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THE BURNING BUSH

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A PLEA FOR A PERFECT BIBLE

Jeffrey Khoo

The Bible controversy today is hotting up. The controversy ironically involves the simple question of whether the Church today has a perfect Bible. Fundamentalists today cannot agree on this very basic question. The issue concerns the biblical doctrine of verbal plenary preservation.

VPI and VPP

King James Version (KJV) fundamentalists who affirm the *verbal plenary inspiration* (VPI) of the Bible, and believe in a perfect God who has given His Church a perfect Hebrew and Greek Text underlying the King James Bible are being labelled “extreme” and “dangerous” by non-KJV fundamentalists. Since when has believing in a perfectly inerrant Bible in the original languages ever been considered such? Are 21st century fundamentalists recanting their belief in verbal and plenary inspiration that their 20th century forebears fought so hard to define and defend against the modernists? These Neo-fundamentalists are saying: We had a perfect Bible then, but we do not have a perfect Bible now! The danger in fundamentalism today is the failure among fundamentalists to affirm the *verbal plenary preservation* (VPP) of the Scriptures.

Apparent Discrepancies or Scribal Errors?

Anti-VPP fundamentalists would deny that God’s people today have the perfect Word of God. According to them our Bible today contains scribal errors. However, such errors are so insignificant that they do not affect the spiritual truths taught in the Scriptures. This sounds rather neo-evangelical, doesn’t it? Anti-VPP fundamentalists appear to be quite sure that 2 Kings 8:26 (Ahaziah is 22 years old) and 2 Chron 22:2 (Ahaziah is 42 years old), and 2 Sam 8:4 (700 horsemen) and 1 Chron 18:4 (7000 horsemen) are *true contradictions or errors*. Although some might concede that the reformers “are quick to consider many of these

contradictions as merely apparent” (which is my view for “it is not improbable to reconcile the apparent contradiction between 2 Kings 8:26 and 2 Chron 22:2 by explaining that prior to his official reign at the age of 42, he might have co-reigned with his father at the age of 22,” and as for 2 Sam 8:4 and 1 Chron 18:4, it might be explained that one counted them one-by-one, and the other group-by-group, and so both figures could be correct), they prefer not to see them as apparent discrepancies but “scribal errors.” If they are indeed scribal errors, surely there must be manuscripts that reflect the correct reading. Surely God could not have possibly allowed the corruption to be so devastating that not a single manuscript would reflect the autographical reading.

Anti-VPP fundamentalists say they are able to correct the errors found in our present Bible by a collation of various manuscripts. But where are the manuscripts? Why did the Masoretes—the keepers of the purity of the OT Scriptures—refuse to correct these “scribal errors?” Was Jesus wrong when He said that the Hebrew Scriptures the Jews had at the time when He was on earth, which were not the autographs, were word perfect to the jot and tittle (Matt 5:18)? Interestingly, the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* lists no variants. If this is the case (ie, there are no extant manuscripts that reflect the correct reading), then they could be *actual and factual* errors committed by the original inspired writers and not necessarily scribal, could they not? Is this not a serious problem? Would this not lead to a denial of VPI?

Anti-VPP fundamentalists ape the neo-evangelicals when they say that it is of no consequence whether such discrepancies are simply scribal errors or true factual errors since they are so “minor;” they deal with numbers, names, dates, and places, and hence do not affect our salvation since the gospel is not impaired by such “errors.” Is this correct thinking? I submit that if they proceed with this line of thinking and of judging the Bible, crying “error, error, error” here and there, they are no better than the neo-evangelicals who say that our Bible is only inerrant in a limited sense (see “Discrepancies in Scripture,” in *The Battle for the Bible* by Harold Lindsell, 161-184).

The Autographa Not Lost

No one denies that scribal errors were committed during the work of copying Scripture. But the question is: Did God allow any of His inspired words in the autographs to be lost during this transmission process?

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Although the Church does not have the autographs (the very first scripts) today, she has the apographs (copies) which reflect the autographs. Providentially speaking, the autographs were *neither lost nor destroyed*.

Was God careless in preserving His Scripture? Can He even allow “minor” corruptions? 17th century theologian—Francis Turretin—wrote, “It will not do to say that divine providence wished to *keep it free from serious corruptions, but not from minor*. For besides the fact that this is gratuitous, it cannot be held without injury, as if lacking in the necessary things which are required for the full credibility of Scripture itself. Nor can we readily believe that God, who dictated and inspired each and every word to these inspired (*theopneustois*) men, would not take care of their *entire* preservation. If men use the utmost care diligently to preserve their words (especially if they are of any importance, as for example a testament or contract) in order that it may not be corrupted, how much more, must we suppose, would God take care of his word which he intended as a testament and seal of his covenant with us, so that it might not be corrupted.” Turretin does not deny scribal errors in the *copying process* but he says that “even if some manuscripts could be corrupted, *yet all could not*.”

