical scholars say, the Bible is God’s Word inerrant when it touches on matters of Faith, but not on matters of science, history, geography and language. This wolf-in-sheep’s-clothing teaching is summed up in the damnable doctrine against God’s Word called “limited inerrancy.” This damnable doctrine we must expose wherever we go. When we say the Bible is the Word of God, we mean what our Lord has categorically stated. The Bible is true and unchanging to the last letter, to the dot of an “i” and the cross of a “t.” Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount, “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matt 5:18).

We know the Bible to be God's Word precisely because the Bible declares it. None of the writers of the Bible ever wrote as secular writers would. Secular writers say things out of their own hearts, out of their own thoughts, and declare them to be their own. None of the writers of the Bible state the words they declare are theirs. Everyone speaks in the Name of God or of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every Book points to the Saviour of mankind. The declaration, "Thus saith the LORD [or Lord God]," or "Hear the Word of the LORD" or "The LORD spake ... saying" appears over 3,000 times in the Bible.

The 39 Books of Old Testament were and are received by the Jews to be the very Word of God. This found endorsement in our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus declares His coming is not to destroy or supplant the Old Testament teachings but rather to fulfil them (Matt 5:17–18).

The Books of the New Testament are declared to be on the same footing with the Old when Paul says the faith of the Church is built on the foundation of the Apostles (NT) and the prophets (OT), Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone (Eph 2:20). Peter, when quoting Paul, puts him at par with the Books of the Old Testament. In 2 Peter 3:15–16, Peter classed Paul's epistles with "the other scriptures," which, of course, refer to the Old Testament. Further, when Paul writes to the churches, in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, he is gratified that the word he gave them was received not as the word of men, "but as it is in truth, the word of God ..." (1 Thess 2:13). Summing up, we see how writers of both the Old Testament and New Testament declare the Divine origin of their writings, without apology, but with authority and authenticity. God is the Author behind every human writer!

“As for us, we take the Bible as it is, at its face value. Whatever the Book represents itself to be we recognise it to be, and we accept the authority of Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the Church” (McIntire). By faith, we take God at His Word for He is Truth and does not lie (Heb 6:18).

The second reason why we say the Bible is God’s Word is its *Unity*. The Bible is made up of 66 Books (excluding the 14 books of the Apocrypha which are finding their way back through Ecumenical machinations). These 66 Books are penned by 40 different writers. Moses wrote the first Five Books, David wrote the Psalms and Solomon the Proverbs, etc. These two were kings. The prophets who wrote after them were from every stratum of society. Some moved in the royal palace, others were herdsmen, nobodies; while the Books in the New Testament were authored by such a scholar as Paul, and by fishermen like Peter. The time span between the first and last writers of the Bible is over 1,500 years. Despite all these differences in personages and time, the Bible is woven together as One Book. No Scripture is penned so that it contradicts another.

The theme the Books of the Bible display is one—God’s eternal and all-complete plan of salvation through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This all-embracing theme came not from the minds of the writers, since they wrote independently and without mutual consultation across the ages. This all-embracing theme can come only from one Supreme Mind, from God alone. If you have not read through the Bible, start reading it now! David says, “O taste and see that the LORD is good” (Ps 34:8), and says again, “How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Ps 119:103).

The third reason why we say the Bible is God’s Word is *the fulfilment of every prophetic utterance*, and the fulfilling

today before our eyes of those on Israel and world events, leading to the soon coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you want to know about future events, go to the Prophetic Scriptures, not the fortune-teller.

The Bible does not predict and generalise on the prediction. There is no need of using equivocal language by an all-knowing God. The Word of God is yea and Amen, infallible and eternal. Every one of the prophecies about our Lord Jesus Christ in His first coming—from His conception in the Virgin, His birth and upbringing to His crucifixion and resurrection—has been fulfilled. These are so well-known that we have no need to refer to the Scripture passages. His coming again in power and great glory, setting foot on the Mount of Olives as He went up before His disciples may occur in our time, according to the prophet Zechariah (14:14).

In conjunction with the prophecies on Christ's Second Coming, which have yet to be fulfilled, there are the prophecies about the Restoration of Israel that must first come to pass, because Christ shall return to the throne of David (Isa 9:7). The restoration of Israel as a nation May 14, 1948 after 2,000 years of Diaspora (exile in foreign lands), and her victory in the four wars she has fought against her enemies, as foretold in Isaiah 11, are most wonderfully fulfilled in our times. The routes taken by the Israelis to knock out their enemies in the Six Day War of 1967 can be traced practically step by step, according to Isaiah 11:14; "But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west" (Israel's capture of the Gaza strip on the Mediterranean coast). "They shall spoil them of the east together" [Syria is referred in the Old Testament as of the east (2 Kgs 13:17)]. "They shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them" (the names of the small countries mentioned here are linked to

Jordanian territory, and from Ammon is derived the modern name Amman, capital of Jordan). All the above territories were either conquered or defeated by Israel in the Six Day War.

God's Word is fulfilled and will be fulfilled as the present day drama of nations is acted on the stage of history. There is a tendency by prophetic teachers to set dates or gauge the year of Christ's coming. All of these have failed and failed miserably.

Why? Because the Prophetic Word of God not only fixes the place and time of fulfilment, but also forbids any intrusion into the sanctity of His secret knowledge. Jesus says, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:32). So if prophecies seem not to be fulfilled, they are not fulfilled due to erroneous human interpretations, and not due to the prophecy itself. "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever" (1 Pet 1:24–25). The Bible is God's Holy Word. Do not speak too loudly. "Be still," the Bible says, "and know that I am God" (Ps 46:10).

Beware of the many false prophets of today. How to test the so-called "prophets"? The credibility of any prophet is the fulfilment of his prediction. Moses says, "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deut 18:22).

At a certain charismatic meeting, an American preacher who claimed to be a faith-healer gripped the audience by announcing his special communications from God. "You

don't tell me what your sickness is," he thundered, "God will tell me, and I'll tell you." But as he went on, he did not fulfil what he had boasted. He began to drawl as he pointed to a group of 30 ladies sitting in the front, "God tells me one of you is suffering from diabetes!" Surely this is the trickery of a charlatan and a psychologist. He was a false prophet, for what he predicted he could not bring to pass. Do not be afraid of him.

Now let us come to our fourth and last reason, though not the least. Every reason given to show the Bible is God's Word is as important as the others. This fourth and last reason is *the absolute accuracy and fidelity of the moral teachings of God's Word.*

The Bible has plenty to say on family life. It records the lives of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Now, because Abraham had Hagar and Keturah as concubines and Jacob had four wives, the Mormons tried to justify polygamy, and even practise it. To ensure that the records of the patriarchs' polygamous marriages are not a preceptive example, but rather a warning, we must compare with the teaching of other Bible passages. Malachi 2:14–16 rebukes the Jews for marrying more than one wife. It challenges them for an answer why God had created one Eve and not two. Sarcastically, was it because He had no more strength to make another woman? No! But that He might have a godly people.

Let us take another case for study. It is so often quoted, or rather misquoted, "money is the root of all evil." If that is the case, how then did God prosper His children with riches and declare the riches to be His blessings? Genesis 26:12–14 records, "Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him. And the man waxed great, ... For he had possession of flocks, and

possession of herds.” Money, riches, possessions are not evil of themselves. What Paul writes to Timothy is, “The love of money is the root of all evil” (1 Tim 6:10). How true! A Christian who is blessed with a good job or business that prospers him is blessed indeed. A Christian who becomes covetous, who loves money more than God, soon falls “into temptation and a snare” (1 Tim 6:9). How it shames the Lord and the Church to read of Christian professional men booked and hooked by the law for one extra, unlawful, morsel of bread. It is not money that entangles them, but the love of money in their covetous hearts.

God’s Word is inerrant not only in the form of the letters but even more in the content of their meaning. To test my students, I [Timothy Tow] pretended to say, Jesus said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind ... and Thou shalt love thy neighbour more than thyself.” A good many were taken in, but these were soon enlightened by the original statement that is not “more than thyself” but “as thyself.” Is not God fair to all? Paul says, if we love our wives as ourselves that will be good enough. There is no undue stress of spirituality, and no superhuman demand over sinning humans in God’s Word. I hope this study of Christian ethics, so holy and so equitable, will make you treasure God’s Word as inerrantly sublime in its teachings. McIntire has rightly said, “God is honoured when we honour His Word; God is exalted when we trust in His promises.”

Alas! After all that has been said, after all these objective truths are presented to you, after all the logical arguments have been discharged in a most logical fashion, if you are not a Christian, you will not fully understand. Are you a born again Christian? If not, you would not understand what I have said to show the Bible is God’s Word. Jesus says, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of

God” (John 3:3). Except you have been born by the working of the Holy Spirit in your heart, you will not treasure and love the Bible as a Christian would, much less understand. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 2:14, “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

Do you want the Spirit of God to help you understand His wonderful Word? Repent of your sins and believe the Gospel. Trust in the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, for by His death on the cross for your sins and His resurrection from the dead, He is able to cleanse you and forgive you of all your sins, and give you new life, life everlasting. Then a spontaneous, illuminating answer to the question, “How do we know the Bible is God’s Word?” will come to your heart.

“No fundamentalist needs to apologize for the Bible or to be ashamed of anything in it. It has stood the test of the centuries. It is God’s Holy and Infallible Word” (McIntire).

