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# KEYNOTE

## THE CONFESSION, INSPIRATION, AND TRANSLATIONS by Tito S. Lyro

Which one is the right Bible? Are all translations inspired? Can I be sure that my English Bible is the Word of God? All of us have, at one point or another, asked all or some of these questions. When the Lord saved me, I was given a nice, parallel Bible. It had all kinds of bells and whistles, but it became confusing to me because I didn't know which column to read. Should I read the column on the right, or the one on the left? Or, should I read one with one eye and the other with the other eye? Besides personal doubts about which version to read, there is also the debate about which Greek text should be used, which method of translation is sound, which version is from God and which is from the Devil. Choosing a Bible can be a very stressful activity!

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The Westminster Confession helps us understand and answer quite a few of the questions posed in the preceding paragraph. The divines rightly gave the chapter on the Word of God a place of pre-eminence by placing it first. Chapter 1 masterfully deals with the doctrines of inspiration and preservation of the Scriptures, and sets forth the need for translations in the common language of the people. An analysis of the entire chapter is beyond the scope of this article.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, we will focus on Paragraph 8 of that first chapter because it encapsulates the issues that are pertinent to this article.

### THE INSPIRED TEXT

The Confession states “The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God... are therefore authentic.” This means that inspiration has to do with the biblical text in the original language, not with translations into various languages. No single translation is inspired in the same sense that the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts are. Notice that the Confession speaks of the immediacy of the inspiration of the original text. The word *immediately* in this case means “without intervening medium of agent.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, *immediately* could be replaced by the word *directly*. God directly inspired the original writings.<sup>3</sup>

Inspiration, however, is not a mechanical or robotic process. God worked out the lives of the sacred writers in a such

a way that when they arrived at the point of writing the Scriptures, they wrote exactly what God wanted without any violence being done to their own thinking, purpose, or volition. Dr. Warfield writes:

Representations are sometimes made as if, when God wished to produce sacred books which would incorporate His will—a series of letters like those of Paul, for example—He was reduced to the necessity of going down to earth and painfully scrutinizing the men He found there, seeking anxiously for the one who, on the whole, promised best for His purpose; and then violently forcing the material He wished expressed through him, against his natural bent, and with as little loss from his recalcitrant characteristics as possible. Of course, nothing of the sort took place. If God wished to give His people a series of letters like Paul’s He prepared a Paul to write them, and the Paul He brought to the task was a Paul who spontaneously would write such letters.<sup>4</sup>

The Scriptures speak of its writers being moved by the Holy Spirit as a ship is carried along by the wind.<sup>5</sup> As a ship arrives at its wanted destination by the blowing of the wind, the biblical writers arrived at what they wanted to write by the moving of the Spirit. Thus, the original manuscript of each of the books of the Bible contained the exact words that the Holy Spirit uttered through the writers. This is true of the autographs. However, what about the current Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek texts?

The Confession states that “by His singular care and providence,” God “kept” the original text “pure in all ages.”

Although we don’t have the autographs, we do have the correct, inspired text because God preserved for us as he promised he would. Interestingly enough, he chose a way that is contrary to what most of us would have chosen. Instead of preserving one set of manuscripts that would be the standard for everybody, God preserved the original text in thousands of different manuscripts. What at first seems counterintuitive becomes obvious when one thinks about it. Instead of preserving the autographs, which would probably become the object of sinful worship, God kept the text protected by providing so many copies of it that no one can effectively change the reading of the text and get away with it. G. I. Williamson explains this concept in more scholarly terms:

At first sight it would appear that with the disappearance of A [autographs] (probably worn out with use) the text would be doomed to progressive corruption thereafter. But such is not the case. The reason is that God has exercised control over all the elements and agencies concerned with the preservation of the sacred text. We see that God determined that early copies of the original would be made. True, each erred in a slight degree, but they did not all err in the same points. Being human, the copier of manuscript B would make a mistake here and there. Likewise would the copiers of C and D. But they would each err in a different, individual way. So that where B erred, C and D would not err. In effect, C and D would thus bear witness against the error of B. And so, while the true (or perfect) original text would not be entirely reproduced in any single copy, yet it would not be lost or inaccessible because by the majority

testimony of several copies, error would always be witnessed against. The true text would be perfectly preserved within the body of witnesses.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, when the science of textual criticism has been correctly applied, we can truly say that we have today the inspired and inerrant text of God. Now, keep in mind that this is true of the text in the original languages. That is why the Confession says that “in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.” Therefore, it is imperative that the leaders in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ know the language of his Word.<sup>7</sup>

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Not everybody in the Church, however, is able to study and learn the original languages and the Confession makes provision for that. It says, “But, because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every

nation unto which they come.” The need for translating the Scriptures into the vulgar, or common, language of people is made clear by the testimony of the Scriptures themselves and by the testimony of God’s providence in history.

When the Israelites returned to Judea from the Babylonian captivity, Hebrew was no longer their everyday language. Aramaic had become the popular language among the people of Israel. So, when Ezra gathered the people to hear the Law read, he also provided a translation of the sacred text:

Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded Israel. So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month. Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law; and the people stood in their place. So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading. (Neh 8:1-2, 7-8)

The Levites helped the people understand what was being read by providing a translation from Hebrew into Aramaic. The result of providing a translation of the law that the people could understand was hearts broken by the Word of God.<sup>8</sup>

We find the same pattern in the New Testament. Time and time again, the gospel writers go through great pains to translate words they think their audience will not understand. For example, Mark wrote to a primarily Gentile audience. So, when he recorded Jesus' utterance of Psalm 22:1 in Aramaic, he also gave a translation of it in Greek.<sup>9</sup> In another place, Mark translated into Greek what Jesus said to the little girl.<sup>10</sup> John, who also wrote to a Gentile audience, gives translations of Hebrew and Roman terms in Greek.<sup>11</sup> Luke did the same thing in Acts.<sup>12</sup> So, we see that translations were used by the biblical writers to increase the understanding of their audience, thus, making the Scriptures more profitable to them. The Holy Spirit himself made use of a translation in moving the biblical writers to write the New Testament. Almost every Old Testament quotation in the Epistle to the Hebrews is from the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew/Aramaic Old Testament.

Another very important witness to the fact that the Scriptures need to be translated into the common language of the people is the very Greek that the New

Testament biblical writers used. By the end of the 1800s it was commonly accepted that there were words in the New Testament that were specially coined by the Holy Spirit. Some lexicons even provided a list of "Holy Ghost Greek" words.<sup>13</sup> The reason for such belief was that these words were not found in any of the literary works of the time. With the early 1900s discoveries of non-literary papyri (bills of sale, personal letters, business documents, etc.), it became clear that the words in the "Holy Ghost Greek" list were not specially coined by the Holy Spirit. In fact, they were common, everyday, down to earth words. That is why they weren't in Plutarch, or in the other authors of the time; the words weren't erudite enough for them.<sup>14</sup> So, God, in his providence, chose to use a very accurate, yet current, language for the text of the New Covenant. Therefore, we must follow his lead in our translations.

God, through providence has shown how useful and needed translations are. Very early, following the closing of the canon, the Scriptures were translated into Syriac, Armenian, Old Latin, etc. God used these translations to further his kingdom among non-Greek speaking nations. Later on when Latin became the language of Christianity, the Church commissioned Jerome to revise the Old Latin translation. Instead Jerome started afresh and produced a magnificent Latin translation, the Vulgate. As the name indicates, the Vulgate was designed as an accurate translation in the common language of the people. Jerome wanted it to be accessible. Through the years, however, the Vulgate became idolized by the church and became the standard of biblical text, instead of the Hebrew and Greek. Not till two centuries before the 16<sup>th</sup> century Refor-

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mation was another meaningful translation produced. Even then, the translator was persecuted as a heretic. Interestingly enough, most of the pre-Reformation efforts to put the Bible into the common language of the people were coming from Great Britain.

During the Reformation years, the benefit of having an accurate and current translation became clearer than in any other time. Luther's German translation was mightily used by God to bring German-speaking people to salvation. Current translations popped up all over Europe. "The fullness of time" had come for the people to have the Word of God in their native tongues. The best, most accurate translations were coming out of England with the Bishop's Bible, the Geneva Bible, and in 1611 the King James Version. All these were excellent translations greatly used by God. Because of its accurate translation and magnificent style the King James Version became the standard for English translations. Sadly, however, this translation was elevated to a status of almost perfection and any efforts to update the language in it were met with fierce opposition. Yet, in God's good providence, in the 1900s current translations became available to English-speaking people and once again they were able to read the Word of God as it was designed to be read: in the common language of the people.

<sup>1</sup> For an excellent historical commentary on Chapter 1 of the Confession, see B. B. Warfield, *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work*. (Edmonton: Still Waters Revival Books, 1991), 155-336.

<sup>2</sup> Jess Stein, ed., *The Random House College Dictionary: Revised Edition*  
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(New York: Random House, Inc., 1980), 664.

<sup>3</sup> These original writings are commonly called the autographs. The autographs, then, are the actual manuscripts that Paul, John, etc., wrote. These are no longer available.

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin B. Warfield, "The Biblical Idea of Revelation," in *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Phillipsburg, N. J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1948), 92.

<sup>5</sup> See 2 Pet 1:21; same word used in Acts 27:17, 15; Acts 2:2; John 21:18; Eph 4:14 (related word).

<sup>6</sup> G. I. Williamson, *The Confession of Faith for Study Classes*. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1964), 16.

<sup>7</sup> A particular Greek instructor I had in seminary would always say that "Greek will liberate you from the tyranny of translations."

<sup>8</sup> "And Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, 'This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn nor weep.' **For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law**" (Neh 8:9).

<sup>9</sup> Mark 15:34-35.

<sup>10</sup> Mark 5:41; for another place where Mark translates a Hebrew term into Greek, see Mark 15:22.

<sup>11</sup> John 1:38; 1:41-42; 9:7; 19:17.

<sup>12</sup> Acts 4:36; 9:36; 13:8.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, *The Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament with Index*. (1886; reprinted, Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1981), 698.

<sup>14</sup> J. Gresham Machen, *New Testament Greek for Beginners*. (Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1923), 5.

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# EXEGESIS

## INSPIRATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT by Christopher Lensch

### THE BOOK OF BOOKS

The Bible is unique among books. It claims to come from God. Other religious books may claim to come from God, but they always prove inferior in their message and reliability. Books like the Koran, the Book of Mormon, or the Hindu Vedas cannot match the Bible for its sublimity nor for its consistent ability to penetrate the depths of the human heart.<sup>1</sup> The Bible alone gives voice to man's greatest aspirations of worship of the living God, and the Bible alone gives God's answer for man's greatest need of reconciliation with a holy God.

The Bible's singleness of purpose and its consistent treatment of man's condition and God's nature set it apart from other religious guides. The Bible's message is the same from the beginning of history to its closing pages that foretell the culmination of history. For a book that was written over a period of 1500 years, its unity is remarkable.

### FROM SACRED MESSAGE TO SACRED SCRIPTURES

The writing of the Old Testament spanned a millennium from the days of Moses to the days of Malachi. Before Moses and even before the flood there were God-fearing souls who preserved the stories of their encounters with God, as well as His revelations and promises to them. These early accounts were preserved in an era of exacting oral tradition that carefully related the details and sub-

stance of the message from generation to generation.<sup>2</sup>

With God's founding of a holy nation at Sinai to worship and serve Him, God would give a written record of His will. There Moses transcribes from God the Book of the Covenant.<sup>3</sup> It contains the Ten Commandments and the civil and religious code by which Israel would live in union with God. Forty years later, Moses wrote down the amplified version of God's law code for the generation coming up out of the wilderness.<sup>4</sup> So sacred was this covenant law that it was deposited inside the ark of the covenant in the house of God's dwelling. In effect, this covenant law from God was the holy nation's constitution. More than that, it was God's infallible word of revelation to a chosen people.<sup>5</sup>

The Biblical teaching of the divine inspiration of Scriptures begins with Moses' deposit of the record that he had transcribed from God. The two facts that the covenant document was given by God through His mediator, Moses, and that it was preserved in a sacrosanct place speak of the special nature of that law. Added to this beginning was the warning that none should add to God's words in that document nor take away from them.<sup>6</sup> They accurately reflected the perfect will of God.<sup>7</sup>

The deposit of the sacred writings in the sacred place was the beginning of the recognition of the sacred Scriptures. It set a precedent in the minds of God's people that what God had spoken through His mediator, Moses, could and should be

preserved in writing for review by future generations. Following on the heels of the written constitution came the subsequent sacred history written by Joshua and other recognized mediators after him. God was continuing to do wonders, and His prophets were confirming His message with predictions that could be verified.<sup>8</sup> Because of the organic unity of God's workings, it was an easy step from receiving the Torah as God's scripture to receiving the scrolls of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, et. al., as the continuing sacred record.