By faith, we believe in God’s promise that He will allow none of His words to be lost. Ps 12:6-7 says, “The *words* of the LORD are pure *words*: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt *keep them*, O LORD, thou shalt *preserve them* from this generation for ever.” Jesus declared in Matt 24:35, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my *words* shall not pass away.” In Matt 5:18. Jesus promised, “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, *one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass* from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

Closest and Purest

There are some other fundamentalists who believe that the purity of the Scriptures has been purely *maintained*, but not finally *attained* in the Traditional Hebrew Masoretic Text and Greek Textus Receptus underlying the KJV. The Dean Burgon Society statement which declares that “the Texts which are the *closest* to the original autographs of the Bible are the Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text for the Old Testament, and the Traditional Greek Text for the New Testament underlying the King James Version.” They take the word “closest” to mean that the

Hebrew and Greek Scriptures that underlie the KJV are *not completely inerrant* since they contain so-called “scribal mistakes.”

It must be clarified that the word “closest” in the Dean Burgon Society statement does not at all mean that we have an errant text or that the text is not the same as the original writings. The Dean Burgon Society statement must be understood in the *context* (ie, the battle against Westcott and Hort) in which the statement was phrased. Westcott and Hort had puffed up their cut-up Greek text as being closest to the original since they based it on the 4th century Alexandrian manuscripts, which Dean Burgon had dismissed as “most corrupt.” The term “closest” seeks to *correct and counteract* Westcott and Hort’s view on the identity of the true text. The term “closest” also distinguishes between the autographa (past and “lost”) and the apographa (present and existing). VPP fundamentalists do not deny that the autographa and apographa *though distinct are the same*. The *paper* may be different, but the *contents* are the same.

The word “closest” should be interpreted to mean “purest.” Dr D A Waite, President of the Dean Burgon Society, likewise understands the statement to mean “that the *words* of the Received *Greek* and Masoretic *Hebrew* texts that underlie the *King James Bible* are the very *words* which God has *preserved* down through the centuries, being the exact *words* of the *originals* themselves.” This declaration is entirely consistent with the fundamental doctrines of VPI and VPP.

Such a high view of Scripture grants believers *maximum certainty* with regard to the authenticity of the inspired words of Scripture. And such certainty can only be had if the doctrine of the special providential preservation of the Scriptures is upheld. Dr E F Hills wrote, “if we believe in the special providential preservation of the Scriptures ... we obtain *maximum certainty*, all the certainty that any mere man can obtain, all the certainty that we need. For we are led by the logic of faith to the *Masoretic Hebrew text, to the New Testament Textus Receptus, and to the King James Version.*”

Does the Lord want His people to be certain about His inspired words? Listen to what the Lord says, “Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, That I might make thee know *the certainty of the words of truth*; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?” (Prov 22:20-21). Be sure of this: God

wants us to have certainty concerning His words, and we can be certain of God's words only if we apply the logic of faith consistently.

Which Textus Receptus?

If there exists a perfect TR, then which of the many editions of the TR is perfect? It must be affirmed that all the editions of the TR being from the pure stream of God's preserved text are *pure*, no doubt about it. But which is the *purest*? It is the TR underlying the KJV. Dr Hills takes the same view concerning the KJV and TR. Hear Dr Hills himself, "The texts of the several editions of the Textus Receptus were God-guided. They were set up under the leading of God's special providence. Hence the differences between them were kept down to a minimum. . . . But what do we do in these few places in which the several editions of the Textus Receptus disagree with one another? Which text do we follow? The answer to this question is easy. We are guided by the common faith. Hence we favor that form of the Textus Receptus upon which more than any other *God, working providentially*, has placed the stamp of His approval, namely, the King James Version, or more precisely, the Greek text underlying the King James Version."

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

Special Providence Not Static But Dynamic

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

I believe God providentially guided the KJV translators to produce the purest TR of all. The earlier editions were individual efforts, but the TR underlying the KJV is a corporate effort of 57 of the most outstanding biblical-theological, and more importantly, Bible-believing scholars of their day. And as the Scripture says, "in a multitude of counsellors there is safety" (Prov 11:14). The KJV translators had all the various editions of the TR to refer to, and they made their decisions with the help of the Holy Spirit. I believe the Lord providentially guided the King James translators to make the right textual decisions. As such, I do not believe we need to improve on the TR underlying the KJV. No one should play textual critic, and be a judge of God's Word today. *God is His own Textual Critic*. I accept God's special providential work in history during the great 16th Century Protestant Reformation.

Why the TR Underlying the KJV?