VERBAL PLENARY INSPIRATION

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God (*theopneustos*)” (2 Tim 3:16a). The Bible is a God-breathed Book, written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. As the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God—inspired as a whole as well as in its parts, even to the jot and tittle (Matt 5:18)—it is all-sufficient and all-authoritative, “and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim 3:16b–17).

Unless the Holy Spirit authenticates the Holy Book in our hearts, we will not bow to its authority. Calvin says, “The authority of Scripture is to be established rather by the testimony of the Holy Spirit. For as God alone is a sufficient

witness of Himself in His own Word, so the Scripture will never gain credit in the hearts of men, till they be confirmed by the internal testimony of the Spirit. It is necessary therefore, that the same Spirit, who spoke by the mouths of the prophets, should penetrate our hearts, to convince us that they faithfully delivered the oracles which were divinely entrusted to them. And this connection is suitably expressed in these words, “My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed ... for ever” (Isa 59:21).

“It is an undeniable truth, that they, who have been inwardly taught of the Spirit, feel an entire acquiescence in the Scripture, and that it is self-authenticated, carrying with it its own evidence. The authority of the Scripture is therefore not to be made the subject of demonstration and arguments from reason. Only those illuminated by Him can believe in the divine original of the Scripture.

“This, that I have spoken, is what every believer experiences in his heart. That alone is true faith, which the Spirit of God seals in our hearts, even as Isaiah predicts, that, “all [the] children” of the renovated Church ‘shall be taught of the LORD’ (Isa 54:13). This faith, which the Holy Spirit sends in our hearts, God deigns to confer only on His elect, and not on the rest of men. It is, therefore, not surprising that we see so much ignorance and stupidity among the vulgar herd of mankind.” Without the Holy Spirit, we will never believe the Bible.

The Holy Spirit confirms in our hearts that the Holy Book is God’s Word to us that we should submit to its commands. As for Dr John Sung, this is what he testifies after his conversion and enforced confinement in a Mental Hospital in the United States: “The first lesson I’ve learned is how to

become an obedient servant. God has thoroughly moulded my character and temperament. The day of my complete capitulation and surrender to Him was the day of my graduation from God's Seminary!

"The second lesson was my understanding of Holy Scripture. So I have declared the Mental Hospital my Seminary from which I have graduated. The Holy Spirit was my Teacher, teaching me the deep things of Truth. The day of my leaving the Hospital was the day I received my diploma.

"The Bible was my textbook. ... The Bible comprises 1189 chapters. By the Lord's instruction, I've derived 40 methods of study, reading the Bible 40 times. Of course I did not read the Bible crudely word by word. When I read the Bible I was so carried away by it that I kept on and on, like enjoying a delicious meal.

"The Bible is the inspired Word of God, written by the moving of the Holy Spirit of God. Therefore, the Bible reader, unless it is revealed to him by God at the instruction of the Holy Spirit, how can he understand it? I thank God that He has shown me the mysteries of the Bible. I know that every chapter, every verse, every word has something good for my spiritual life."

The exposition of Calvin and the testimony of John Sung on the Bible should find a ready amen-echo from our hearts. The Holy Spirit has authenticated the Holy Book, that we should bow to its every dictate.

THE BIBLE IS ABOVE THE CHURCH NOT VICE VERSA

It is therefore unmitigated insolence for the Roman Catholic Church to claim that "the Scriptures have only so much weight as is conceded to them by the suffrages of the Church." They pretend to decide what Books of the Bible have come

down to us from God, which are to be comprised in the canon. This is sheer arrogance, tantamount to an extortion from the ignorant. Such a claim, subjecting the authority of God's Word to the judgement of men is contempt of the Holy Spirit.

The Church does not take precedence over the Scripture, but the Scripture the Church. One word from the Apostle suffices to prove this. Paul testifies that the Church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph 2:20). If the doctrine of the Prophets and Apostles be the foundation of the Church, it supports the Church and not the Church the doctrine. The Scripture existed before the Church, so it is absurd to say the Church is the power that determines the Scripture's authority. Which comes first, the hen or the egg?

This rather is the truth of the relationship between the Church and the Scripture: when the Church receives the Scripture, and seals it with her suffrage, she does not authenticate a thing otherwise dubious or controvertible. Knowing it to be the truth of her God, she performs a duty of piety. But if it is asked, "How shall we know it is God's Word unless we have the Church to tell us?" This is just like asking, "How shall we distinguish light from darkness, white from black, sweet from bitter?" The Scripture exhibits the truth clearly, as white is distinguished from black, as sweet is distinguished from bitter. With the anointing of the Holy Spirit (1 John 1:20–27), we re-affirm with the Westminster Confession of Faith the sixty-six books of the Protestant Bible to be the infallible and inerrant Word of God, to be our rule of faith and life.

"The fortress that has to be held, if there is to be Christianity and Protestantism, is the Bible" (McIntire). "If the

foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps 11:3).

VERBAL PLENARY PRESERVATION

The Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) states very clearly that the verbally and plenary inspired (VPI) Scriptures in the original languages are by God’s “singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages” (1:8). The Westminster divines used Matthew 5:18 as a proof text for this affirmation of the verbal and plenary preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures. This proves that the doctrine of the VPP of Scripture is not just creedal, but more importantly Biblical.

The VPP of Scripture is a position of faith that is based solely on the Word of God. “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb 11:1). “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17). “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb 11:6). It is a position that we must take if we are to weather and survive the onslaughts of postmodernism, pop-modernism, open-theism and neo-deism that seek to destroy the church today.

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

every syllable, every letter is infallibly preserved by the Lord Himself to the last iota.

VPP was affirmed by the Helvetic Consensus Formula (1675): “God, the supreme Judge, not only took care to have His Word, which is the ‘power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth’ (Rom 1:16), committed to writing by Moses, the prophets, and the apostles, but has also watched and cherished it with paternal care ever since it was written up to the present time, so that it could not be corrupted by craft of Satan or fraud of man. Therefore, the church justly ascribes it to His singular grace and goodness that she has, and will have to the end of the world, a ‘sure word of prophecy’ (2 Pet 1:19) and ‘holy Scriptures’ (2 Tim 3:15), from which, though heaven and earth perish, ‘one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass’ (Matt 5:18).”

The doctrine of VPP is taught in the following biblical passages:

Psalm 12:6–7—“The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. *Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.*”

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

Psalm 78:1–7—“Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he

commanded our fathers, that they should *make them known to their children*: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and *declare them to their children*: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

Psalm 119:160—“Thy word is true from the beginning; and every one of *thy righteous judgements endureth for ever.*”

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

Isaiah 59:21—“As for me, this is *my covenant* with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and *my words* which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth,

INSPIRATION AND PRESERVATION OF SCRIPTURE : FOUR VIEWS				
	MODERNISM	NEO-EVANGELICALISM	NEO-FUNDAMENTALISM	FUNDAMENTALISM
BIBLICAL INSPIRATION	No inspiration	Partial inspiration	Total inspiration	Total inspiration
BIBLICAL PRESERVATION	No preservation	Partial preservation	Partial preservation	Total preservation
BIBLICAL INFALLIBILITY AND INERRANCY	Denies both infallibility and inerrancy in autographs and apographs.	Affirms infallibility but denies inerrancy in the autographs and apographs.	Affirms total infallibility and inerrancy but in the autographs only.	Affirms total infallibility and inerrancy in both the autographs and apographs.
AUTHORITY AND EPISTEMOLOGY	Science alone. Intellect, not Faith, is supreme. See to believe.	Science plus Bible. Faith subjected more to Intellect than to the Bible. See to believe.	Science plus Bible. Faith subjected more to Intellect than to the Bible. See to believe.	Bible alone (<i>Sola Scriptura</i>). Faith and Intellect totally subjected to the Bible. Believe to see.
TEXTUAL CRITICISM	Yes to Westcott and Hort	Yes to Westcott and Hort	Yes to Westcott and Hort	No to Westcott and Hort
ORIGINAL GREEK TEXT	Minority and Critical Text only	Minority and Critical Text only	Minority and Critical Text mainly	Majority Text and Textus Receptus only
ENGLISH BIBLE VERSIONS	Only modern versions acceptable	Only modern versions acceptable	All versions acceptable	Only KJV acceptable

nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, *from henceforth and for ever.*"

Matthew 4:4—"But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*"

Matthew 5:17–18—"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, *one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass* from the law, till all be fulfilled."

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

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

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

Is not VPP a biblical doctrine? Surely it is! Every believer—young or old, man or woman, rich or poor, unlearned or educated, Jew or Greek—by *simple, childlike faith* in God's forever infallible and inerrant words—can say "Amen" to the truth that God has indeed preserved His inspired words, and every one of them to the last iota!

What and where are the preserved words of God today? They are the inspired Old Testament Hebrew words and

New Testament Greek words the prophets, the apostles, the church fathers, the reformers used which are today found in the long and continuously abiding and preserved words underlying the Reformation Bibles best represented by the time-tested and time-honoured King James Bible, and NOT in the corrupted Alexandrian manuscripts and critical Westcott-Hort texts underlying the liberal, ecumenical, and neo-evangelical modern English versions.

PRESERVATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT WORDS

The Word of God is forever infallible and inerrant. The Church today has a 100% Perfect Bible without any mistake because God promised to preserve His inspired words to the last jot and tittle (Matt 5:18). Thus, (1) the inspired Scriptures were never lost but *always preserved* without any corruption or missing words; (2) the Sacred Scriptures are *always infallible and inerrant, and supremely authoritative not only in times past, but also today—Sola Scriptura!*

The Old Testament Scriptures were first given to Israel—God’s chosen nation. Romans 3:1–2 tells us that God had committed to the Jews the safekeeping and copying of the Holy Scriptures. Knowing well the divine nature of the Scriptures, that the words of the sacred pages were the very words of the Almighty God, they copied the Scriptures with great precision and accuracy employing very strict rules. H S Miller in his book—*General Biblical Introduction*—gave examples of these scribal rules: (1) “No word or letter could be written from memory; the scribe must have an authentic copy before him, and he must read and pronounce aloud each word before writing it.” (2) “The revision of a roll must be made within 30 days after the work was finished; otherwise it was worthless. One mistake on a sheet condemned the sheet; if three mistakes were found on any page, the entire manuscript was condemned.” (3) “Every word and every letter was counted, and if a letter were omitted, an extra letter

inserted, or if one letter touched another, the manuscript was condemned and destroyed at once.”

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

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

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

Since God has preserved His inspired words to the last iota and no words are lost but all kept pure and intact in the original language Scriptures, we must categorically deny that our Bible contains any mistake or error (scribal or otherwise). But it is troubling that certain evangelicals and fundamentalists would rather choose to deny the

present infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures by considering the “discrepancies” found in 1 Samuel 13:1 and 2 Chronicles 22:2 and other like passages to be actual instead of *apparent* discrepancies, and calling them “scribal errors.”

A denial of the verbal preservation of the Scriptures will invariably lead one to believe that some words of God have been lost and remain lost leading to a “scribal error” view of the Old Testament Scriptures. For instance, in the book *One Bible Only?*, W Edward Glenny denied that God has perfectly preserved His Word so that no words have been lost. He says, “The evidence from the Old Testament text suggests that such is not the case. *We might have lost a few words ...*”

Based on his “lost words” view of the Bible, he was quick to point out “obvious discrepancies” in the Old Testament like 2 Chronicles 22:2. He wrote, “In 1 Chronicles 8:26 [sic], the KJV states that Ahaziah was twenty-two when he began to reign; the parallel in 2 Chronicles 22:2 says that he began to reign at the age of forty-two. ... These *obvious discrepancies* in the KJV and the Hebrew manuscripts on which it is based show that *none of them perfectly preserved the inspired autographa.*”

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

It is significant to note that every single Hebrew manuscript reads “forty-two” (*arebba'im wushetha'im*) in 2 Chronicles 22:2. There is no evidence of lost words—every word to

the letter is preserved, and reads precisely as “forty-two” as accurately translated in the KJV. If every Hebrew manuscript reads “forty-two” in 2 Chronicles 22:2, then on what basis do the NASV, NIV, and ESV change it to “twenty-two”? They change “forty-two” to “twenty-two” on the basis of the Septuagint (LXX) which is a Greek version of the Hebrew Scripture just like the NIV is an English version of it. In other words, they use a version or translation to correct the original Hebrew text! Should not it be the other way round?

Why do they do this? They do this because of their fallacious assumption that (1) God did not preserve His words infallibly, (2) lost words exist in the Hebrew text, and (3) 2 Chronicles 22:2 is an “obvious” discrepancy (cf. 2 Kgs 8:26). Thus, Glennly and all such non-preservationists are quick to use a fallible translation (e.g. LXX) to correct the infallible Hebrew Text! This is no different from someone using the NIV today to correct any part of the Hebrew Text according to his whim and fancy! But Glennly calls it “conjectural emendation” which sounds scholarly but it is pure guesswork. Can a translation be more inspired than or superior to the original language text? Can a translation or version (whatever the language) be used to correct the Hebrew? Glennly’s method of explaining such “obvious discrepancies” in the Bible is troubling for it displays (1) a sceptical attitude towards the numerical integrity of God’s Word, (2) a critical readiness to deny the present inerrancy of Scripture in historical details, and (3) a lackadaisical approach towards solving difficulties in the Bible by conveniently dismissing such difficulties as “scribal errors.”

A godly approach is one that presupposes the present infallibility and inerrancy of God’s Word not only when it speaks on salvation, but also when it speaks on history, geography or science. “*Let God be true, but every man a liar*” (Rom 3:4). A godly approach to difficult passages

seeks to compare (not correct) Scripture with Scripture. By comparing Scripture with Scripture, there are two possible solutions to the so-called “problem” or “error” in 2 Chronicles 22:2. The age of “forty-two” could be either (1) Ahaziah’s years counted from the beginning of the dynasty founded by Omri, or (2) the year in which Ahaziah was actually seated as king though anointed as one at “twenty-two” (2 Kgs 8:26). Whatever the answer may be, the truth and fact is: the inspired and preserved Hebrew reading in 2 Chronicles 22:2 is “forty-two” and not “twenty-two,” and no man has the right to change or correct God’s Word by “conjectural emendation,” taking heed to the serious warning not to add to or subtract from the Holy Scriptures (Rev 22:18–19).

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

Now, the difficulty is: How could Saul be only a year old when he began to reign? Scholars and translators who do not believe in the jot-and-tittle preservation of Scripture say that this is an actual discrepancy in the Hebrew Text which they attribute to a “scribal error.” This is why Michael Harding in a mistitled book—*God’s Word in Our Hands*—wrote, “[I]n 1 Samuel 13:1–2 the Masoretic Text states that Saul was one year of age (*ben-shanah*—literally “son of a year”) ... Some ancient Greek manuscripts ... read “thirty years” instead of “one year,” ... On account of my theological conviction

regarding the inerrancy of the *autographa*, I believe the original Hebrew text also reads “thirty,” even though *we do not currently possess a Hebrew manuscript with that reading.*”

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

It must be categorically stated that there is no error at all in the Hebrew Text and no mistake also in the KJV which translated 1 Samuel 13:1 accurately. So how do we explain 1 Samuel 13:1? A faithful explanation is offered by Matthew Poole who wrote, “[Saul] had now reigned one year, from his first election at Mizpeh, in which time these things were done, which are recorded in chap. xi., xii., to wit, peaceably, or righteously. Compare 2 Sam. ii.10.”

In other words, the year of Saul was calculated not from the time of his birth but from his *appointment as king*; “Saul was a year old *into his reign.*” This meaning is supported by the Geneva Bible which reads, “*Saul now had beene King one yeere.*” Rest assured, there is no mistake in the Hebrew Text

and in the KJV here. God has indeed inspired and preserved His Old Testament words perfectly so that we might have an infallible, inerrant Old Testament Bible in our hands today.

The Biblical doctrine of the jot-and-tittle preservation of the Holy Scriptures affirms a 100% infallible and inerrant Bible *today!* The Written Foundation of our Judeo-Christian Faith is sure and secure for “the Word of our God shall stand for ever” (Isa 40:8). Amen!

PRESERVATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WORDS

In the light of God’s supernatural and continuous preservation of His inspired words in the original languages (Ps 12:6–7, Matt 5:18, John 10:35, 1 Pet 1:23–25), we identify the Traditional, Majority and Received Text (Textus Receptus) to be the VPP Text, and not the recent corrupt, scissored and mutilated text of Westcott and Hort (1881), represented today by the modern Critical Text underlying the modern versions.

The VPP Text is the Textus Receptus (TR) underlying the King James Bible. All the editions of the TR descend from the pure stream of the divinely preserved Traditional or Majority Text. But which edition is the purest? We believe it is the TR underlying the KJV. Edward F Hills (ThD, Harvard) takes the same view concerning the KJV and TR. Hear Dr Hills himself, “The texts of the several editions of the Textus Receptus were God-guided. They were set up under the leading of God’s special providence. Hence the differences between them were kept down to a minimum. ... But what do we do in these few places in which the several editions of the Textus Receptus disagree with one another? Which text do we follow? The answer to this question is easy. We are guided by the common faith. Hence we favor that form of the Textus Receptus upon which more than any other God, working providentially, has placed the stamp of His approval,