#### PROPHETIC PREDICTIONS

A key element that argues for the divine nature of the Bible is prophetic prediction. A stream of predictions is given in the Hebrew Scriptures, some short-term, and others with a longer horizon. Sometimes short and long-term predictions are uttered in the same message in order to confirm the surety of the distant prophecy when the near prophecy is fulfilled.<sup>9</sup>

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In either case predictive prophecies are given by God's servants to verify the validity of their prophetic message. This test is necessary because of false prophets who may claim God's sanction but who really are leading people away from God. Therefore God gives the necessary test of prophetic leaders proving their credentials:

When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.<sup>10</sup>

Predictions recorded through the Bible, likewise, confirm the authenticity of the Bible's message. The approximately 200 predictive passages of the OT,<sup>11</sup> many of which were fulfilled before and at the first coming of Christ, are offered as rational proof of the supernatural nature of these Scriptures. The Old Testament, like the New Testament, offers its own falsification test to verify itself and to discredit counterfeits. Other religious books cannot and do not make the same kind of detailed predictions that the Holy Scriptures do.

#### HOW THE OT VIEWED ITSELF

From the days of Moses the writers of the OT had a self-conscious knowledge of the divine origin of their message. The prophetic writers may not always have understood the timing or the end of their message from God,<sup>12</sup> but they faithfully transmitted it. God's people received it as the voice of majesty, and the angels contemplated the mystery of grace.

God's prophetic messengers did not generally rush to become mediators of

God's Word. Jeremiah is illustrative of the sentiment of others like Moses and Amos when he relates the difficulty and even human opposition in preaching and conveying God's Word: "Then I said, 'I will not make mention of Him, nor speak anymore in His name.' But His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not."<sup>13</sup> Jeremiah recorded God's Word even though his disobedient king might destroy it in the fire.

The prophets and canonical writers persevered in their calling of putting God's Word to paper. It was not their inspired message, but God's. Anyone who reads the Old Testament will find more than 2,000 occurrences of the introductory formula, "Thus saith the Lord." Without controversy, the biblical writers understood that God was the author of the message.

The sweet Psalmist of Israel gives one of the clearest expressions of a writer consciously channeling God's Word. David claims, "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spoke to me...." This passage (2 Sam 23:1-3) is doubly interesting because the Psalm found in the preceding chapter, 2 Samuel 22, is nearly the verbatim form of Psalm 18. In 2 Samuel 23 the Psalmist comments on the divine nature of the Psalms (like Psalm 18) that were appointed for God's temple praise. Some Psalms may have arisen out of the Psalmist's life experience, but the end result of the Psalm came by God's Spirit speaking through the Psalmist.

OT claims of God's superintendence of His canonical prophets does not prove

conclusively that the Old Testament was inspired. These matter of fact claims, just the same, are strong indications of how the writers understood and explained their cohesive message that spanned the centuries before Christ.

#### HOW THE NT WRITERS VIEWED THE OT

The concept of the sacred canon was established well before NT times. By Daniel's time there is reference to the "Scripture of truth"<sup>14</sup> to describe a heavenly revelation. The word for "Scripture" may be translated "writing," but the New Testament commonly uses this word in a technical, theological sense. "Scripture" and "scriptures" in the NT are used in a matter of fact way to reference the canonical writings of the Old Testament.

Jesus taught the authority and inspiration of the OT because the stream of the OT canon led to Him as God's Messiah. After His resurrection He walked incognito with two of His disciples; to them He "expounded" the Scriptures, He "opened" the Scriptures, and finally He "opened their understanding" so that they might comprehend the Scriptures.<sup>15</sup>

Jesus and the NT writers often spoke of the [OT] Scripture being "fulfilled." The OT was not an outdated, dead message nor a dark message with lucky predictions; it was a living message that looked for a terminus of fulfillment in the Messiah. It was full of life when God breathed it into existence, much as God gave life to Adam by His own breath.<sup>16</sup>

It was the law that Jesus lived by while on earth; He insisted that God's law to the smallest part would be fulfilled by Himself. The language of Matthew 5:18, where Jesus speaks of the smallest part of

Hebrew alphabet (“jot”) and even the smallest part of a Hebrew letter (“tittle”), implies that the very words of the divine record that contained the law were intentional. Jesus’ words here support the doctrine of verbal inspiration. His high view of OT Scripture, from its parts to its purpose, is expressed in His statement, “...the Scripture cannot be broken.”<sup>17</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

Peter believed his Master’s teaching about the OT canon. It was nothing less than God’s inspired Word. It is not inferior to the New Testament; rather it was the corpus of writing that shaped the thought and words of Jesus and His apostles. In his final own canonical message, Peter affirmed that “The prophecy [of the OT prophetic Scriptures] came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”<sup>18</sup> Any other words apart from God’s canonical Word can never have the same power of God’s Spirit to change lives and to move the world and to tease angels. 

<sup>1</sup> Gleason Archer observes that “The Book of Mormon is vitiated by many historical inconsistencies and inaccuracies, and the Koran (which is claimed to have been dictated from a heavenly archetype coeternal with Allah) exhibits not only the most startling historical inaccuracies but also the changing viewpoints of a human author (Muhammed) in the light of the current events of his own day.” (*Survey of OT Introduction*, rev. ed., p. 23). See his Appendices #2 & #3 for a listing of anachronisms and historical inaccuracies in the Koran and in the Book of Mormon.

<sup>2</sup> A tome like Homer’s *Odyssey* in the *The WRS Journal* 10:2, August 2003

early first millennium was transmitted orally for generations before it was put to paper. Even earlier the dramatic account of Job probably was preserved orally before being written.

<sup>3</sup> Exo 24:4, 7.

<sup>4</sup> Deut 31:9-13.

<sup>5</sup> “...to [the Jews] were committed the oracles of God” (Rom 3:2).

<sup>6</sup> Deut 4:2; cf. the similar warning at the end of the canon of Scriptures in Rev 22:18.

<sup>7</sup> “...those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law” (Deut 29:29b).

<sup>8</sup> A key test of a true prophet is whether his short-term predictions came true (Deut 18:21, 22).

<sup>9</sup> Examples of near and far predictions combined together are the two advents of Jesus seen in Isa 61:1,2 and Zech 9:8-10.

<sup>10</sup> Deut 18:22.

<sup>11</sup> J. Barton Payne’s *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* catalogs 600 topics of prediction in the whole Bible that have already been fulfilled, with another 127 topics foretelling the Lord’s return.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Pet 1:10-12.

<sup>13</sup> Jer 20:9.

<sup>14</sup> Dan 10:21.

<sup>15</sup> Luke 24:27, 32, 45.

<sup>16</sup> 2 Tim 3:16 refers to the OT Scriptures that were “God-breathed” (see the Greek). Consider also the witness of Heb 4:12 to the living Word.

<sup>17</sup> John 10:35.

<sup>18</sup> 2 Pet 1:21.

## INSPIRATION AND TRANSLATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

by John A. Battle

The New Testament provides great assistance to us as we seek to understand the inspiration of the Bible, and how we are to translate it into our own and other languages. This is true because the New Testament itself deals extensively with the Bible—with the Old Testament in particular. Since the two testaments were written in different languages we can examine how the New Testament authors translated the passages they were dealing with, in this case from Hebrew into Greek. We can also observe what they thought about the text they were translating.

### THE INSPIRATION OF THE OT IN THE NT

Uniformly the NT considers the OT as the Holy Scripture, the Word of God. For this reason the NT very frequently quotes parts of the OT to prove or illustrate the point being made.<sup>1</sup> Consistently the NT writer will consider the citation to be proof sufficient—“case closed.”

The formulas used to introduce these citations also demonstrate the high regard the NT writers felt for the OT. When quoting the ancient text, they would introduce the passage with words such as “the Lord says,”<sup>2</sup> “Scripture says,” “The Holy Spirit says,” or simply, “It is written,” or, “It says.” These introductory formulas would only be appropriate in their contexts if the NT writer and his readers assumed the inspiration and consequent truthfulness and authority of the OT.<sup>3</sup>

The classic passage revealing the NT’s attitude toward the OT is 2 Timothy 3:16, “All Scripture is God-breathed and

is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.”<sup>4</sup> The term “all Scripture” refers to the entire OT recognized by the Jews (our present 39 books). Paul asserts two things about the OT: it is “God-breathed” (i.e., inspired), and it is “useful” for all the necessary tasks of Christian instruction. This passage reveals Paul’s high view of the OT Scripture, agreeing with the OT’s own view of itself. In his teaching the OT was literally “breathed out” by God. Just as God “breathed” into Adam to make him a living person, so he “breathed” into the OT as it was being written. Both Adam and the Scriptures are the direct results of God’s creative work.<sup>5</sup>

### THE INSPIRATION OF THE NT ASSERTED IN THE NT

While the NT text is not as long as the OT, the NT still contains many passages and statements showing that it regards itself with the same authority as the OT. The gospel writers define their work as revealing the gospel of Jesus Christ, leading to certain knowledge.<sup>6</sup> All the epistles are written in the authoritative spirit of the apostles and their representatives, and all expect their readers to study, remember, and follow the instructions given.<sup>7</sup> The book of Revelation also contains such references.<sup>8</sup>

In two NT passages the writer identifies another NT passage as equal in authority to the OT. The apostle Peter in 2 Peter 3:15-16 asserts that the writings of Paul are equal in authority with the OT Scriptures:

Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes

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the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

And in 1 Timothy 5:18 the apostle Paul quotes a statement of Jesus found in Luke 10:7 (“The worker deserves his wages”)<sup>9</sup> along with a statement in Deuteronomy 25:4 (“Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain”), and refers to them both together as “the Scripture”:

For the Scripture says, “Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,” and “The worker deserves his wages.”

#### THE TEACHING OF JESUS CHRIST REGARDING SCRIPTURE

As our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ is the head of the church and our authority in all things. What he says about Scripture it is incumbent on all Christians to believe. This is the final and conclusive argument for those who know Christ. Since Jesus lived on earth when only the OT was available, his references to Scripture refer to the OT. However, he also made provision for the NT, which would be given after his ascension.

Jesus Christ loved the Scripture. He was thoroughly familiar with the OT; it saturated his thought and speech, and controlled his actions. The words of Scripture came from his mouth when he endured temptation, and when he was suffering on the cross. In his teaching he assumed the factual historicity of all the narratives in the OT. These include the creation and marriage of Adam and Eve,<sup>10</sup>

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the murder of Abel, Noah and the flood, the destruction of Sodom, the death of Lot’s wife, the existence and faith of Abraham, Moses and the burning bush, the manna in the wilderness, the Ten Commandments given to Moses, the serpent in the wilderness, David’s eating the consecrated bread, the glorious reign of Solomon and the visit by the queen of Sheba, Elijah’s helping the widow and his stopping the rain, Elisha’s cleansing of Naaman, Jonah’s being three days in the great fish, his preaching to the Ninevites, and their repentance.<sup>11</sup>

We note that Jesus never questioned the factuality of these OT events. This fact is more remarkable because many of these events are miraculous in nature. He cited them and gave full credit to them as historical events, on which one could depend for principles of life. As the Son of God, he certainly would have told his disciples if they were wrong in holding to this high view of Scripture; but rather, he encouraged this attitude.