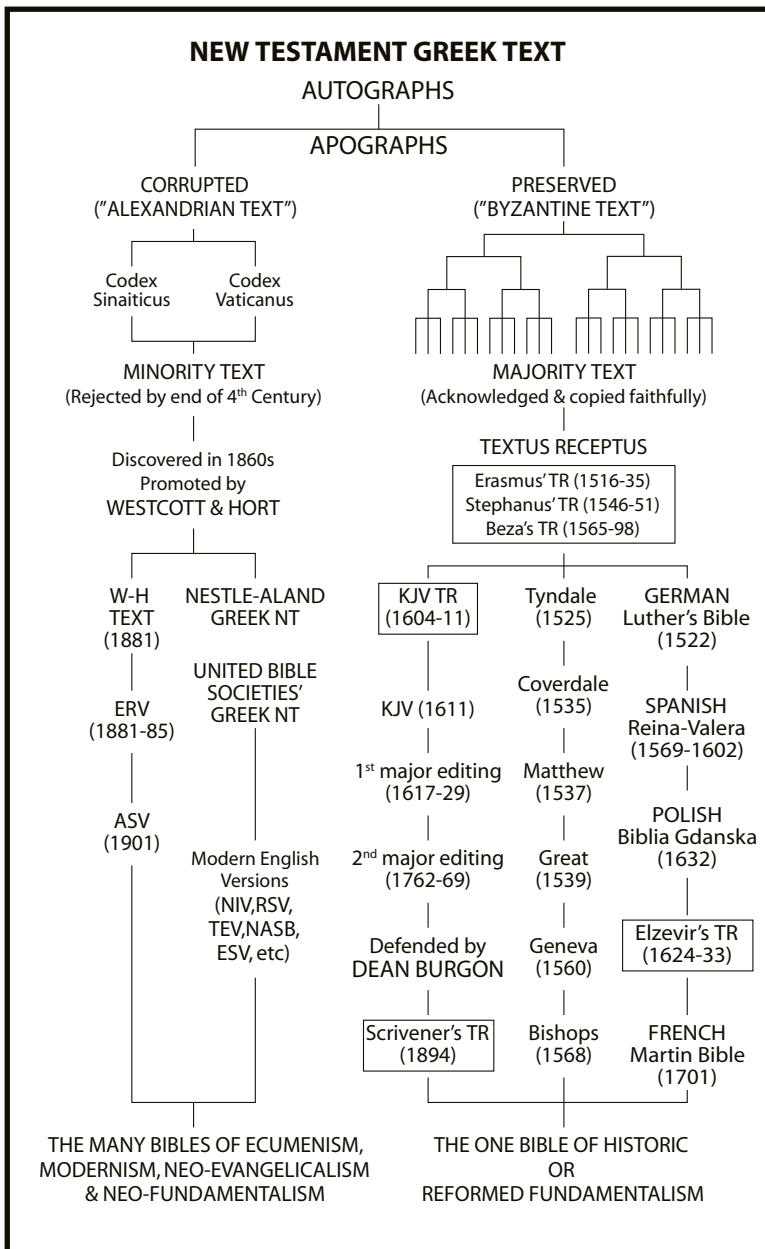
namely, the King James Version, or more precisely, the Greek text underlying the King James Version.”

Like Dr Hills, we believe that all the TR editions are pure, but there is one that is purest—the one underlying the KJV. Dr Hills said that the King James Version “ought to be regarded not merely as a translation of the Textus Receptus but also as an independent variety of the Textus Receptus.” Is not the Greek Text underlying the KJV the Textus Receptus? Whose TR? Not completely Erasmus’s, Stephen’s, or Beza’s, it is a new edition of the TR which reflects the textual decisions of the KJV translators as they prayerfully studied and compared the preserved manuscripts. According to the Trinitarian Bible Society, “The editions of Beza, particularly that of 1598, and the two last editions of Stephens, were the chief sources used for the English Authorised Version of 1611. ... The present edition of the Textus Receptus underlying the English Authorised Version of 1611 follows the text of Beza’s 1598 edition as the primary authority, and corresponds with ‘The New Testament in the Original Greek according to the text followed in the Authorised Version,’ edited by F H A Scrivener.”

It ought to be noted that God’s providential preservation of His Scripture is not static but dynamic. The deistic heresy that God inspired His Word but did nothing to preserve it must be rejected. Dr Timothy Tow rightly said, “If Deism teaches a Creator who goes to sleep after creating the world is absurd, to hold to the doctrine of inspiration without preservation is equally illogical ... inspiration and preservation are linked one to another. Without preservation, all the inspiration, God-breathing into the Scriptures, would be lost. But we have a Bible so pure and powerful in every word and it is so because God has preserved it down through the ages.”

God had providentially guided the KJV translators to produce the purest TR of all. The earlier editions were individual efforts, but the TR underlying the KJV is a corporate effort of 57 of the most outstanding biblical-theological, and more importantly, Bible-believing scholars of their day. And as the Scripture says, “in a multitude of counsellors there is safety” (Prov 11:14). The KJV translators had all the various editions of the TR to refer to, and they made their decisions with the help of the Holy Spirit. The Lord providentially guided the King James translators to make the right textual decisions. As such, there is no need to improve on the TR underlying the KJV. No one should play textual critic, and be a judge of God’s Word today. God is His own Textual Critic. God’s special providential work in history during the great 16th Century Protestant Reformation is seen in the publication and widespread use of the Textus Receptus.

Now the question remains: Why the TR underlying the KJV and not Luther’s German Bible, or the Spanish Reina Valera, or the Polish Biblia Gdanska, or the French Martin Bible, or some other language Bible? Now we do not deny there are faithful and reliable versions that are accurately translated and based on the TR, nor do we discount the need for foreign language Bibles, but here is Dr Hills’s reply to the question: “God in His providence has abundantly justified this confidence of the King James translators. The course of history has made English a world-wide language which is now the native tongue of at least 300 million people and the second language of many millions more. For this reason the King James Version is known the world over and is more widely read than any other translation of the holy Scriptures. Not only so, but the King James Version has been used by many missionaries as a basis and guide for their own translation work and in this way has extended its influence even to converts who know no English. For [almost 400] years therefore the reverent diction of the King James



Version has been used by the Holy Spirit to bring the Word of life to millions upon millions of perishing souls. Surely this is a God-guided translation on which God, working providentially, has placed the stamp of His approval.” This is in keeping with Jesus’ words, “Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit ... Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matt 7:17–20).

Some may say that this belief on biblical preservation is a result of “circular reasoning.” Indeed it is. On what basis does the Church believe in Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI)? Is it not on the testimony of the Bible itself (2 Tim 3:16, Matt 5:18)? “God says it, I believe it, that settles it.” Circular reasoning or *a priori* reasoning is not illegitimate. It is fallacious only when the premise to begin with is false. If I reason, “I am perfect because I say I am,” it is fallacious because the presupposition is utterly untrue (Rom 3:4–23). If God says of Himself, “I am perfect because I say I am,” that is absolutely true. Why do we believe God has preserved His Word and words perfectly? It is simply because God has promised to do just that in the Scriptures cited above. We simply take God at His Word because God cannot lie (Num 23:19).

Do we know everything that went on in the transmission of the text? No, we do not. But God knows; He knows everything and we believe He knows what He is doing. For instance, we were not there when God created the world. We did not see His work with our own eyes. When “Science” so-called contradicts what the Bible says concerning origins, who are we going to believe? Science or the Bible? We believe the Bible. Hebrews 11:3 says, “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” Faithfulness to God and His Word demands that a Christian believe in a perfect God who has given His

Church a perfect Bible. Biblical epistemology is not “seeing is believing,” but “believing is seeing.”

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

In like manner, the Lord allowed copyist errors and corruptions to enter into the transmission process through the pen of fallible and heretical scribes. Nevertheless, His special providential hand kept His inspired words of Scripture from being lost. In light of God’s special providence, that nothing happens by chance, and that history is under His sovereign control, we see that in the fulness of time—in the most opportune time of the Reformation when the true church separated from the false, when the study of the original languages was emphasised, and the printing press invented (which meant that no longer would there be any need to handcopy the Scriptures thereby ensuring a uniform text)—God restored from out of a pure stream of preserved Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, the purest Hebrew and

Greek Text of all—the Text that underlies our KJV—that accurately reflects the original Scriptures.

That the providential preservation of Scripture sees its historical parallel in the providential canonisation of Scripture was Dean Burgon’s thinking as well. Dr Hills wrote of Burgon: “Burgon ... never lost sight of the special providence of God which has presided over the transmission of the New Testament down through the ages, expressly set out to maintain against all opponents that the Church was divinely guided to reject the false readings of the early centuries, and to gradually accept the true text. He denied that he was claiming a perpetual miracle that would keep manuscripts from being depraved at various times, and in various places. But ‘The Church in her collective capacity, has nevertheless—as a matter of fact—been perpetually purging herself of those shamefully depraved copies which once everywhere abounded within her pale’ (*The Revision Revised*, 334-5). He believed that just as God gradually settled the Canon of the New Testament by weaning His churches from noncanonical books, so He did with the Text also.”

SOLA AUTOGRAPHIA OR SOLA APOGRAPHIA?

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

The *Sola Autographa* view of infallibility and inerrancy is generally held today by so-called evangelicals and fundamentalists. The Evangelical Theological Society (ETS)

deny the total and present inerrancy of Scriptures albeit in varying degrees. The controversy over Open Theism in the ETS is a case in point. The ETS definition of inerrancy is so loose that it allows for all kinds of interpretations with regard to what inerrancy means. This is due to the ETS belief that inerrancy lies only in the autographs, “The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written and is therefore inerrant in the autographs.” The consensus among evangelical scholars is that the autographs are no longer in existence. As such, an individual who believes that the Bible contains mistakes may subscribe to such a statement because it can be said, “I only believe the Scriptures to be inerrant as originally given; I do not believe that they are inerrant today since we no longer have the autographs, the Scriptures as originally given.” It goes without saying that the theological confusion found in evangelical (or neo-evangelical) Christianity today finds its root-cause in such a denial of Biblical inerrancy in the apographs.

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

The denial of the supernatural jot-and-tittle preservation of the Holy Scriptures has caused great confusion and

hindrance to the evangelistic-fundamentalist cause worldwide. There is a need today to reaffirm the present infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures in the divinely preserved apographs of God's Word.

According to the Chamber's Dictionary, the word "infallibility" means "incapable of error," and the word "inerrancy" means "freedom from error." As such, "infallibility" may be deemed a stronger term for the perfection of Scripture than the term "inerrancy." If the Bible by nature is incapable of error, it goes without saying that it must also be totally free from error. We shall use the terms "infallibility" and "inerrancy" in their pure dictionary sense.

The Scripture when it speaks of its inspiration and preservation and consequent infallibility and inerrancy speaks of them in terms of its apographs. For instance, when Jesus spoke of the jot-and-tittle infallibility (or verbal inerrancy) of the Scriptures in Matthew 5:18, He was referring to the Scriptures that He had in His hands, which were the apographs of the Old Testament Scripture, and not the autographs which had since disappeared. The canonical Old Testament which was completed by the 5th century BC had been preserved exact and intact until the time of Jesus Christ in AD 27. The Apostle Paul when he spoke of the divinely inspired Scriptures in 2 Timothy 3:16 must have thought of them in terms of the Scriptures then used by the church (AD 64), which were the apographs, for the non-existent autographs could hardly have served as a supreme rule of faith and life that is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim 3:16–17).

Some say that the Apostle Paul meant the perfect *autographa* when he spoke of the God-breathed Scriptures in 2 Timothy

3:16. If that was what Paul meant, then a question may be raised: how can an intangible and non-existent *autographa* serve as a supreme and final authority? An authority must be existing, present and accessible or else it would be no authority at all. An eye-witness who is already dead and unable to testify is of no use in a court of law. Furthermore, what could Paul have meant by “the holy Scriptures” with which Timothy was brought up but the apographs themselves (2 Tm 3:15)?

Others say that Paul meant the *apographa*, but argue that the *apographa* cannot be deemed as perfect or complete. If this be the case, then how can an imperfect and an incomplete *apographa* serve as an all-sufficient guide for the perfect and complete equipping of the Christian towards godly living (2 Tim 3:17)? If an eye-witness is not of impeccable character, but a compulsive liar, what good is he? His testimony would be utterly discredited. The same goes for Scripture. If the Church does not have an infallible and an inerrant Scripture, and have it today, then her supreme and final authority of faith and practice is all myth. But it is truthful that the Scripture was, is, and shall be God’s infallible and inerrant Word, and thus supremely authoritative (Ps 12:6–7, Ps 119:89, Matt 24:35, Heb 13:8).

Not only does the testimony of Scripture itself affirm the perfection of its apographs, the Reformers of the 16th century, in their declaration of *Sola Scriptura*, always thought in terms of the existing infallible and inerrant apographs rather than the autographs. The great Puritan divine—John Owen (1616-83)—believed in “the purity of the present original copies of the Scripture, or rather copies [*apographa*] in the original languages, which the Church of God doth now and hath for many ages enjoyed as her treasure.” Francis Turretin (1623-87)—pastor-theologian of the Church and Academy of Geneva—wrote in his Systematic Theology, “By

original texts, we do not mean the autographs written by the hand of Moses, of the prophets and of the apostles, which certainly do not now exist. We mean their apographs which are so called because they set forth to us the word of God in the very words of those who wrote under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit.”

The Protestant creeds reflect the Reformation doctrine of the infallibility of the *apographa* as their *Sola Scriptura*. It was not enough to affirm the infallibility and inerrancy of the *autographa* in the days of the Reformation for the Roman Catholic Church challenged *Sola Scriptura* at the Council of Trent (1545-63) by pointing out the scribal errors, variants and discrepancies in the extant Scriptures. The Reformers met this serious challenge by stating unequivocally that the extant Scriptures were infallible and inerrant by virtue of God’s promise to preserve His words to the last iota. In response to the Council of Trent, the Westminster Confession of Faith (1643-8) produced a most excellent statement on the continuing infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture, “The Old Testament in Hebrew ... and the New Testament in Greek ... being immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.” (1:8). The biblical proof-text cited was Matthew 5:18, “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” In the battle for the sole and supreme authority of the Scriptures over against the Roman Catholic dogma of papal and ecclesiastical infallibility, the doctrine of the special, providential preservation of Scripture was eventually and necessarily credalised in the days of the Protestant Reformation.

Although it is admitted that the Westminster Confession did not specifically use the terms “infallible” and “inerrant”

to describe the Scriptures, their use of the word “authentic” said just as much. They did not at all believe that the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures that they possessed were in any way imperfect or errant. J S Candlish rightly observed that the word “authentic” did not mean simply that the Scriptures were “historically true,” but that in a literal sense, the existing Scripture “is a correct copy of the author’s work.” William F Orr put it more forcefully, “Now this affirms that the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New which was known to the Westminster divines was immediately inspired by God because it was identical with the first text that God has kept pure in all the ages. The idea that there are mistakes in the Hebrew Masoretic texts or in the Textus Receptus of the New Testament was unknown to the authors of the Confession of Faith.”

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

The current evangelical view of “inerrant autographs” is a relatively new one that began in the 19th century in conjunction with the introduction of rationalistic textual criticism. Textual Criticism as introduced by Westcott and Hort treated the Scriptures like any ordinary literature, and sought by human reasoning and subjective analysis to judge which part of Scripture is inspired and which part is

not. They touted the highly corrupted Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus as the new standard text, and rejected the traditional Textus Receptus as the providentially preserved text. Their revision of the providentially preserved Textus Receptus saw them cutting out a total of 9,970 Greek words from it in their newly edited Greek text of 1881. The Westcott and Hort text deleted such divinely preserved and time-honoured passages as the *Pericope de adultera* (John 7:53–8:11), the last 12 verses of Mark (Mark 16:9–20), and the Johannine Comma (1 John 5:7). Their denial of verbal inspiration as seen in their rendering of 2 Timothy 3:16 was soundly castigated by Southern Presbyterian theologian—Robert Dabney—as the work of a Socinian and a rationalist.

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

The uncritical acceptance of Westcott and Hort's false textual-critical theory by Princeton Seminary, and later evangelical and fundamental seminaries resulted in the Textus Receptus being replaced by the United Bible Societies and the Nestle-Aland Critical Texts as the "commonly received" text in New Testament studies and modern translations. Over a hundred modern English versions have been birthed by this mutilated and corrupted text causing much confusion over

the infallibility, inerrancy and authority of the Scriptures. Where is the Bible? Do modern textual critics have the answer? They are agnostic!

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

Fundamentalism’s love affair with Westcott and Hort, the modern versions, and textual criticism is truly a classic case of the unequal yoke (2 Cor 6:14–7:1). The KJV and its underlying inspired and preserved Hebrew and Greek texts ought to be the Text of Biblical fundamentalism. But today, certain fundamentalists pay lip service to the KJV as the “very” (100%) Word of God, but undermine its very source—the underlying Hebrew Masoretic Text and Greek Textus Receptus—saying that it is not 100% (with much deference to Westcott and Hort). It goes without saying that this partnership of the KJV with the Westcott and Hort Text

in the classrooms of fundamental theological colleges and seminaries is a marriage unequally yoked.

There is a vital need today for true Biblical fundamentalists to teach and defend the indispensable doctrine of the verbal and plenary preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures, and by so doing, recapture the Reformation battle-cry of *Sola Scriptura* as found in the infallible and inerrant *apographa* of the traditional Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus on which the venerable KJV is based.

The 19th century Warfieldian concept of the inerrant *autographa* as reflected in contemporary evangelicalism ought to be expanded to include the inerrant *apographa*. According to Richard Muller of Calvin Theological Seminary, “The Protestant scholastics do not press the point made by their nineteenth-century followers that the infallibility of Scripture and the freedom of Scripture from error reside absolutely in the *autographa*, and only in the derivative sense in the *apographa*; rather, the scholastics argue positively that the *apographa* preserve intact the true words of the prophets and the apostles and that the God-breathed (*theopneustos*) character of Scripture is manifest in the *apographa* as well as in the *autographa*. In other words, the issue primarily addressed by the seventeenth-century orthodox in their discussion of the *autographa* is the continuity of the extant copies in Hebrew and in Greek with the originals both *quoad res*, with respect to the thing or subject of the text, and *quoad verba*, with respect to the words of the text.” It is quite clear that the Reformation scholars believed in the 100% inspiration and 100% preservation of the very words of Scripture that God has breathed out, and not simply the doctrines (2 Tim 3:16, Ps 12:6–7, Matt 5:18, 24:35). Without the words, where the doctrines? It must be pointed out that the current neo-evangelical and neo-fundamental view of (1) verbal inspiration and total inerrancy in the autographs

alone, and (2) conceptual inspiredness and limited inerrancy in the apographs, contradicts reformed and fundamental dogmatics.

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

Ian Paisley, renowned leader of the World Congress of Fundamentalists and President of the European Institute of Protestant Studies, wrote likewise, “The verbal Inspiration of the Scriptures demands the verbal Preservation of the Scriptures. Those who would deny the need for verbal Preservation cannot be accepted as being really committed to verbal Inspiration. If there is no preserved Word of God today then the work of Divine Revelation and Divine Inspiration has perished.”

In the battle for the Bible today, there is a need for Bible-believing and Bible-defending churches and seminaries to produce statements of faith that affirm the Scriptures to be verbally and plenary preserved in the apographs; that all the Hebrew and Greek words of the Masoretic Text and the Textus Receptus underlying the King James Bible are the verbally and plenary inspired words of God, and therefore absolutely infallible, totally inerrant and supremely authoritative.