Jesus placed the Scripture as our highest authority for faith and life.<sup>12</sup> The Scriptures were the basis of his theological arguments.<sup>13</sup> He used the very words, or even parts of words, to make his points.<sup>14</sup> He insisted that events in his own life were the fulfillment of OT prophecy,<sup>15</sup> and that other prophecies would be fulfilled in the future.<sup>16</sup>

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During his final supper with his apostles before his crucifixion, the Lord assured them that the Holy Spirit would guide them so that, among other things, they would have the knowledge to produce the NT books.<sup>17</sup> It is that same Spirit who inspired the other NT writers (those not apostles—Mark, Luke, James, Jude), who were prophets.<sup>18</sup> The Lord then led the church to recognize his working in the inspiration of all the NT books.

#### TYPES OF OT TRANSLATION FOUND IN THE NT

The way that the NT quotes the OT is a fascinating study, and much has been written about it. Some critics say that the NT quotes the OT without care or precision. It is true that NT writers do quote the OT with varying degrees of precision, from precise quotes to paraphrases. However, the critics neglect the fact that there is no error involved in this type of quotation, as long as there is no claim to verbatim quotation. Careful study of the OT contexts shows that the NT quotes the OT with great care and profundity, being sensitive to the OT context. Likewise, the translating of the OT portions into Greek is honest and appropriate for the purpose of the NT context.

When the NT was written, the OT Scriptures were available to the early Christians in three main forms.

- Jewish Christians, especially those living in or around Judea, were able to read the original Hebrew. All Jewish boys were expected to attend synagogue school, where the Hebrew language was taught and many scriptural portions were memorized.
- Jewish Christians living in the territory of ancient Israel would have spoken Aramaic as the common language of that region. For them the OT was available also in what is known as the Aramaic Targums; this was a fairly periphrastic or loose translation of the Hebrew text into the common Aramaic.<sup>19</sup> These Aramaic Targums were read in the synagogue services after the Hebrew text was read. Therefore, Jewish Christians who had been brought up regularly attending

the synagogue would be very familiar with that Aramaic translation.

- The third common form of the OT used by the early Christians was the Septuagint (abbreviated LXX). This was a translation of the OT into Greek, made by various Jewish scholars in Alexandria over a period of many decades. It was completed about two hundred years before Christ. For nearly all Gentile Christians, and for many Jewish Christians living outside the national boundaries, the LXX was the version of the OT used almost exclusively.

One difficulty NT scholars have is that the NT writers did not specify which text they were using. In many cases, the Greek NT text quoting the OT is exactly or nearly exactly the same as that of the LXX. When this is the case consistently with a particular NT writer, we can assume that he ordinarily uses the LXX. This quotation of the LXX is apparent in John's Gospel and in the book of Acts (usually quoting speeches of Peter and Paul). The Gospels of Mark and Luke seem to have used a text that is close, but varies somewhat from the LXX. Matthew, on the other hand, seems to have avoided use of the LXX, choosing rather to provide his own translation of the OT text. The apostle Paul seems to have relied on the LXX about half the time, and to have provided his own translation or paraphrase the other times. In this usage he differs from the book of Hebrews and the other General Epistles, which almost always quote the LXX text when they quote the OT.<sup>20</sup>

#### SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE NT'S TRANSLATIONS OF OT PASSAGES

Careful examination of these many quotations of the OT in the NT provides evidence for an overall philosophy of translation held by the NT writers. Several features are clear:

*Authority of the original.*—When a controversy in interpretation occurred, those writers who had access to the original Hebrew based their final arguments on the original language of Scripture.<sup>21</sup> This procedure is that required by our *Westminster Confession of Faith*:

The Old Testament in Hebrew, (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek, (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and, by his singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them. (*WCF* 1:8)

It is because of our belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures in the autographs, that we require ministers to be able to exegete the Old and New Testaments in the original languages. This involves much time and effort in the training of ministers, but it is time and effort well spent.

*Use of the common version.*—The NT writers more than half the time are content to quote the popular OT translation of the day, the Septuagint. This is true, even when the LXX provides a “dynamic” translation of the Hebrew.<sup>22</sup> Most NT writers employed that version rou-

tinely; they did not insist on a “word-for-word” transfer from the Hebrew to the Greek. This practice confirms us in using commonly available versions of the Bible into English, as long as the idea being discussed is not obscured or changed by a faulty translation at that point.

*Application within translation.*—

When Jesus quoted the OT, sometimes he paraphrased the OT text, bringing out more clearly the point he wished to make. For example, Jesus added the important and relevant word “only” when he quoted Deuteronomy 6:13 to Satan at his temptation: “You shall worship the Lord your God and serve him *only*.”<sup>23</sup> While the word *only* was not in the Hebrew, Jesus properly inserted it in his translation and quotation, since the idea was assumed in the OT context, and the current situation called for that emphasis.

In a similar way Jesus also changed a word in the greatest commandment so that it applied more directly to the Pharisees, who were trying to trap him with intellectually tricky questions. In the OT the command reads, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.” But, according to Matthew, when Jesus quoted it to the Pharisees, he substituted the word “mind” for “might”: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your *mind*.”<sup>24</sup> On an earlier occasion Jesus had answered another inquirer in a similar fashion, by adding the phrase “and with all your understanding” to the three in Deuteronomy.<sup>25</sup>

It was this type of interpretive translation that Martin Luther defended when

**The NT writers quoted the OT much like preachers quote the Bible during sermons. It is the idea of the quotation that is important. The quotation may be word-for-word and complete, but often is more dynamic, partial, or even paraphrased. . . . (They) used whatever translation was most convenient and accessible, or which was most appropriate to demonstrate the point being emphasized.**

he inserted the word *only* into his translation of Romans 3:28, “der Mensch gerecht werde ohne des Gesetzes Werke, *allein* durch den Glauben [man is justified not by works of the law, but *only* through faith].” Although criticized harshly by Roman Catholic opponents, Luther defended his translation by stating that the word *only* was necessary to bring out the meaning of the Greek within the genius of the German language. In that case, a word-for-word translation would have obscured the meaning of the text.<sup>26</sup>

*Confidence in serious translations.*—The NT writers quoted the OT

much like preachers quote the Bible during sermons. It is the idea of the quotation that is important. The quotation may be word-for-word and complete, but often is more dynamic, partial, or even paraphrased. In only a few special cases is the actual wording insisted on, when the precise wording affects the point being discussed. And in those cases, reference to the original language is customary. In the balance of cases the NT used whatever translation was most convenient and accessible, or which was most appropriate to demonstrate the point being emphasized. In our days we can copy the NT methodology by using any serious version that is well known to the audience and appropriate for the situation. God in his providence has given us a plethora of translations into most of the languages of the world, which we should not hesitate to use for our own edification and for declaring his message to those about us and to all the nations of the earth. 📖

<sup>1</sup> I counted 318 passages in the NT that quote the OT, according to the index in UBS<sup>4</sup>, pp. 888-890. The index also lists many times that number of verbal parallels and allusions to the OT.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., Heb 3:7, quoting Ps 95:7-11; cf. Heb 4:7, “God spoke through David.”

<sup>3</sup> For these and many other illustrations, see Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, “‘It Says:’ ‘Scripture Says:’ ‘God Says:’” *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 5 (1899): 472-510; reprinted as Chapter 7 of B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (ed. Samuel G. Craig; Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1948).

<sup>4</sup> The ASV of 1901 incorrectly translates this verse “Every inspired Scripture of God is also profitable.” The

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plainest rendering of the Greek is as it is in most other translations (including the KJV, RSV, NASB, LB, NRSV, NIV, and ESV). The Greek phrase in question is πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος καὶ ωφέλιμος (*pasa graphe theopneustos kai ophelimos*).

<sup>5</sup> B. B. Warfield provides a detailed study of the Greek word for “God-breathed,” *theopneustos*, in “God-Inspired Scripture,” *PRR* 11 (1905): 89-130; reprinted as Chapter 6 of *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*.

<sup>6</sup> Matt 1:1; Mark 1:1; Luke 1:1-4; John 20:31; 21:24-25.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the epistles of James, Jude, Peter, John; and especially Paul, as in 1 Cor 2:13; 14:37; 1 Thess 2:13; 5:27; 2 Thess 3:14.

<sup>8</sup> E.g., Rev 1-3; 22:18-19.

<sup>9</sup> Luke was written before 1 Timothy; there is a similar verse in Matt 10:10.

<sup>10</sup> In Matt 19:4-6 Jesus takes two passages from Genesis, which critics identify as coming from different sources (Gen 1:27 from “P,” and Gen 2:24 from “J”), and puts them together with the simple formula “Have you not read?” He takes these passages together as the word of God.

<sup>11</sup> Matt 23:35; 24:38; 11:23; Luke 17:31-32; John 8:56; Mark 12:26; John 6:49; Mark 7:10; John 3:14; Matt 12:3; 6:29; 12:42; Luke 4:25, 27; Matt 12:40, 41; Luke 11:51.

<sup>12</sup> Mark 7:9-13; 22:29; Luke 10:25-28; John 10:35.

<sup>13</sup> E.g., Matt 5:18; Luke 24:25-27, 44; John 10:34-35.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Matt 5:18; 22:31-32; 22:43-45.

In a similar way Paul bases an important point of doctrine on a singular form of a word in the OT: Gal 3:16, “The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say

‘and to seeds,’ meaning many people, but ‘and to your seed,’ meaning one person, who is Christ.” Here Paul notes the singular form of the word *seed* in Gen 12:7; 13:15; and 24:7; and he draws a suitable inference from that form. In this case, he depends on the number of a single noun in the biblical text.

<sup>15</sup> As in Matt. 5:17; 21:1-5; 26:24; Mark 14:49; John 13:18; 17:12; 19:28. Note in Matt 21:1-5 and in John 19:28 that he even consciously adjusted his behavior so as to fulfill the prophecy.

<sup>16</sup> E.g., Matt 21:42; 26:31, 64-65.

<sup>17</sup> John 14:26; 16:13-15.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Acts 15:32; Rom 16:25-26; 1 Cor 12:28; Eph 3:5; 4:11.

<sup>19</sup> The Aramaic language was much better understood than Hebrew by the common Jewish people; cf. Neh. 8:8. Jesus used the common Aramaic, according to various quotations of his found in the Gospels (Mark 5:41; 15:34; John 1:42).

<sup>20</sup> Much detailed work has gone into this subject. See, for example, the listings and analyses of Thomas Hartwell Horne, *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.; Edinburgh, 1839; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1970), 2/1: 281-346, and Henry Barclay Swete, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (rev. by Richard Rusden Ottley; Cambridge University Press, 1902; repr., New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1968), 381-405.

<sup>21</sup> As Paul did in Gal 3:16.

<sup>22</sup> For example, Heb 10:5 quotes the LXX text of Ps 40:6, which paraphrases “a body you prepared for me” for the original “my ears you have opened.” In other cases, it may be that the LXX has actually preserved an earlier form of the

Hebrew text, now absent from most Hebrew MSS (as Acts 15:17 quoting Amos 9:12).

<sup>23</sup> Matt 4:10. The Hebrew text of Deut 6:13 does not contain the word “only,” nor is the word in the text of the LXX at that point. The parallel passage in Luke 4:8 contains the word “only,” confirming that Jesus actually did use that additional word in his quotation of Deuteronomy.

<sup>24</sup> Matt 22:37, quoting Deut 6:5. On the other hand, the parallel in Mark shows the phrase “and with all your understanding” added to the word “strength,” the more literal quotation (Mark 12:30), thus making the quotation have four phrases instead of the original three.

<sup>25</sup> Luke 10:27.