There is also a need to be specific in the identification of the preserved text. In his discussion on “How to Combat Modernism—Follow the Logic of Faith,” Dr Edward F Hills warned against a false view of preservation that says (1) the doctrines are preserved, but not the words (contra Matt 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33), or (2) the true reading is preserved somewhere out there in the whole body of extant manuscripts. Such a general and uncertain view would imply that God was somehow careless in preserving His inspired words. Hills rightly advised, “It is not sufficient merely to say that you believe in the doctrine of the special, providential preservation of the holy Scriptures. You must really believe this doctrine and allow it to guide your thinking. You must begin with Christ and the Gospel and proceed according to the logic of faith. This will lead you to the Traditional text, the Textus Receptus, and the King James Version.”

It is by this same logic of faith applied consistently that Dr D A Waite, the President of the Dean Burgon Society, concluded that “the WORDS of the Received Greek and Masoretic Hebrew texts that underlie the KING JAMES BIBLE are the very WORDS which God has PRESERVED down through the centuries, being the exact WORDS of the ORIGINALS themselves.” (Note that Waite is speaking of the Hebrew and Greek words underlying the KJV, and not the English words, nor the KJV per se.)

This is not a new view, but a restatement of an old truth. By believing in the verbally and plenary preserved apographs, we are affirming or reaffirming good old Protestant and Reformation Theology. It is heartening to note that God's people, filled and guided by the Spirit, are recognising this vital truth of the verbal and plenary preservation of the Scriptures, and not a few theological institutions have already taken a declared position for it.

One such institution is the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC). The ICCC is a worldwide fellowship of fundamental churches which are opposed to liberalism, ecumenism, charismaticism, and neo-evangelicalism. Led by Dr Carl McIntire, its founding President, the ICCC in its 16th World Congress in Jerusalem, 2000, a statement, "On the Word of God Forever Inerrant and Infallible," was passed:

"Believing the Holy Scriptures on the originals to be fully inspired with its words and genders and being complete as God's revelation to man without error;

"Believing that God not only inspired the Bible without errors in fact, doctrine and judgement but preserved the Scriptures in all ages for all eternity as the Westminster Confession of Faith standard says—'the O.T. in Hebrew and the N.T. in Greek ... being immediately inspired by God and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages are therefore authentical ... They are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come;'

"Believing the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, gave us a supernatural gift, and both inspired and preserved it. By inspired we mean that the Holy Spirit moved in the hearts of its human authors that they recorded the very words that God wanted written in the Bible using the

personality and background of its writers but without error. 'For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' II Pet 1:21;

"Believing God safeguarded the Bible in times past and will continue to do so in the future and all eternity. He preserved on Scripture, the Bible. 'Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away;' Matt 24:35;

"Believing the O.T. has been preserved in the Masoretic text and the N.T. in the Textus Receptus, combined they gave us the complete Word of God. The King James Version in English has been faithfully translated from these God-preserved manuscripts. Other good Protestant versions have been translated around the world in many languages based on the Masoretic and Textus Receptus until 1881 when Drs. Westcott and Hort used a shorter text removing many words, phrases and sections by following the eclectic watered down polluted Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts;

"These manuscripts differ widely among themselves and with others amount to less than 5% of the manuscript evidence. God preserved the Textus Receptus in the majority text with 95%. This is called the traditional, or majority text. It is also called Eastern Byzantine text and also the manuscripts that have the longer and fuller texts; ...

"We the International Council of Christian Churches meeting in Jerusalem, 8-14 November 2000 strongly urge the churches in their pulpits and people at large, to continue to use the time honoured and faithful longer translations and not the new shorter versions that follow in too many places the short eclectic texts. These are very similar to the shorter Westcott and Hort texts that remove or cast doubt on so many passages and words. Furthermore we are not

against new versions as such but believe all true and faithful versions must be based on the traditional longer texts that the Holy Spirit preserved through the early century versions, the early church fathers and the faithful Textus Receptus.”

It is significant to note that Dr Carl McIntire—founding president of the ICCC—believed the Bible to be 100% perfect without any mistake, and that Psalm 12:6–7 teaches the Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures. In his sermon, “Help, LORD!” (Psalm 12), preached on January 11, 1992, he said, “Now come verse 6, ‘The words of the LORD are pure words,’ not one of them is mistaken, ‘as silver tried in the furnace of earth, purified seven times.’ All the dregs are out. Here is a marvellous affirmation and vindication that God’s Word is perfect. ... Now, ‘The words of the LORD are pure words.’ And then verse 7, how I love this: ‘Thou shalt keep them, O LORD,’ that is, keep His words; ‘thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.’ No matter what happens, one generation comes and another passes away, God is going to preserve His words ... from one generation to another. The words of God will be preserved throughout all the generations.”

WHY THE AUTHORISED/KING JAMES VERSION?

A number of publications seek to attack and destroy the verbal and plenary perfection of the Bible. They claim that the Bible is verbally and plenary inspired (VPI) but not verbally and plenary preserved (VPP). Simply put, they want Christians to believe that the Bible was only infallible in the past but no longer infallible today.

In attacking the present infallibility and inerrancy of the Scriptures and the identification of an existing infallible and inerrant Scripture in the original languages in the inspired and preserved Hebrew and Greek words underlying the Reformation Bibles best represented by the KJV, these



WILLIAM TYNDALE (1494-1536)

William Tyndale, master linguist of Oxford and Cambridge Universities, gave his people their first Bible translated from the original languages. By selfless toil, he completed translating the NT in 1525 and most of the OT before his death. Tyndale's Bible became a forerunner of the King James Bible (1611).

His testimony on translation: "I call God to record against the day we shall appear before our Lord Jesus, to give a reckoning of doings, that I never altered one syllable of God's Word against my conscience, nor would this day, if all that is in the earth, whether it be pleasure, honour, or riches, might be given me."

anti-perfectionists, anti-preservationists, anti-TR/KJV, pro-Westcott-Hort modern-versionists falsely accuse believers of the present perfection of Scriptures as schismatics, heretics and even cultists by linking them to Ruckmanism and Seventh-Day Adventism (SDAism). Their writings imply that it is simply unscholarly and even sinful to suggest that Christians today indeed possess a 100% infallible and inerrant Bible.

Henceforth, we will refer to such propagators of untruth generally as “the accusers,” bearing in mind that not all of them share exactly the same beliefs with regard to the VPP and the KJV, as some among them even inexplicably profess love for the KJV—notwithstanding their readiness to find fault with the KJV and/or the original language texts (words) underlying the KJV. The title of “arch-accuser” goes to Doug Kutilek who contributed a chapter to the faith-denying and doubt-casting book called *One Bible Only?* authored by the faculty of Central Baptist Theological Seminary (with support from Bob Jones University). In that book, Kutilek paints with a broad and contemptuous brush all pro-KJV advocates as Ruckmanites. He linked sound defenders of the KJV like Edward F Hills, David Otis Fuller, David Cloud, and D A Waite to Ruckman! This is hitting below the belt. He also unjustly accused pro-KJV defenders of SDAism just because D O Fuller quoted from SDA Benjamin Wilkinson who so happened to defend the KJV as well in his book, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated* (1930). This is a common tactic by detractors to mislead, to paint white as black so that people will not see the white but only the black, and to make people think that the black they see is indeed white. Such sophistry is usually employed by those who have no case or a weak case, who have to resort to such low blows to score their points in order to look credible.

VPP is not Ruckmanism. It is a well-known fact that authors like Hills, Fuller, Cloud and Waite by no means defend the KJV in the way Ruckman does. It is clear from the writings of Hills, Fuller, Cloud and Waite that they do **NOT** espouse at all the beliefs of Ruckman that:

1. the KJV is doubly inspired;
2. the KJV is advanced revelation;
3. the English KJV is as or more inspired than the original language Scriptures;
4. the KJV can be used to correct the original language Scriptures;
5. there is no need whatsoever to study the Biblical languages of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek due to an “inspired” English translation;
6. the KJV cannot be improved on (*The Defined King James Bible* edited by D A Waite and S H Tow and published by Bible For Today is certainly an improvement of the KJV);
7. the KJV is the only Bible that has gospel or salvific content;
8. those who do not use the KJV are condemned to hell; and
9. all non-English speaking believers must learn English to know the Truth.

Hills, Fuller, Cloud and Waite are all essentially speaking of the infallibility and inerrancy of the inspired Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek Scriptures behind the Reformation Bibles best represented by the KJV. The KJV does not stand independently or separately. It is dependent on its original language source texts, and these source texts (words) known by various names—Byzantine, Majority, Received—are the infallibly preserved autographs of the inerrant autographs.

As far as non-English translations or versions of the Bible go, all non-English speaking believers are encouraged to use the Bibles they have in their own native tongue, but they ought to use that version which is closest to the inspired and preserved Byzantine, Majority and Received texts, and as far removed as possible from the Alexandrian, Minority, and Westcott-Hort texts. They ought also to use a Bible that is translated by means of the verbal equivalence method (word-for-word) rather than the dynamic equivalence method (thought-for-thought) in keeping with the twin doctrines of VPI and VPP. Biblically and theologically trained pastors and teachers are necessary to teach faithfully the whole counsel of God, expounding from the inerrant Hebrew and Greek Scriptures God has infallibly preserved, namely, the Masoretic Text and the Textus Receptus of the Protestant Reformation, all the truths that God has given using the best version or translation the people have in their hands.

VPP is not SDAism. Dr Benjamin Wilkinson (an SDA) does not own the King James Bible. The King James Bible was not translated by SDAs but by Reformation and Protestant scholars of the highest calibre during the reign of King James in the early 17th century. The King James Bible is for everyone who loves the Bible and desires to have the best and most faithful English Bible ever produced for their meditation and edification. Neither does Wilkinson own the “copyright” to the Biblical doctrine of VPP which belongs only to the Lord Jesus Christ who said in all three Synoptic Gospels, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matt 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33).

Wilkinson did not pioneer the defence of the KJV. The original defence of the KJV may be traced to the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS) which was originally founded in 1831 to defend the biblical and fundamental doctrine of the Trinity and the 100% deity of Christ—hence its name “Trinitarian.”

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.” This most excellent verse has been scissored out by Westcott and Hort, and the modern versions. The TBS in its defence of the Trinity found it most necessary also to defend 1 John 5:7 as found in the underlying preserved Greek text of the KJV. By so defending the KJV and its preserved underlying Greek text, is the TBS now SDA just because Wilkinson at a later time happened to defend the KJV and its underlying Greek text too? Note that the TBS is stoutly against Westcott and Hort, and the modern versions, and even considers the NKJV untrustworthy.

The Bible League is another early defender of the KJV. Founded in 1892, the Bible League resisted the “Downgrade” in Great Britain. The modernists were throwing out one doctrine after another including the foundational and indispensable doctrine of the divine inspiration and total inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures. The Bible League was founded to contend earnestly for the historic Christian Faith. Since its inception, the League has endeavoured “[t]o promote the Reverent Study of the Holy Scriptures, and to resist the varied attacks made upon their Inspiration, Infallibility and Sole Sufficiency as the Word of God.” Insofar as the Bible versions issue is concerned, the Bible League unashamedly holds to the view that “the Authorised Version is the most accurate and faithful English Bible translation available today.” Its latest publication (2004), a 126-paged book authored by Alan J Macgregor and titled *Three Modern Versions* is a most timely critique of the NIV, ESV and NKJV. It is significant to note that Macgregor quoted Wilkinson’s *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, but in a footnote Macgregor wisely explained his use of Wilkinson’s material thus: “It must be pointed out here that while there is some good material in Dr Wilkinson’s book, there are also

a number of inaccuracies. He was a Seventh-day Adventist (a fact that many who quote from him fail to reveal). Some who support the use of modern versions of the Bible allege that one of the reasons for Dr. Wilkinson's strong opposition to the Revised Version of 1881 was that it altered two verses which Adventists regard as proof-texts in support of their doctrines: Acts 13:42 (which they regard as teaching the necessity of Gentiles keeping the Sabbath or Seventh Day), and Hebrews 9:27 (which Adventists believe teaches soul sleep). I have sought to be selective in the quotes I have used. Some might argue, why quote from him at all, if he was a member of a cult? The answer is that despite his Adventist views ... there is nonetheless some sound evidence in his book that rightly exposes facts concerning the Westcott and Hort Text, and the errors of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. He also provides solid, factual support for the superiority of the Received Text."

This allegation that the belief in the verbal and plenary preservation of the Scriptures and the defence of the KJV is a "new doctrine" and a "new practice" has been very much the tactic of anti-VPPists, anti-TRists, and anti-KJVists to vilify the fundamental doctrine of the infallible preservation of the inspired words of the Holy Scriptures to the last jot and tittle as promised by our Lord Himself in Matthew 5:18, and the goodness of the KJV and its underlying Hebrew and Greek Texts, so that the unknowing populace would automatically shun the good old doctrine of VPP, the good old TR, and the good old KJV without consciously giving them a second thought. Some of the accusers even claim to be "preserving our godly paths" (Jer 6:16)! Can this be so?

David Cloud rightly says that such new attacks against KJV defenders "has increased in intensity in recent years and is finding a home even among those who claim to be Fundamentalists and Bible-believing Baptists." Cloud quoted

from the Rev Denis Gibson (a minister of the gospel who has served in Presbyterian and Baptist churches since 1958, and a regular contributor to the international devotional guide—*Read, Pray, Grow*) who in a letter to him dated April 19, 1995 wrote, “I see a real hostility that has been generated in the minds of some of the younger pastors. There does not seem to be, on their part, a serious interest in dealing with this issue ... It is the hostility, however, that is troubling. Sides are forming and deep prejudices are evident. To be ‘a King James man’ is now a term of opprobrium. This opposition is within ‘so-called’ evangelicalism, not as in the past, from the liberal-modernist camp.”

Is it no wonder that the Trinitarian Bible Society, noting a significant change in theological climate in Christendom, felt compelled to issue a comprehensive statement in 2005 defining what it believes to be the Doctrine of Scripture? D P Rowland, the General Secretary of TBS wrote in the Society’s *Quarterly Record* (April-June 2005), “Today, as has been stated, things are very different. The doctrine of Scripture has been, and is being, assailed on every side; not least from within many branches (including those taking the name of ‘evangelical’ and ‘reformed’ [*and fundamentalist*]) of the so-called ‘Christian Church’ of our day. The Committee, therefore, considers it necessary for the Society clearly and unambiguously to state where it stands on this most fundamental of all doctrines.”

New assaults on the foundational and indispensable doctrine of the infallible preservation of the inerrantly inspired words of Holy Scripture require updated statements and more definitive terms to affirm Christianity’s fundamental beliefs concerning the forever infallible and inerrant Scripture, hence our term—“Verbal Plenary Preservation”—as expressed in the Constitution of the Far Eastern Bible College:

1. We believe in the divine, Verbal Plenary Inspiration (Autographs) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (Apographs) of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the perfect Word of God, the Supreme and final authority in faith and life (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20–21; Ps 12:6–7; Matt 5:18, 24:35);
2. We believe the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament underlying the Authorised (King James) Version to be the very Word of God, infallible and inerrant;
3. We uphold the Authorised (King James) Version to be the Word of God—the best, most faithful, most accurate, most beautiful translation of the Bible in the English language, and do employ it alone as our primary scriptural text in the public reading, preaching, and teaching of the English Bible.

What is the real problem today? Is it not the unequal yoking of “reformed” and “fundamentalist” theology with the textual-critical method of Westcott and Hort and the “inerrant autographs alone” view of Warfield, their resultant corrupt text and modern perversions? Why are “reformed” people agreeing with certain fundamental Baptists who castigate the doctrine of special providential preservation as a “new doctrine,” non-existent before 1648 and the Westminster Confession? Why are certain Biblical fundamentalists well-known for their Biblical conservatism and separatism speaking favourably of rationalistic methods of Biblical criticism, modernistic critical texts, and the ecumenical and neo-evangelical modern versions? Has there not been a downgrade today within reformed Christianity and historic fundamentalism? If so, is this not a backsliding away from the 16th and 20th century Reformation movements?

Our sincere and earnest prayer is that Bible-believing and Bible-defending Christians would not just believe and defend the Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) of Scripture, but also the Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of Scripture. The Bible was not only infallible and inerrant in the past (in the Autographs), but also infallible and inerrant in the present (in the Apographs). These Apographs are the providentially and specially preserved Hebrew and Greek manuscripts and texts underlying the Reformation Bibles best represented by the KJV.

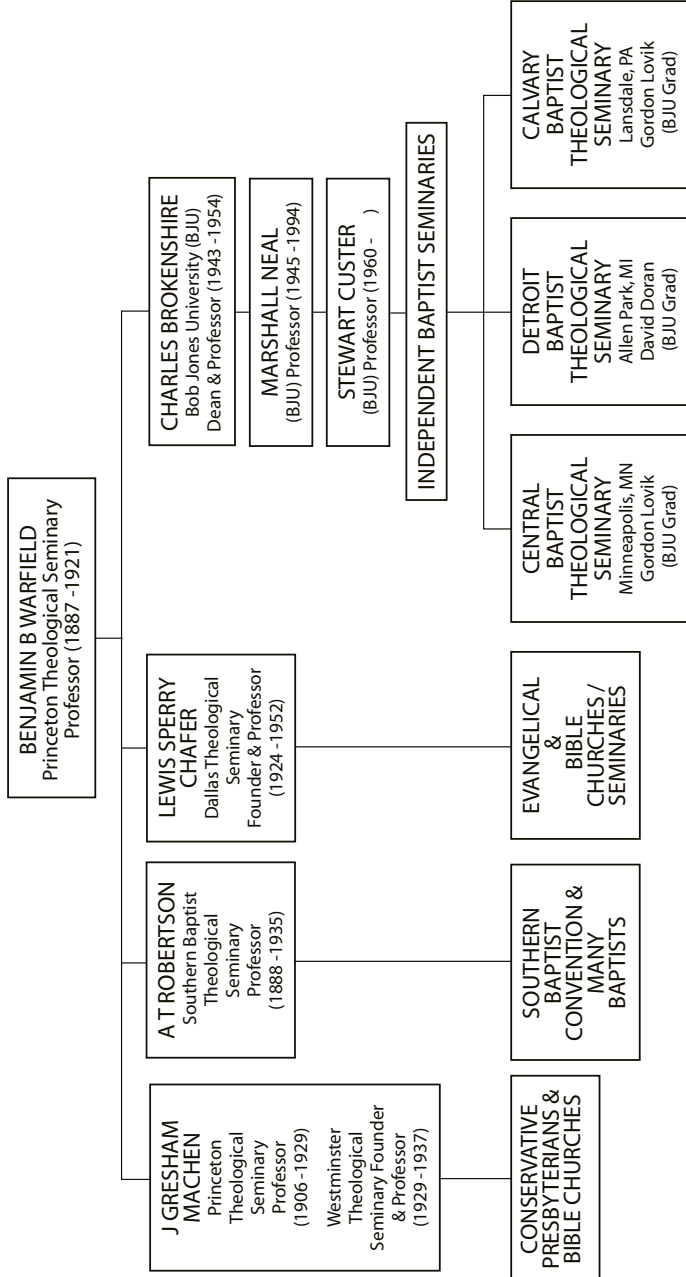
The Trinitarian Bible Society's latest position statement on the Bible as published in its *Quarterly Record*, April-June 2005, is noteworthy. The TBS identifies and describes the underlying texts of the KJV as follows:

“The Trinitarian Bible Society Statement of Doctrine of the Holy Scripture” approved by the General Committee at its meeting held on 17th January 2005, and revised 25th February 2005 declares its position on the underlying texts of the KJV:

“The Constitution of the Trinitarian Bible Society specifies the textual families to be employed in the translations it circulates. The Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Received Texts are the texts that the Constitution of the Trinitarian Bible Society acknowledges to have been preserved by the special providence of God within Judaism and Christianity. Therefore these texts are definitive and the final point of reference in all the Society's work.