<sup>26</sup> Martin Luther, “An Open Letter on Translating,” (available many places on the web; e.g., <http://www.bible-researcher.com/luther01.html>). His arguing with his Catholic critics is entertaining as well as insightful: “I also know that in Rom. 3, the word *solum* is not present in either Greek or Latin text—the papists did not have to teach me that—it is fact! The letters *s-o-l-a* are not there. And these knotheds stare at them like cows at a new gate, while at the same time they do not recognize that it conveys the sense of the text—if the translation is to be clear and accurate, it belongs there.”

*WRS ministerial students spend a minimum of 464 hours of class time, studying just the Hebrew and Greek languages! And much more time out of class!*

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# *APPLICATION & PERSPECTIVE*

## A SHORT HISTORY OF OUR ENGLISH BIBLE

By Rev. Earl L. Brown Jr., S.T.M.

### EARLY CHURCH HISTORY AND THE ENGLISH BIBLE

Before the end of the second century A.D. the gospel was brought to London, England. There might have been early translations of portions of the Greek New Testament into English. None are extant.<sup>1</sup> It remained for missionaries from Rome in the fifth century to bring Jerome's Latin Vulgate to England.<sup>2</sup> The need was great for an English translation of the Bible.<sup>3</sup>

### MEDIEVAL CHURCH HISTORY AND THE ENGLISH BIBLE

An intelligible liturgy that both priest and laity could understand gave an impetus for the paraphrasing of Scripture into the English language. Foremost of the portions of the Bible paraphrased became the Psalms, sometimes with meter.<sup>4</sup> **Caedmon**, (a seventh century monk) made a metrical version of some portions of Scripture. **Bede** translated the Gospels into English. It is alleged that he finished translating the Gospel of John on his deathbed in A.D. 735. **Alfred the Great** (reigned 871-899) translated the Psalms and the Ten Commandments.<sup>5</sup> Some inter-linear translations remain from the tenth century.<sup>6</sup> **The Lindisfarne Gospels** are cited as the most famous of this period (ca. 950).<sup>7</sup> **Aelfric** (ca. 955-1020) made idiomatic translations of Scripture portions. Two of these exist until today.

Almost three hundred years later, **William of Shoreham** and **Richard Rolle** each translated the Psalter. **Rolle's** work included a verse-by-verse commentary. Both Psalters were popular at the time of **John Wycliffe** (ca. 1329-1384).<sup>8</sup>

**John Wycliffe** (ca. 1329-1384), the "Morning Star of the Reformation," was the first with his associates to translate the entire Bible from Latin into English. He was the most recognized scholar and theologian at Oxford University of his day. Wycliffe's beliefs warranted that the only safeguard against the Church's abusive authority was to make the Bible available in the language of the people. The whole New Testament was completed in 1380 and the Old Testament in 1382.<sup>9</sup>

### MODERN CHURCH HISTORY AND THE ENGLISH BIBLE

In 1415, the Council of Constance condemned John Huss to burn at the stake, condemned the writings of Wycliffe, and ordered his bones to be dug out of the ground and for them to be burned. His ashes were to be cast in the river. The influence of the Wycliffe Bible was great.<sup>10</sup> It was still only an English translation of Jerome's Latin Vulgate. Almost fifty years after the "Constitutions of Oxford" (1408), which condemned the writings of Wycliffe, Gutenberg printed the Latin Bible in 1456. The complete Hebrew Old Testament was printed at Soncino, Italy in 1488. Erasmus had the

Greek New Testament printed in Basel in 1516.<sup>11</sup>

FROM TYNDALE TO THE KING JAMES  
VERSION

The first English translation of the Greek New Testament was completed and printed by **William Tyndale** (1494-1536) in 1526. He saw great value in revising his New Testament in 1534. Though very busy in theological dispute, Tyndale had translated the Pentateuch and several other Old Testament portions in 1530.<sup>12</sup> **Myles Coverdale** (1488-1569) completed the Old Testament which Tyndale had begun in 1535. For the first time the Old Testament Apocrypha was separated from the canonical books. Other revisions of the English Bible emerged. **John Rogers**, who took the pen name Matthew, in actuality had completed Tyndale's translation with some improvements of his own. Rogers was burned at the stake in 1555.<sup>13</sup> **The Great Bible** was printed in 1539. It was called great because of its size. The Lutheran order of the books of the New Testament was discontinued with this version. A lesser known work was that of **Richard Taverner**, another revision of Matthew's Bible in 1539.<sup>14</sup> All of these translations were produced during the reign of King Henry VIII (1509-1547).<sup>15</sup>

The first English version to be brought to America was the **Geneva Bible**. It was first published in 1560. **William Wittingham** (ca.1524-1579) translated the New Testament from Beza's Latin text consulting the Greek New Testament. This translation contained annotations which reflected a pronounced Calvinist slant.<sup>16</sup> As a strong reaction by the bishops in the Church of England, the **Bishop's Bible** was produced in 1568. This was primarily a revision of the Great

Bible. The low church Separatists championed the Geneva Bible. Conversely, the high church Anglicans promoted the Bishop's Bible.<sup>17</sup>

The first English Roman Catholic Bible was translated by **William Allen** and **Gregory Martin**. It was called the **Douay-Rheims Bible**. The New Testament was completed at Rheims in 1582. Martin died in 1584. The Bible was completed by William Allen and **Richard Bristow** at Douay in 1609-1610. The Rheims-Douay or the Douay-Rheims was a very stilted translation of the Latin Vulgate into English. This translation became the standard for Roman Catholics into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>18</sup>

**What the Authorized Version lacked in manuscript availability, it compensated for with the magnitude of scholarship of its day. To its credit, the King James Version was the clearest, most fluent translation, having poetic rhythm and dignity based on the watershed of some seven previous translations of Scripture.**

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THE AUTHORIZED OR KING JAMES VERSION  
OF 1611

James I came to the throne of England in 1603 after Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603), having reigned in Scotland for some thirty-six years, since the age of one. In the calling of the Hampton Court Conference in 1604 he sought a discussion of the various parties within the Church of England. He sought a resolution of the vying factions with a new Bible translation that would be a compromise among the contending translations of the three rival traditions.<sup>19</sup>

From the outset, the **King James Version** was staunchly opposed by **Richard Bancroft**, a bishop in London. It was **Dr. John Rainolds** (1549-1607), the president of Corpus Christi College in Oxford, who originally proposed the idea. The King James Version was a monumental scholastic effort of its day. Some 54 men, many the leading classical and oriental scholars of the day, set out to revise the Bishop's Bible, adopting less objectionable renderings of the Geneva Bible influenced by the Latin vocabulary of the Vulgate and the Rheims-Douay.<sup>20</sup>

Quite surprisingly, the compromise Bible of its day, the King James Version, has become venerated by fundamentalists of today. It was the first translation to incorporate marginal notes which reflected alternative renderings of Hebrew and Greek into English. Although somewhat authorized by King James I, in the strictest sense it wasn't. Even James had a number of complaints against this version of the Bible.<sup>21</sup> However, James I was not popular among the British people. His monumental accomplishment for his reign was the production of the "new" Bible.<sup>22</sup>

Three panels translated the Old Testament headed by **Lancelot Andrewes**. One panel, probably headed by **John Bois**, translated the Apocrypha. Two panels headed by **Thomas Ravis** translated the New Testament. Of the five currently available primary uncial manuscripts, only Codex Beza was extant at the time, but there is no evidence it was utilized. Of the 5,358 known New Testament manuscripts, only 25 were known in their day. Papyri discoveries were still three hundred years in the future. Of the now 800 Hebrew manuscripts of the OT now known, only two were utilized. These were the Complutensian Polyglot (1517) and the Antwerp Polyglot (1572). What the Authorized Version lacked in manuscript availability, it compensated for with the magnitude of scholarship of its day. To its credit the King James Version was the clearest, most fluent translation, having poetic rhythm and dignity based on the watershed of some seven previous translations of Scripture.<sup>23</sup>

SOME REVISIONS OF THE AUTHORIZED  
VERSION

There were a number of unofficial revisions of the 1611 KJV. The current printed edition of most of the common KJV texts is that of **Benjamin Blaney** in 1769.<sup>24</sup> Language does change. Reflecting such change was the noble attempt of **Charles Thompson** in 1808 to revise the AV or KJV. Even **Noah Webster** (1758-1843) produced his revision in 1833, finding the usage of some 150 words in the KJV misleadingly obsolete in his day.<sup>25</sup>

TWO TRADITIONS EMERGE IN REVISION OF  
THE KJV

As new discoveries of ancient manuscripts became available to scholars, it became painfully obvious that there was

a need to revise of the KJV.<sup>26</sup> Only a few revisions utilized the same Greek textual base as the KJV. These were the **King James II** (1971) and the **New King James Version** (1982). The first was produced by **Jay Green** and his Associated Publishers and Authors. This revision was essentially a one-man Bible, despite his working in concert with a number of scholars who remained anonymous when their suggestions were ignored by the editor.<sup>27</sup> The second was prepared by 130 evangelical scholars, who produced the New King James Version. The Old Testament text used was Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (1977). The New Testament text used was the Revised Textus Receptus (1881). Though infinitely superior to King James II, the New King James Version suffers from placing new wine of updated vocabulary in the old wine pouches of Elizabethan phraseology.<sup>28</sup>

Most revisions of the KJV follow a more eclectic approach to utilizing one or more families of Greek texts. In this short history of English Bible translation, we shall skip a multitude of private translations of the New Testament, or even the Bible, to concentrate on the more familiar versions of the Bible.<sup>29</sup>

In 1870 **Dr. Samuel Wilburforce** proposed the AV be revised. Some 65 scholars were involved. Two committees were formed with some Americans serving in order to produce one translation that would serve both sides of the Atlantic. The New Testament of the **English Revised Version** was produced in 1881, and in 1885, the whole Bible.<sup>30</sup> The purpose of the ERV was flawed. The translators were to limit vocabulary changes to that of Tudor and Jacobean authors. The method of the ERV was uneven. The Hebrew text

used was the Massoretic Text. The New Testament text utilized was that of B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort. When issued, the ERV contained a list of words revised by the Americans but not adopted by the English in an edition for circulation in America.<sup>31</sup>

**Although the NIV has  
been the Bible of many  
evangelicals, time may  
prove the ESV of 2001 to  
become the KJV of our  
day, and, perhaps, the  
NIV or NASB the  
Geneva Bible of our day.**

#### SUBSEQUENT BRITISH ENGLISH VERSIONS

In May of 1946 there was a proposal that a new translation undertaken be in British English. The **New English Bible**, New Testament, underwent three revisions from 1961-1970. The entire Bible was produced in 1970. This New English Bible reflected the views of largely liberal scholars who followed the theory of Dynamic Equivalence in translation. The New English Bible was revised in 1989 and called the **Revised English Bible**.<sup>32</sup>

#### SUBSEQUENT AMERICAN ENGLISH VERSIONS

The **American Standard Version** of 1901 was the result of the work of ten American scholars including **Philip Schaff** and **William Henry Green** improving on their suggestions to the British ERV committees. It used the same text base as its British counterpart. In contrast to the ERV, none of the Apocrypha was

translated. Unfortunately, it suffered from similar archaic language and stilted style of the ERV.<sup>33</sup> Some have joked that the ERV and ASV brought the vocabulary up to 1650.<sup>34</sup>

#### LIBERALIZING REVISIONS OF THE ASV

In 1928 the copyright of the ASV was acquired by the International Council of Religious Education. This council was under the auspices of the **Federal Council of Churches**, which eventually became the **National Council of Churches** in 1950. The most prominent of the 32 scholars of what would become the **Revised Standard Version** were **Luther A. Weigle**, **Edgar Goodspeed**, and **James Moffatt**. The two latter men are known particularly for their own private translations of the Scripture.<sup>35</sup> In 1946 the New Testament of the RSV was released. Ensuing was the release of the Old Testament in 1952, and the Apocrypha in 1957. On the whole the RSV was an excellent modern English translation. It was unfortunate that the liberal bias against Messianic prediction rendered this translation unfavorable, distasteful and unworthy of trust by many conservatives.<sup>36</sup> In 1971 the whole New Testament was revised using a later Greek textual base.<sup>37</sup> Thirty scholars from the National Council of Churches revised both the RSV Old and New Testaments. The text basis for the **New Revised Standard Version** of 1989 was that of Old Testament, *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, and New Testament, the third edition of the Greek New Testament of the United Bible Societies (1975). Chief editor of this undertaking was **Bruce M. Metzger** of Princeton Theological Seminary.<sup>38</sup>

#### CONSERVATIVE REVISION OF THE ASV

**The Lockman Foundation**, working closely with some 58 anonymous scholars, produced in 1971 the **New American Standard Bible**. There were two revisions of this translation. The first was in 1977. A second occurred in 1995. This translation tries to render the same Hebrew or Greek word into English with consistency. The first edition uncritically adopted the RSV rendering of Psalm 16:10. It corrected the liberal interpretation in its subsequent editions.<sup>39</sup>

#### RECENT TRANSLATIONS NOTED

About 110 Evangelical scholars worked on the **New International Version**. The New Testament was completed in 1973 and the Old Testament in 1978. A British version called the **New International Bible** was completed in 1983 with gender inclusive language. An American revision was finished in 1984.<sup>40</sup> The NIV is a translation, according to Kenneth Barker, as being somewhere between Formal Equivalent and Dynamic Equivalent.<sup>41</sup> Some scholars have held well that the NIV has the potential of becoming the Bible that most evangelicals will use in the future.<sup>42</sup>

In 2002 a gender inclusive New Testament was released called **Today's New International Version**. The TNIV is a conservative attempt at gender neutral translation. It offers one-third the amount of such translation as the NRSV does.<sup>43</sup>

The twentieth century saw two major Roman Catholic translations. The **New American Bible** was completed in 1970 and revised in 1986. The texts utilized were *Biblia Hebraica* for the Old Testament, and the 25<sup>th</sup> edition of the Nestle-Aland Greek text. This was the

product of 59 Roman Catholic scholars. The annotations make concessions to higher critical theories of the origin of Scripture.<sup>44</sup> **The Jerusalem Bible** (1966) was the first Roman Catholic Bible to be completely translated from the original languages of Scripture. It was revised and called the **New Jerusalem Bible** in 1989. Originally it was the product of **Alexander Jones** of Corpus Christi College and 27 contributors. The extensively annotative notes reflect a warm acceptance of liberal Protestant views regarding authorship of many of the books of Scripture. In the Old Testament, this translation resorts to some unwarranted textual emendation.<sup>45</sup>

Though called a version, the **Today's English Version**, or **Good News Bible** is properly a modern speech translation and not a version. The New Testament was translated in 1966. The complete Bible appeared in 1976. **Dr. Robert Bratcher** of the American Bible Society was its editor in chief. The Old Testament text used was *Biblia Hebraica* 1937. The 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the United Bible Society's Greek text was used in the 1976 revision. Although intended for use with readers for whom English is a second language, the liberal bias shown at places negates the dynamic equivalence incorporated. **The Bible in Basic English** (1949) does a much better job, as does **Olaf Norlie's Simplified New Testament** (1961).<sup>46</sup> Comments made in this light can equally in manner of degree be mentioned of the **Contemporary English Version** (1991, 1994), and the **New Century Version** (1991). Both are designed for children, but are examples of over-simplification in economy of speech and overuse of dynamic equivalence.<sup>47</sup>

**This translation (the Holmon Christian Standard Bible) was conceived in the wake of Southern Baptist outcry against the attempt to come up with gender neutral translations like the NRSV, the ESV of 2001, and the TNIV.**

Another misnomer is the one-man work of **Kenneth Taylor**, the **Living Bible** (1966, 1971). Taylor conceived the work, paraphrasing the ASV of 1901 for his children. More than 40 million copies have been sold. The deficiencies of the work led to its revision by its publishers. At least 93 translators were involved with the **New Living Translation** (1996), which is basically a scholarly rework of Taylor's along the lines of evangelical dynamic equivalency. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* was used for the Old Testament; the New Testament employed the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the UBS Greek text (1993).<sup>48</sup> The translators were dissatisfied with the result and are working on a thoroughgoing retranslation which should appear in a few years.

In stark contrast, **Eugene Petersen's, The Message** (2002) tries to do what Taylor did in the late 1960s—bridging the century gap. His purpose is to provide an "impact translation." It is at places over-translation for sake of impact. This was

much like the **New Testament of J. B. Phillips** (1958). He revised it in 1973 and with revision deleted the time-bound colorful language which made the original so popular.<sup>49</sup> Perhaps Peterson will repeat the venture as J. B. Phillips did.

#### REACTION TO GENDER-NEUTRALITY IN TRANSLATION

The year A.D. 2000 saw, among many things, another translation worthy of discussion. The **Holmon Christian Standard Bible** New Testament was released. The whole Bible will not be released for at least another few years. The goal of this translation is to “be as accurate as the NASB and as readable as the NIV.”<sup>50</sup> The translation theory adopted, called “optimal equivalence,” is in essence the combination of the best of Formal and Dynamic Equivalence. Some 90 scholars are participating. The text of this translation is that of the UBS 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the Greek text. This translation was conceived in the wake of Southern Baptist outcry against the attempt to come up with gender neutral translations like the NRSV, the ESV of 2001, and the TNIV.<sup>51</sup>

#### AN ECUMENICAL VERSION ACCEPTED BY CONSERVATIVES

As this short history comes to a close, it appears that we shall come full circle on KJV revision. The **English Standard Version** of 2001 bridges many gaps for many reasons. It bridges the gap between British and American English. A team of 100 conservative, evangelical translators sought to revise the text of the 1972 revision of the RSV. In reality, it is a conservative purification of many of the readings of the NRSV.<sup>52</sup> It is interesting that, regarding the issue of gender neutrality, it contains more gender neutral renderings than the TNIV, but fewer than the NRSV.<sup>53</sup>

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The ESV of 2001 retains the generic “he” in many places where the NRSV has dropped it. To summarize the goal of the ESV of 2001, “In each case the objective has been transparency to the original text, allowing the reader to understand the original on its own terms rather than on the terms of our present-day culture.”<sup>54</sup> Although the NIV has been the Bible of many evangelicals, time may prove the ESV of 2001 to become the KJV of our day, and, perhaps, the NIV or NASB the Geneva Bible of our day.<sup>55</sup> 📖

<sup>1</sup>Philip W. Comfort, *Essential Guide to Bible Versions* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 2000), 134. Paul D. Wegner, *The Journey from Texts to Translations: The Origin and Development of The Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, corrected printing, 2000), 274. Ira Maurice Price, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible* (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed., 1934), 225.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.; David Ewert, *From Ancient Tablets to Modern Translations: A General Introduction to The Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 183.

<sup>3</sup> Price, 225, notes for us that the language we now know as English was not then the majority language. There were many languages on the British Isles.

<sup>4</sup> G. W. H. Lampe, ed., *The West from the Fathers to the Reformation* (vol. 2 of *The Cambridge History of The Bible*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975, repr. 1980), 365-387.

<sup>5</sup> Comfort, 134; Wegner, 274-277; Price, 226-228.

<sup>6</sup> Wegner, 277.

<sup>7</sup> Comfort, 135.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. Note also Price, 230-231.

<sup>9</sup> Comfort, 135-136; Wegner, 281-283;

Price, 232-239; Lampe, 2:387-415; W. F. Moulton, *The History of The English Bible* (London: Charles H. Kelly, new and revised edition, c. 1900), 17-32; Frederic Fiivie Bruce, *The English Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 1961), 12-23; Ewert, p. 184; and Bruce Manning Metzger, *The Bible in Translation: Ancient and English Versions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 57; on doubt that Wycliffe had direct part in the translation.

<sup>10</sup> Wegner, 284; Ewert, 184; Metzger, *The Bible in Translation*, 57-58.

<sup>11</sup> Wegner, 284; Bruce, *The English Bible*, 24-25.

<sup>12</sup> Bruce, *The English Bible*, 28-52; Comfort, 138-140; Ewert, 186-189; Jack P. Lewis, *The English Bible from KJV to NIV* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 20-22; Metzger, *The Bible In Translation*, 58-60; Moulton, 43-94; Price, 240-251; Wegner, 284-292; S. L. Greenslade, ed., *The West from the Reformation to the Present Day* (vol. 3 of *The Cambridge History of The Bible*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975, repr.1980), 141-147.

<sup>13</sup> Bruce, *The English Bible*, 53-66. Coverdale's version had the distinction of being the first printed Bible in England. Comfort, 140; Ewert, 190-191; Greenslade, 147-153; Metzger, *The Bible in Translation*, 60-61.

<sup>14</sup> Bruce, *The English Bible*, 67-80; Comfort, 140-141; Ewert, 189-191; Greenslade, 147-155; Metzger, *The Bible in Translation*, 60-63; Moulton, 95-136; Price, 252-259; Wegner, 292-296.

<sup>15</sup> Comfort, 140-141; Wegner, 304. Henry VIII vacillated between permission for Coverdale's version in 1537 to the authorization of the Great Bible for public use in 1538, and then reversing

himself by 1543, the English Parliament passing a law restricting the use of any English translation.

<sup>16</sup> See Charles C. Ryrie, "Calvinistic Influences in the Geneva and Bishop's Bibles," *BSac* 122:485 (January-March, 1965): 23-30. Ryrie's conclusion was that only predestination and election were "toned down" in the Bishop's Bible.

<sup>17</sup> Bruce, *The Bible In English*, 92, makes the statement that the Bible of Shakespeare was the Geneva Bible. While this is true, the Bible of the liturgy would be the Bishops' Bible which was utilized in the Common Book of Prayer. For an extensive treatment of the Geneva Bible see: Bruce M. Metzger, "The Geneva Bible of 1560," *Theology Today* 17 (1960):339-352.

<sup>18</sup> Wegner, 304-305; Metzger, *The Bible in Translation*, 67-69; Moulton, 181-189. See notes 44 and 45 for modern Roman Catholic versions.

<sup>19</sup> The three rival traditions were the High Church Protestants, the Low Church Separatist Protestants, and the Roman Catholics. Lewis, 28, notes in addition that the last printing of Tyndale's New Testament was 1566, the Coverdale Bible, 1553, and the Great Bible, 1569. Also there was not uniformity even about the Geneva Bible concerning various texts, Lewis, 26.

<sup>20</sup> Ewert, 198-203. For two works on the biographies of the men who worked on the KJV, see Alexander McClure, *The Translators Revived: Biographical Notes of the KJV Bible Translators* (Worthington, Pennsylvania: Marantha Publications, reprint); and Gustavus S. Paine, *The Men Behind the King James Version* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977).

<sup>21</sup> Ewert, 203. Lewis, 29-34, extensively uses sources of criticism of the KJV from its own time period. This sounds a lot like KJV criticism of modern translations! Wegner, 313. For recent constructive criticism, see Comfort, 147-160; Lewis, 35-68.

<sup>22</sup> Wegner, 309.

<sup>23</sup> Lewis, 41-42, also cited in Wegner, 311, for the textual deficiencies of the KJV. Praise of the KJV prose can be found in Comfort, 146. Ewert, 203-204.

<sup>24</sup> Wegner, 314. Bruce, *The English Bible*, 127-134, notes for us some private translations after the KJV to the time of the ERV. Ewert, 204-205; Wegner, 314.

<sup>25</sup> Greenslade, 361-371; Metzger, *The Bible In Translation*, 81-92.

<sup>26</sup> Ewert, 204. Comfort, 149-151.

<sup>27</sup> Comfort, 151-154; Wegner, 327-329. For a short synopsis of the KJV debate, see Wegner, 337-340. Extensive discussions from the eclectic Greek text position include D. A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate; A Plea for Realism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979); James R. White, *The King James Only Controversy: Can You Trust the Modern Translations?* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany House, 1995); Roy E. Beacham and Kevin T. Bauder, *One Bible Only? Examining Exclusive Claims for the King James Bible* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001).