“These texts of Scripture reflect the qualities of God-breathed Scripture, including being authentic, holy, pure, true, infallible, trustworthy, excellent, self-authenticating, necessary, sufficient, perspicuous, self-interpreting, authoritative and inerrant (Psalm 19:7–9, Psalm 119). They

THE ENTRANCE OF THE LEAVEN OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM INTO FUNDAMENTALISM



Source: Dell G Johnson, overhead chart entitled “The Leaven in Fundamentalism,” in *The Leaven in Fundamentalism: A History of the Bible Text Issue in Fundamentalism*, videocassette tape 3, 145 mins, Pensacola Christian College, 1998. Used by permission.

are consequently to be received as the Word of God (Ezra 7:14; Nehemiah 8:8; Daniel 9:2; 2 Peter 1:19) and the correct reading at any point is to be sought within these texts.

“The Society accepts as the best edition of the Hebrew Masoretic text the one prepared in 1524–25 by Jacob ben Chayyim and known, after David Bomberg the publisher, as the Bomberg text. This text underlies the Old Testament in the Authorised Version.

“The Greek Received Text is the name given to a group of printed texts, the first of which was published by Desiderius Erasmus in 1516. The Society believes that the latest and best edition is the text reconstructed by F.H.A. Scrivener in 1894. This text was reconstructed from the Greek underlying the New Testament of the Authorised Version.”

Can the accusers and detractors fault the TBS for letting us know which texts have been preserved by the special providence of God and used by the TBS as its final point of reference in all its work? If they find fault, it may be because they want to paint VPP as merely a theory with no specific texts that can be found or identified in practice (i.e., in the real world). If VPP is destroyed or undermined by them, the immediately underlying original Hebrew and Greek apographs become of no consequence and it would then not matter if Christians use perverted modern versions since such versions can also claim to be ultimately traceable to the unavailable autographs. VPI without VPP can lead to the floodgate being opened for the inclusion of the heretical Gnostic gospels and perverted modern Bible versions.

DANGER OF DENYING VERBAL PLENARY PRESERVATION

The Bible warns in 1 Timothy 4:1–2, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart

from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.”

The Bible today is under attack like never before. The modernists through *The Da Vinci Code* tell us that the 27 books of the New Testament Canon are false and must be replaced by newly discovered Coptic manuscripts which speak of a more realistic down-to-earth Jesus stripped of all His deity and moral purity. They claim that the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, the Gospel of Judas, and other Gnostic Gospels are the true Gospels; and that these Gospels must replace the Canonical Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Many evangelical Bible Colleges and Seminaries today teach that the Bible was only infallible and inerrant in the past, but no longer infallible and inerrant today. According to popular theology, the Bible today contains “insignificant mistakes,” “redundant words,” and so-called “scribal errors.”

It is significant to note that the Bible under constant attack by modernists and evangelicals is not the NIV, not the NASB, not the RSV, not even the NKJV, or any of the modern versions but the good old Authorised or the King James Version (AV/KJV). Why is the KJV under such attack? The KJV is under such attack because it is the Bible of the 16th century Protestant Reformation, and as the Reformation Bible, it stands against the tide of unbelief, apostasy, and compromise today.

Bart Ehrman in his book entitled—*Misquoting Jesus* (2005)—attacked the KJV and the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures behind the KJV. According to Ehrman, “The King James Bible was based on corrupted and inferior manuscripts that in many cases do not accurately represent the meaning of

the original text. The favorite Bible story of Jesus's forgiving the woman caught in adultery (John 8:3–11) doesn't belong in the Bible. Scribal errors were so common in antiquity that the author of the Book of Revelation threatened damnation to anyone who 'adds to' or 'takes away' words from the text." In other words, in Ehrman's mind, if you quote from the KJV or its underlying texts, you are misquoting Jesus.

Bart Ehrman began as a fundamentalist at Moody Bible Institute but finally lost his faith at Princeton Seminary where he got his PhD. How did he lose his faith? Ehrman tells us on page 11 of his book. He wrote, "If one wants to insist that God inspired the very words of scripture, what would be the point if we don't have the very words of scripture? In some places, as we will see, we simply cannot be sure that we have reconstructed the original text accurately. It's a bit hard to know what the words of the Bible mean if we don't even know what the words are!

"This became a problem for my view of inspiration, for I came to realize that it would have been no more difficult for God to preserve the words of scripture than it would have been for him to inspire them in the first place. If he wanted his people to have his words, surely he would have given them to them (and possibly even given them the words in a language they could understand, rather than Greek and Hebrew). The fact that we don't have the words surely must show, I reasoned, that he did not preserve them for us. And if he didn't perform that miracle, there seemed to be no reason to think that he performed the earlier miracle of inspiring those words.

"In short, my study of the Greek New Testament, and my investigations into the manuscripts that contain it, led to a radical rethinking of my understanding of what the Bible is. This was a seismic change for me. Before this—starting



JOHN WILLIAM BURGON (1813-1888)
Professor of Divinity, Oxford University
Dean of Chichester

John William Burgon was a man of deep faith and strong convictions, with an intense love of the Word, and a fierce loyalty to God's Truth. Raised of God at a time of great "falling away" from the faith, Burgon devoted himself with singleness of mind to defend the inspired Word of God by study of ancient manuscripts, the source texts of Bible translations.

Travelling extensively, he visited libraries throughout Europe, including the Vatican, to examine and study all available NT manuscripts. By his vast knowledge of Greek, he was able to identify those preserved NT manuscripts originating from the Apostolic church, and handed down intact up to the time of the Reformation.

To this group of preserved manuscripts, Dean Burgon gave the name of "Traditional Text," which formed the basis of the KJV, and continued to be used in the Protestant Church for the next three hundred and fifty years. He also identified the Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus to be among manuscripts the "most corrupt."

with my born-again experience in high school, through my fundamentalist days at Moody, and on through my evangelical days at Wheaton—my faith has been based completely on a certain view of the Bible as the fully inspired, inerrant word of God. Now I no longer saw the Bible that way.”

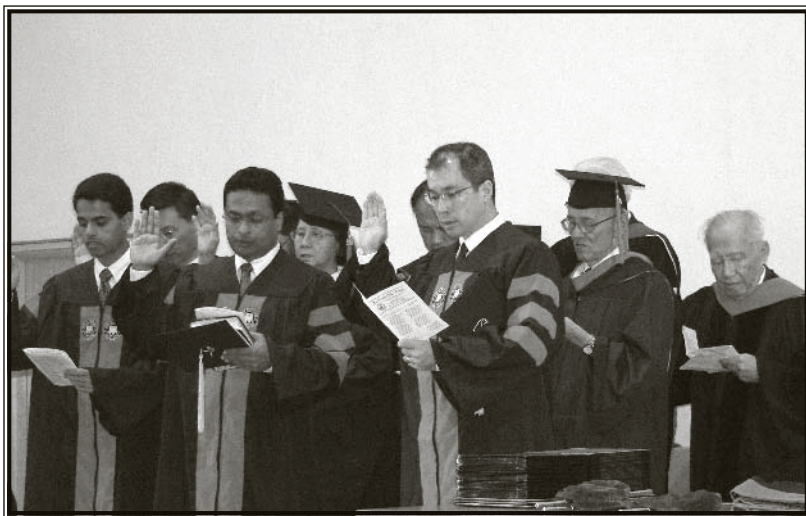
Ehrman’s testimony serves as a warning: If we do not believe that God has verbally and plenary preserved His words, that we have truly the very words of God today—100% infallible and inerrant without any mistake—and are against the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words behind the KJV, we might just end up like Ehrman—an agnostic and a modernist.

It goes without saying that it is not enough for true Christianity to believe in the Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) of the Scriptures; it is equally important to believe in the Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of the Scriptures. “The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever” (Ps 12:6–7). The twin doctrines of VPI and VPP are our only sure defence against the attacks on the Bible today. We have a fixed Canon and a fixed Text. We see no need for textual criticism and we reject higher criticism altogether.

The leadership of the Far Eastern Bible College believes without any reservation the present infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures as spelled out in the College Constitution (see Appendix O).

The Board of Directors and Faculty affirm their allegiance to the Word of God by taking the Dean Burgon Oath at every annual convocation: “I swear in the Name of the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit that I believe ‘the

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



FEBC Faculty and Board Taking the Dean Burgon Oath