<sup>28</sup> Wegner, 329-331.

<sup>29</sup> Ewert, 250-251, for a pretty exhaustive list of translations 1900-1982. For an extensive list of translations and paraphrases 1950-1996, see Wegner, 394-395. For evaluations of translations from 1900-1950, see Wegner, 341-355. For evaluations of translations 1950-1996, see Wegner, 357-397.

<sup>30</sup> Moulton, 212-242; Bruce, *The*

*English Bible*, 135-152; Comfort, 161-162; Ewert, 206-209; Metzger, *The Bible in Translation*, 99-102; Price, 278-289.

<sup>31</sup> Wegner, 315-318.

<sup>32</sup> Wegner, 365-370; 383-386. For an early analysis of the NEB see Oswald Thompson Allis, *The New English Bible: The New Testament of 1961. A Comparative Study* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1963).

<sup>33</sup> Lewis, 69-105; Wegner, 318-320.

<sup>34</sup> This was the analysis of Thomas Vernon Taylor at Biblical Theological Seminary in 1977. See Metzger, *The Bible In Translation*, 103-104.

<sup>35</sup> Primary documentation on the RSV: Luther A. Weigle, *An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament* (1946); Luther A.

Weigle, *An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the Old Testament* (1952). Secondary material on the RSV is voluminous; see Comfort, 165-170; Ewert, 226-230; Lewis, 107-128; Metzger, *The Bible in Translation*, 117-122; Wegner, 320-324 (also note his evaluations of both the Moffatt and Goodspeed translations); Wegner, 345-348, 349-351. For an early criticism of the RSV see Oswald Thompson Allis, *Revision or New Translation? Revised Version or Revised Bible?* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1948); published with Oswald Thompson Allis, *Revised Version or Revised Bible?* (1953). The first computer generated concordance was undertaken for the RSV (1957). *A New Testament Octapla* and *A Genesis Octapla* were issued by Thomas Nelson publishers, containing eight translations from Tyndale to the RSV. Millar Burrows, *Diligently Compared: The R.S.V. and K.J.V.* (New York: Thomas Nelson &

Sons, 1964), attempts to be an apologist for Old Testament improvements of the RSV over the KJV.

<sup>36</sup> Comfort, 168-170; Ewert, 229-231; Lewis, 111-128.

<sup>37</sup> Wegner, 332.

<sup>38</sup> Wegner, 331-335. Note his analysis in contrast with Metzger, *The Bible in Translation*, 155-162.

<sup>39</sup> Ewert, 239-240; Lewis, 165-197; Wegner, 324-327.

<sup>40</sup> Wegner, 379-382; Metzger, *The Bible in Translation*, 138-141; 171-174 on the New International Reader's Version of 1996.

<sup>41</sup> Kenneth Barker has repeatedly stated this in explaining the difference between the NASB, the NIV, and the New Living Translation.

<sup>42</sup> Wegner, 383, citing Dr. Robert Bratcher, *In the Word of God*, 152.

<sup>43</sup> I have read that there are 3,300 instances of gender-neutral translation in the NRSV. See Vern S. Poythress and Wayne Grudem, *The Gender Neutral Controversy* (Nashville: Broadman and Holmon Publishers, 2000), 277. At present only the New Testament exists for the TNIV. I have read that there are approximately 500 instances of gender neutral translation in the TNIV. If this is correct and the rate of translation is a constant, then I would guess that this fraction will be correct when the whole Bible is produced. Unfortunately I do not have access to a computer program which would tabulate the exact figures for the TNIV or the ESV of 2001.

<sup>44</sup> Comfort, 188-189; Ewert, 238-239; Lewis, 215-228; Wegner, 352-354. The conclusion is mine based upon a healthy perusal of the 1970 Saint Joseph Edition. See the forward to the NAB in *The Complete Parallel Bible: NRSV,*

*REB, NAB, and New Jerusalem Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), xxxiv-xxxvi.

<sup>45</sup> Wegner, 375-379; conclusion mine. See *The Complete Parallel Bible*, xli, for the update on the Jerusalem Bible. No attempt has been made to discuss English translations by Jewish translators; the interested reader may find helpful material in Wegner, 348-49, 359-361.

<sup>46</sup> Wegner, 375-379. Analysis is mine based on a comparison of this translation and the aforementioned translation.

<sup>47</sup> Comfort, 194-196. Analysis is mine again based on a comparison of these translations.

<sup>48</sup> Wegner, 389-396.

<sup>49</sup> Wegner, 386-389. Analysis is mine based on a comparison of these phrases. The complete *Message* was not in existence when Wegner completed his text.

<sup>50</sup> *Holmon Christian Standard New Testament* (Nashville, Tennessee: Holmon, 2000), page 2 of the preface.

<sup>51</sup> *Holmon Christian Standard Bible: Clearly the Word* (advertisement literature; Holmon, 2000).

<sup>52</sup> *The Holy Bible; English Standard Version* (advertisement literature; Crossway Books, 2001).

<sup>53</sup> This analysis is based upon random comparisons between the translations.

<sup>54</sup> *The Holy Bible; English Standard Version* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2001), p. viii.

<sup>55</sup> This is my analysis based upon the premise that liberals will not accept a conservative translation. Liberals and ecumenicals can accept a liberal translation reworked by conservative scholars.

**BIBLE TRANSLATIONS: IMPACT ON  
MODERN LANGUAGES**  
by Christopher Lensch

INTRODUCTION

The Bible is more than a book of religious wisdom. It is the Book of light and life. Troubled souls and confident saints turn to the Bible for enlightenment from God. The Psalmist confessed, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."<sup>1</sup>

The influence of the Bible and Christianity has spread, in general terms, one person at a time. That is the master plan of Christ's Great Commission, to spread into all the world and to "make disciples" one by one. National conversions by fiat, such as Emperor Constantine's or that of Russia's Prince Vladimir, did not bring the heart of Christianity, but introduced only the shell of Christendom. The mere ethics and trappings of Christianity brought a form of godliness but could not bring the power to live in a godly fashion.<sup>2</sup>

This is not to deny the positive impact of Christianity upon western culture. Along with the outward forms of Christianity in the West there still came biblical principles, because even where nominal Christianity spread, the Bible was regarded as God's book. To name a few, the Bible has influenced the traditional western beliefs of cosmology (God separate from His creation), anthropology (dignity of humanity juxtaposed by the fallen nature of humanity), and justice (universal and balanced). These beliefs, of course, have shaped western institutions and traditions.

LANGUAGE: THE VEHICLE OF THOUGHT,  
COMMUNICATION, AND ACTION

There is one subtle area of Bible influence that is not common knowledge. Translations of the Bible into native tongues have helped shape, not only the thoughts and thought patterns of societies that have identified with nominal Christianity, but even the very languages themselves.

Biblical images and phrases reflect the values and thought of a Christian-oriented people; understandably, peoples of Asian or Arabic countries will not share these values or ways of thinking. Post-moderns still utter biblical maxims like "do unto others as you would have them do unto you," or "let him who is without sin cast the first stone." Politicians wanting to appeal to the religious sensibilities of their constituency borrow Bible pictures like a "shining city set on a hill," "crucify mankind on a cross of gold," or "a house divided against itself cannot stand."<sup>3</sup>

In America's case, the widespread use of the Bible and its systematic, weekly pulpit exposition over this country's first four centuries ingrained a "shared cultural memory and language."<sup>4</sup> This truth is

**In America's case, the widespread use of the Bible and its systematic, weekly pulpit exposition over this country's first four centuries ingrained a "shared cultural memory and language."**

patently clear in view of the preponderance of idealistic religious immigrants to America in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, followed by their spread to the American frontier in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The vast majority of early universities in the new world and new territories were established by Christians to promote biblical knowledge.

PIONEER BIBLE TRANSLATIONS: VEHICLES TO STANDARDIZE LANGUAGE

To come to the crux of this article, the first national translations of the Bible after the Latin Vulgate had a major impact on the shape of modern language. While there may be examples from other nationalities, two sample languages will be given: English and German.

*An English Bible*

When John Wycliffe was born in Yorkshire, England, in the 1300s, the nobility still spoke Norman French, the learned spoke Latin, and the common people spoke various regional Anglo-Saxon dialects. In 1362 English became the official language of the courts, but Middle English did not conquer all of England until two of its unofficial ambassadors made it popular in the hinterlands. Geoffrey Chaucer wrote enduring poetry that the common man could understand, and John Wycliffe produced the first full Bible in English. Wycliffe wanted his countrymen to know the Christ of the Scriptures. He believed that "Forasmuch as the Bible contains Christ, that is all that is necessary for salvation, it is necessary for all men, nor for priests alone," and,

Christ and His Apostles taught the people in the language best known to them.... Therefore, the doctrine

should not only be in Latin but in the vulgar tongue and, as the faith of the church is contained in the Scriptures, the more these are known in a truer sense, the better. The laity ought to understand the faith and, as doctrines of our faith are in the Scriptures, believers should have the Scriptures in a language which they fully understand.<sup>5</sup>

Wycliffe translated the whole Bible from the Latin Vulgate into English. To this Oxford scholar, however, it was more than an academic exercise. He armed lay preachers with copied portions of the Scripture and sent them into the villages and countryside to preach the Word of life. Because Wycliffe was controversial, the upper classes also read his sermons and his Bible. It was at this point that the "midland English" of London, Oxford, and Wycliffe's Yorkshire region began to prevail over the two other main Saxon dialects.

Wycliffe's English translation would also influence later Bible translators. For good reason some have called him the "father of English prose." William Tyndale, the martyr translator of the Reformation, would rely heavily on the phrasings of the "Morningstar of the Reformation." The King James Version, 90% of which is based on the work of Tyndale, can trace influences back to the simple language of Wycliffe. His translation of John 3:16 is found in the KJV almost verbatim. The KJV follows his use of the word "charity" in the love chapter (1 Cor 13). While this indirect language connection between the KJV and Wycliffe's ground-breaking translation stamps the KJV as from the broadening stream of Middle English, the connection also ar-

gues for Wycliffe's lasting literary influence on the generations of Bible reading public that were weaned on the KJV.<sup>6</sup>

#### *A German Bible*

Tyndale of the 1500s, who would so strongly influence the shape of the Authorized Version of King James, disdained the excessive use of technical or Latin terms in his Bible translating. The Bible was given for God's people, not just the scholars, and Tyndale wanted the plough boys to be able to understand God's Word.

Another key influence on Tyndale besides Wycliffe was Martin Luther. There is speculation that Tyndale was able to visit Luther in Wittenburg in the 1520s. Luther had completed his NT translation into German in late 1521 and was working in committee to produce the OT in the following years. Even if the two reformers did not meet, Luther's German Bible, the first of its kind on the continent, established the paradigm for reformation translations.

Luther's acid test in translating was, "did it sound right?"—not, "did the words and constructions make sense on paper?" The right words and phrasings were chosen to appeal to the ear, for Luther intended to unpack and proclaim God's Word in preaching to the common man.

Only the middle class could afford a Bible, and literate Germans hungrily pur-

chased it as the first mass-produced book; there was no affordable, literary competition. It became the sole, common possession of many homes and, thereby, the possession of the German people as they proudly read and re-read its pages in the midst of the political controversy surrounding Luther. Germans could relate to the language of the Bible because of Luther's keen sensitivities in translating. Luther, a man of the people, used his brilliance and training to frame his translation of Scripture for the people. In the Bible's phrasings and market language they recognized their own phrasings and market language.

Anyone who has translated knows the difficulty of faithfully representing the message of the mother tongue. What Luther made look easy in his work of translation really was an arduous labor. He reveals the difficulty of the task in a comment on his committee's OT translation:

We are now sweating over a German translation of the Prophets. O God, what a hard and difficult task it is to force these writers, quite against their wills, to speak German. They have no desire to give up their native Hebrew in order to imitate our barbaric German. It is as though one were to force a nightingale to imitate a cuckoo, to give up his own glorious melody for a monotonous song he must certainly hate. The translation of Job gives us immense trouble on account of its exalted language, which seems to suffer even more, under our attempts to translate it, than Job did under the consolation of his friends, and seems to prefer to lie among the ashes.<sup>7</sup>

**Luther's greatest legacy  
was his giving God's Word  
to the heart of Europe.**

The translation committee persevered because of the supreme importance of the goal. Under Luther's guidance both testaments were finally made available in the mother tongue to the masses.

So universal was its appeal, and so thoroughly did it embrace the entire range of the German tongue, that it formed a linguistic rallying point for the formation of the modern German language. It helped formally restructure German literature and the German performing arts.<sup>8</sup>

To appreciate this claim one must realize that the German language of that day was made up of several regional dialects, much like Wycliffe's England of 150 years earlier. Luther borrowed colloquialisms from each region, but the essence of his Bible language was a more refined High German of the cultured southlands.<sup>9</sup> Especially the popular use of his German Bible eventually led to universal adoption of High German as the national standard.

#### CONCLUSION

In early May of this year the German public was polled to determine the top ten Germans in their history. Hitler and the Nazis were deliberately excluded from the survey. Initial returns favor the poet Goethe and some of the great music composers. Also ranking high are German tennis stars and contemporary politicians. But in this made-for-TV poll, Luther does not show on the radar screen.

A poll of world historians, however, generally ranks Luther among the top three Europeans in history. Some scholars call him the most influential German who ever lived. That influence spread through his writings, his hymnology, and

through the Christian denomination that bears his name. His greatest legacy, however, was his giving God's Word to the heart of Europe.

More than the vibrant form of the German Bible that shaped a national tongue, the power was in the message of the Word that God used to bless many generations. Families and individuals who came under its power were brought into obedience to Christ, and thus a nation changed and was blessed from heaven.<sup>10</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Ps 119:130.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Tim 3:5.

<sup>3</sup> In order these were key campaign slogans of G. H. W. Bush, W. J. Bryan, and Abe Lincoln.

<sup>4</sup> This phrase is cited by D. G. Hart, *Princeton Theological Review*, 28:30, in his review of *An American Bible: A History of the Good Book in the United States, 1777-1880*.

<sup>5</sup> Cited in "Why Wycliffe Translated the Bible into English," *Christian History* 2:2 (1983): 26.

<sup>6</sup> Well should John Wycliffe have a modern Bible translation society named after him. The following link provides Wycliffe's entire Bible online: <http://wesley.nnu.edu/wycliffe/>.

<sup>7</sup> Cited in Henry Zecher's "The Bible Translation that Rocked the World," found in *Christian History Magazine*, Issue 34, and online at <http://www.christianitytoday.com/holidays/nbw/features/34h035.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> "High German" takes its name from the southern region that rose in elevation toward the Alps.

<sup>10</sup> 2 Cor 10:4; Ps 33:12.

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## BOOKS

***God-Breathed: The Divine Inspiration of the Bible***, by Louis Gaussen. Originally published in French, 1840; English translation *Theopneustia: The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*, translated by David Scott, 1841. Edited by John Robbins and reprinted by The Trinity Foundation, 2001. Pp. 348. \$16.95 (paper). Reviewed by John Robbins.

Francois Samuel Robert Louis Gaussen is little known in the United States, even among those who profess to be Reformed. Born in Geneva, Switzerland, on August 25, 1790, Gaussen's principal ministry was in Geneva, where he died on June 18, 1863.

Two years after completing his studies at the University of Geneva, he was appointed minister at Satigny, near Geneva, in 1816. Under the influence of his predecessor at Satigny, Cellier, and that of the Scotch layman Robert Haldane, Gaussen became an ardent champion of Reformed theology in Switzerland. About this time there was a renewal of interest in Biblical Christianity in French Switzerland, the *Reveil*. This awakening coincided with Haldane's visit to Geneva in 1817, where he began a weekly Bible study on the *Epistle to the Romans* for the theological students at the University. Because of interest in his lectures from both students and professors, Haldane had to move the study from his apartment to larger quarters. On May 7, 1817, the *Vénérable Compagnie des Pasteurs de Geneve*, concerned about the growth of Christianity in their city, issued an order

virtually prohibiting the preaching of certain important Christian doctrines. Gaussen and his predecessor at Satigny, Cellier, protested against this ruling, chiefly by republishing a new French edition of the *Second Helvetic Confession*, to which they added a preface asserting that a church must have a declaration of faith, and that the *Second Helvetic Confession* correctly voiced their personal convictions.

Gaussen continued to pursue his ministerial duties in Satigny, and held religious meetings in his own home, as well as in his mother's home in Geneva, striving to reform the National Church, but not advocating separation from it. At Geneva, which gradually became the center of his activity, Gaussen founded a missionary society that held meetings, first in private houses and later in the church building. In 1828, through the intervention of the *Vénérable Compagnie des Pasteurs de Geneve*, new members were elected to the missionary society's governing board whom Gaussen considered errant in their views, and he withdrew from the society. This conflict with the clergy of Geneva was typical of frequent storms that affected his career. (Christ's conflict with the clergy of Jerusalem was, of course, another and more important instance of the ancient opposition between ecclesiastical authority and truth.) Calvin's catechism had long been used as a basis for the instruction of the young, but in 1827 the *Venerable Compagnie des Pasteurs* substituted another catechism and ordered Gaussen to use it. He tried to do so, but found it unsatisfactory because of its Rationalism. The clergy of Geneva then

lodged a complaint against him for refusing to obey their order, and after a lengthy dispute he was finally censured by the *Venerable Compagnie des Pasteurs* and deprived of his right to take part in its meetings for a period of one year.

With his friends and fellow Christians, Merle d'Aubigne and Galland, Gausson now founded the Evangelical Society to distribute Bibles and tracts, and to interest the public in missionary work among the heathen. Shortly afterward, the Evangelical Society decided to found a school for the dissemination of Christian doctrine, and this resolve was disclosed to the State Councilor of Geneva, as well as to the churches, in circular letters signed by Galland, Merle d'Aubigne, and Gausson. Because of this, Gausson was deposed from the ministry by the Consistory on September 30, 1831, and his two colleagues were suspended from the ministry. For two years Gausson traveled through Italy and England, awakening strong sympathy for his cause in the latter country, and warning all that the Roman Catholic Church was a threat to Christianity. In 1834 he returned to Geneva and accepted the position of Professor of Systematic Theology at the *Oratoire*, the newly established Evangelical theological school.

Gausson was a strict Reformed theologian, and he deviated from Reformed doctrines only with regard to his theory of predestination, for he denied supralapsarianism. During his career, Gausson published books in three major divisions of theology: the deity of Christ, which was denied by the Rationalistic clergy of Switzerland; prophecies; and the divine authority of Holy Scripture. In addition to *Théopneustie* (Geneva, 1840;

first English translation, *Theopneustia: The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*, London, 1841), in which he argued that the entire Old and New Testaments were verbally inspired by God, an argument that was attacked by members of his own theological school, Gausson wrote, in vindication of his position, *Le Canon des Saintes Écritures* (Lausanne, 1860; English translation, *Canon of the Holy Scriptures as Viewed Through Science and Faith*, London, 1862). He was the author of numerous other works, including *Geneva and Jerusalem*, 1844; *Geneva and Rome*, 1844; *Lessons for the Young*, 1860; *Leçons sur Daniel* (3 volumes, uncompleted, 1861; English translation, *The Prophet Daniel Explained*, 1873-74), consisting of several of his lectures on *Daniel*; *Les premiers chapitres de l'Exode*, and *Le prophète Jonas* (the latter two published posthumously). His works enjoyed a wide circulation both in England and in France during the nineteenth century.

Gausson's defense of the full and detailed inspiration of Scripture by God is one of the principal works on this subject by any Christian theologian. He advocates what has come to be called the "organic" view of inspiration, a word that unfortunately conveys little information to the reader's mind. His view, based firmly and completely on Scripture itself, is that God not only controlled which words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs were to be set down as Scripture, but also controlled all human history so that at the exact time chosen, the author of those words would be properly prepared and available to write the words that God dictated to him. The result is an exact statement of God's thoughts in human lan-

guage, language perfectly adequate to express divine thoughts.

Like Calvin before him, Gausson frequently used the words “dictate” and “dictation” to explain the Bible’s view of its own inspiration. For the past two centuries, and especially during the twentieth century, the “dictation view of inspiration” has been ridiculed by those who do not believe the Bible. But the problem with the liberals’ view of dictation is not that it is too strict, but that it is not nearly strict enough. Gordon Clark explained in his book *God’s Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics*:

When God wished to make a revelation (at the time of the exodus or of the captivity) he did not suddenly look around as if caught unprepared, and wonder what man he could use. We cannot suppose that he advertised for a stenographer, and, when Moses and Jeremiah applied for the position, that God dictated his message. The relation between God and a prophet was not like that at all. A boss must take what he can get; he depends on the high school or business college to have taught the applicant shorthand and typing. But if we consider the omnipotence and wisdom of God, a very different picture emerges. God is the Creator. He made Moses. And when God wanted Moses to speak for him, he said, “Who has made man’s mouth?... Have not I, the Lord?”.... To this end he so controlled events that Moses was born at a given date, placed in the water to save him from an early death, found by Pharaoh’s daughter, given the best Egyptian education possible, driven into the wilderness to learn patience, and in every detail so

prepared by heredity and environment that when the time came Moses’ mentality and literary style were instruments precisely fitted to speak God’s words.... Verbal inspiration therefore must be understood in connection with the complete system of Christian doctrine. It may not be detached therefrom, and *a fortiori* it may not be framed in an alien view of God. Verbal inspiration is integral with the doctrines of providence and predestination. When the liberals surreptitiously deny predestination in picturing God as dictating to stenographers, they so misrepresent verbal inspiration that their objections do not apply to the God of the Bible. The trouble is not, as the liberals think, that the boss controls the stenographer too completely; on the contrary, the analogy misses the mark because the boss hardly controls the stenographer at all.

One reason the republication of Gausson’s book is necessary in the twenty-first century is the widespread ignorance of the doctrine of divine inspiration of Scripture even among those who profess to be Christians. As Gordon Clark wrote: “No discussion of inspiration can contribute much of value without taking into account the elementary Scriptural data. These data must be kept in mind. Yet, unfortunately, a number of these details may have faded from our aging memories. More unfortunately, the younger generation—owing to the low standards of many seminaries—may never have learned the Scriptural data.” Of course, it is not only the seminaries that are to blame; the churches are also culpable. Indeed, if there has been any resurgence of interest in and availability of Christian doctrine in the last 50 years, it is largely

through the instrumentality of ordinary Christians, not seminaries and denominations.

In his recommendation of Gausson's book, Charles Spurgeon wrote:

The turning-point of the battle between those who hold "the faith once delivered to the saints" and their opponents lies in the true and real inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. This is the Thermopylae of Christendom.... In this work the author proves himself a master of holy argument. Gausson charms us as he proclaims the Divine veracity of Scripture. His testimony is clear as a bell.

It is such clarity, boldness, and fidelity to the Word of God that God desires in all his people.

*God-Breathed* is composed of seven chapters treating such topics as the definition of inspiration, the Scriptural proof of the inspiration, a detailed examination of objections and evasions, and the proper role of criticism. It is fully indexed and the 19<sup>th</sup> century English text has been updated, with no change of meaning or omissions. 📖

***The Westminster Assembly and Its Work***, by Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield. Volume 6 of *The Works of Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1931; reprinted separately, Cherry Hill, N.J.: Mack Publishing Company, 1972. Pp. 400. Reviewed by Tito S. Lyro.

The Westminster Confession of Faith is the crown jewel of all Reformed con-

fessions. Since its formulation in the 1640s, English-speaking Presbyterians (and many non-English speaking Presbyterians as well) have embraced this magnificent document as an accurate expression of the system of doctrines that they hold dear. Because of such historic subscription, Presbyterians who have abandoned confessional orthodoxy have felt the need to link their unorthodox positions to the Westminster Confession of Faith. One of the ways that unorthodox Presbyterians twist the Confession is by saying that it should be interpreted independently from the historical context in which it was written. In other words, they make the Confession a living document devoid of any historical background. By doing that they make the Confession say almost anything they want. This method of interpretation, however, is somewhat new. A more traditional approach to linking unorthodox beliefs to the Confession was first used by Charles Briggs at the end of the 1800s.

Mr. Briggs thought that if he could show that the Westminster divines did not personally believe in the verbal and plenary inspiration of Scripture and its inerrancy, he would be able to show that, by logical deduction, the Confession itself would not teach such a view, thus proving that his unorthodox position was a confessional one. In order to show that the type of doctrine Mr. Briggs was proposing was neither scriptural nor confessional, Dr. B. B. Warfield wrote a series of articles originally published in *The Princeton Review* and *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* and later (posthumously) collected and published as *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work*<sup>1</sup> by a committee appointed by Dr. Warfield himself in his will.

The book is organized around six chapters. The first chapter provides a bird's eye view of the history behind the Westminster Assembly and its works. Chapter 2, on the other hand, zooms in to the day-to-day operation of the Assembly, emphasizing specially the part the Scottish commissioners played in the discussions on the floor. Dr. Warfield did a superb job describing the events and processes through which the Confession came into existence. As far as the history of the Assembly, Chapters 1 and 2 are second only to Hetherington's *History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines*.<sup>2</sup> A bonus feature in Chapter 2 is Dr. Warfield's discussion of the making of the chapter on the decrees of God. Although he used Chapter 3 of the Confession as a means to explain the process through which every chapter of the Confession went, Dr. Warfield provided one of the most learned discussions on the formulation of the "horrible decree,"<sup>3</sup> as it has been called, found in that particular chapter of the Confession.

Chapters 3 and 4 are the heart of the book. Although all the other chapters are of great value, these two chapters are worth every penny you might spend in purchasing the book. The main reason why these two chapters are so important is that in them Dr. Warfield proves that Mr. Briggs' charge that the divines did not believe in the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Scriptures is completely false. Chapter 3 offers an excellent commentary on the first chapter of the Westminster Confession. Dr. Warfield discusses section by section of that Confession chapter providing background information, tracing original sources, and showing the foundational work done by the Assembly. Besides this magnificent commentary, Dr.

Warfield also compares the chapter on the Holy Scripture to earlier confessions and to the Irish Articles of 1615.<sup>4</sup>

Chapter 4 is arguably the most important chapter in the entire book. It is in this chapter that Dr. Warfield takes Mr. Briggs on. As described above, Mr. Briggs thought that if he could show that Puritans contemporary with the Assembly did not believe in the plenary and verbal inspiration, he then would have proved that the divines held the same belief. The five Puritans that Mr. Briggs decided to use as ultimate proof of his hypothesis were John Ball, William Lyford, Richard Capel, Richard Baxter, and Samuel Rutherford.<sup>5</sup> So, Dr. Warfield masterfully demonstrates that Mr. Briggs completely misquoted these Puritans. The chapter closes with what Dr. Warfield calls "The Real Westminster Doctrine,"<sup>6</sup> where he quotes Dr. Lightfoot extensively in order to show what the divines meant by inspiration.

Chapter 5 consists of an extensive discussion of the actual printing of the Westminster Standards up to the time of Dr. Warfield. In it you will find very interesting information such as the fact that the Confession was first published in Scotland, not in England, as one would expect.<sup>7</sup> Also, you will discover that "the Westminster Confession was slow in finding its way into print in America. This was not because it was distasteful to the American Churches: the Puritanism of the Colonists was doctrinally the same as that of England, and they gave a hearty welcome to this Puritan formulary."<sup>8</sup> The problem was that the colonists, at first, did not have the capability to print and later on they preferred the Savoy Declaration due to their Congregational beliefs.<sup>9</sup> The first

commercial printing of the Confession in America did not take place until 1710 in New London.<sup>10</sup> This is indeed a fascinating chapter because, in discussing the printing of the Confession, Dr. Warfield does a great job of describing the churches' attitude toward, and opinion of, the Confession.

In Chapter 6, Dr. Warfield traces the origin of the first question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism to Calvin's catechism.<sup>11</sup> It is his contention that the divines relied heavily on Calvin's work while also taking into consideration some of the *lesser* catechisms along the way. The information in this chapter is of great use for anyone who is starting a serious study of the Shorter Catechism. The entire book is a "must read" for anyone who wants to understand the background behind the writing of the Westminster Confession of Faith and what the Westminster Assembly believed concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures. 📖

<sup>1</sup> Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work* (Alberta: Still Waters Revival Books, 1991), iii. My research has shown that this book is currently out of print, but it can still be obtained as part of *The Complete works of Benjamin Warfield* (Baker, 1980).

<sup>2</sup> William M. Hetherington, *History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines* (Reprinted. Alberta: Still Waters Revival Books, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> J. Ligon Ducan, III & David W. Hall, "1993 Westminster Assembly Commemoration: A Bibliography," n.p. Online: <http://capo.org/calvin/wesassem.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Warfield, *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work*, 170-189.

<sup>5</sup> There are three others (Vines, Poole, and Wallis), but they are only mentioned as secondary evidence.

<sup>6</sup> Warfield, *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work*, 273.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 337.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 347.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 347-348.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 352.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 382.

***The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible***, by Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield. Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing House, 1948; often reprinted. Pp. 446. Reviewed by William R. Kane.

This volume contains articles published separately for various audiences pertaining to the nature and authority of the Bible. The different chapters require a variety of skills and interests in the reading of them and even more so in authoring them. The author must have historical research skills with a wide knowledge of Classical Greek literature, Hellenistic literature, and the writings of the early church fathers. The author needs expertise in evaluating variant readings of manuscripts (contemporary literature). The author needs exegetical expertise in both Greek and Hebrew. The author needs skills in Latin and German for evaluating other literature that pertains to the subject matter. The author needs logical skills in evaluating the arguments of antagonists. The author needs to have a profound view of the majesty of God, His sovereignty over all, and the humility to receive the truth of God as it is set forth in His word. Because the book is a collection of articles

for varying audiences, readers may be drawn to different sections of the book according to their background and interests.

The first and third chapters on “The Biblical Idea of Revelation” and “The Biblical Idea of Inspiration” are reprints of Warfield’s articles in *ISBE*. Both of these articles are doctrinal in emphasis. The Scripture data relating to the doctrine are collected and harmonized into the Scriptural doctrines. Objections to the doctrines as well as objections to the exegesis of the passages of Scripture used as evidence for the doctrine are handled in a sympathetic way. For example, the different modes of revelation imply different interaction between God and the prophet or man who is the organ of revelation. According to the mode of revelation, the organ of revelation appears entirely passive when the mode is “external manifestation,” somewhat passive and somewhat active when the mode is “internal suggestion,” and very active when the mode is “concurrent operation.” The critic of Biblical Revelation would use this to argue that different revelations are somewhat more or somewhat less the word of God and of more or less authority. While admitting the data, Warfield denies their conclusion because the Scriptures treat the revelations, which are a result of the different modes, all equally as revelation from God, and hence as authoritative. “The plausibility of such reasoning renders it the more necessary that we observe the unvarying emphasis which the Scriptures place on the absolute supernaturalness of revelation in all its modes alike.”

The second chapter on “The Church Doctrine of Inspiration” is likewise doc-

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trinal in emphasis with the difference being that the evidence lies in the writings of the church fathers and the creeds of the church. It is that evidence that answers the question “what is” the church doctrine. A second question is “what is the origin?” or “where did it come from?” Was this a slowly developing doctrine in the history of the church? Has it arisen from disputes within the church? It is seen to be the church doctrine from the beginning, because it was the Scriptural doctrine of inspiration. The church doctrine presupposes the Biblical doctrine, and both the origin and persistence of the doctrine are based on its being the Biblical doctrine.

The fourth chapter on “The Real Problem of Inspiration” has a polemical emphasis. Here we see Warfield the logician. The questions are “Has criticism destroyed the doctrine of verbal inspiration?” and “Is it necessary to reconstruct the doctrine of inspiration and develop a whole new theology?” Warfield presents in logical form the basis of the doctrine, i.e., what needs to be proven in order to prove the doctrine. Objections to the doctrine which do not disprove the logical foundation of the doctrine can in no way disprove the doctrine itself. Warfield writes, “It being a settled logical principle that so long as the proper evidence by which a proposition is established remains unrefuted, all so-called objections brought against it pass out of the category of objections to its truth into the category of difficulties to be adjusted to it.”

The last three chapters consider the nomenclature of the Greek New Testament with respect to the doctrine of inspiration. The student might consider checking the various words in a lexicon. If there is a consensus, perhaps one would

need go no further. The question that is answered in these chapters is, what if the lexicon is wrong or if there be no consensus? The investigation to determine the *usus loquendi* of the words involves the usage of the words with their synonyms in Classic Greek, the choice of Greek words in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, as well as the use of those words by the Hellenists in their literature, especially considering the Jewish meaning of those words as distinguished from the classics. In some ways there is a narrowing or restriction of the meaning and also an extension in applying words to the Scriptures of the Old Testament. In the New Testament writers and the early church fathers, one sees the words used closer to the Hellenistic usage as over against the Classic Greek. It is interesting to read the manuscripts with their variant readings with arguments pro and con for a particular reading. Even though Warfield is distinguished as a great theologian and apologist, we are reminded of his early work in the New Testament and his work, *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*. It is these chapters which lay the groundwork for the doctrinal studies of the earlier chapters.

Finally, the Introduction, written by Cornelius Van Til, is not so much an introduction to the work of Warfield, as a postlude. It was written thirty years after the death of Warfield and deals with theological and philosophical thought of those who followed Warfield. As such the Introduction should be read after the Warfield articles rather than prior to them. Van Til writes, "Since Warfield's day the matter of the philosophical presuppositions that underlie the factual discussion of the data of knowledge has come to stand in the foreground of interest."

Modern-day theologians have not dismissed the doctrine of verbal inspiration; they have dismissed all of Warfield's arguments without ever combating them. They have done this by setting aside an unstated assumption of Warfield. Warfield assumes the old (or Christian or Biblical) view of epistemology. The modern philosophers deny the knowability of the world as it is in reality. We can only know the world as we see it. By this assumption, there can be no such thing as a revelation from God to be received or rejected by man, only an encounter with God. The modern theory denies absolute truth which is separate from the Knower. Truth is made relative to the Knower; hence we have "my truth" rather than "the truth." Van Til discusses the presuppositions of various systems. It is difficult reading unless one has a background in philosophy.

One great deterrent in grasping the Introduction is that the same words are used by the different systems with different meanings. Suppose you play a game of chess. We observe the shape of the different pieces, the names of those pieces, the moves associated with each piece, and the colors that distinguish your pieces from your opponent's. With respect to any piece, there is no confusion with respect to whose piece it is or how it moves. Let us alter the rules of the game somewhat. Both you and your opponent have the same color pieces. Further, the piece that looks like a knight, is called a knight, and moves like a knight in a standard game. But your opponent's piece that looks like a knight is called a bishop and moves like a bishop, and so forth for the other pieces. In your first game your mind is filled with confusion. The semantics attached to what I see for my pieces are different from those

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for my opponent. After considerable experience with this modified game, the mind is accustomed to the different semantics and the confusion is gone except for occasional relapses. In the Introduction, the same terms used with different semantics according to the system em-

ploying them leads to the same confusion. As we become philosophically competent with the variant semantics we become less confused. As we read Van Til's comments, we must always determine the viewpoint of the person quoted or paraphrased before we attach meaning to the words. 

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## ***NOTES***

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