Now the question remains: Why the TR underlying the KJV and not Luther's German Bible, or the Spanish Reina Valera, or the Polish Biblia Gdanska, or the French Martin Bible, or some other language Bible? Now we do not deny there are faithful and reliable versions that are accurately translated and based on the TR, nor do we discount the need for foreign language Bibles, but here is Dr Hills's reply to the question: "God in His providence has abundantly justified this confidence of the King James translators. The course of history has made English a world-wide language which is now the native tongue of at least 300 million people and the second language of many millions more. For this reason the King James Version is known the world over and is more widely read than any other translation of the holy Scriptures. Not only so, but the King James

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Version has been used by many missionaries as a basis and guide for their own translation work and in this way has extended its influence even to converts who know no English. For more than 350 years therefore the reverent diction of the King James Version has been used by the Holy Spirit to bring the Word of life to millions upon millions of perishing souls. Surely this is a God-guided translation on which God, working providentially, has placed the stamp of His approval.” This is in keeping with Jesus’ words, “Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit ... Wherefore *by their fruits ye shall know them*” (Matt 7:17-20).

I believe the purity of God’s Word has been *faithfully maintained* throughout the whole transmission of the Traditional/Byzantine/Majority/Received Text, and is *fully represented* in the Apographa of the Hebrew Masoretic Text for the Old Testament and the Greek Textus Receptus for the New Testament underlying the KJV. So I agree with David W Cloud, in his paper quoting E F Hills, that “the KJV is accurate in all textual matters, *and if there is a difference between a KJV reading and any certain edition of the Received Text, we follow the KJV*” (ie, the TR underlying the KJV). I also agree with Dr Hills who warned, “We must be very cautious therefore about finding errors in the text of the King James Version, and the same holds true also in the realm of translation. Whenever the renderings of the King James Version are called in question, *it is usually the accuser that finds himself in the wrong.*”

A Virtual Photocopy

As regards the Traditional Hebrew and Greek Scripture underlying the KJV being a “virtual photocopy” of the original, G I Williamson did write to this effect in his commentary on the *Westminster Confession* concerning preservation, “This brings us to the matter of God’s ‘singular care and providence’ by which He has ‘kept pure in all ages’ this original text, so that we now actually possess it in ‘authentic’ form. And let us begin by giving an illustration from modern life to show that an original document may be destroyed, without the text of that document being lost. Suppose you were to write a will. Then suppose you were to have a photographic copy of that will made. If the original were then destroyed, the photographic copy would still preserve the text of that will *exactly the same as the original itself*. The text of the copy would differ in no way whatever from the original, and so it would possess exactly the same ‘truth’ and meaning as the original. Now of course photography was not

invented until long after the original copy ... had been worn out or lost. How then could the original text of the Word of God be preserved? The answer is that God preserved it by His own remarkable care and providence.”

Concerning what the Westminster theologians meant when they declared that the Hebrew OT and the Greek NT “being immediately inspired of God, and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic,” we have another commentary from Prof William F Orr of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary who wrote, “this affirms that the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New which was known to the Westminster divines was immediately inspired by God because it was *identical* with the first text that God had kept pure in all the ages. *The idea that there are mistakes in the Hebrew Masoretic texts or in the Textus Receptus of the New Testament was unknown to the authors of the Confession of Faith.*”

Biblical Basis

So does the Church have a perfect Hebrew and Greek Bible today? Yes, indeed she does. Based on what? Based on God’s promise that He would preserve every one of His words to the jot and tittle (Exod 32:15-19, 34:1-4; Pss 12:6-7, 78:1-8, 105:8; 119:89,111,152,160; Prov 22:20-21; Eccl 3:14; Jer 36:30-32; Matt 4:4, 5:18, 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33; John 10:35; 1 Pet 1:23-25; Rev 22:18-19).

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

Do we know everything that went on in the transmission of the text? No, we do not. But God knows; He knows everything and we believe He knows what He is doing. For instance, we were not there when God

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created the world. We did not see His work with our own eyes. When Science contradicts what the Bible says concerning origins, who are we going to believe? Science or the Bible? We believe the Bible. Heb 11:3 says, “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” Faithfulness to God and His Word demands that a Christian believe in a perfect God who has given His Church a perfect Bible. Biblical epistemology is not “seeing is believing,” but “believing is seeing.”

Canonisation and Preservation

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

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

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

A Perfect Bible Today!

What kind of Bible do fundamentalists have? Do they have a perfect Bible? The VPP fundamentalist would say yes, but the anti-VPP would say no. Make no mistake about it, both claim to believe in VPI, but despite this, anti-VPP fundamentalists say they do not have a perfect Bible. Is this biblical? Is this logical? Is this safe? Anti-VPP fundamentalists say that God's preservation of His Bible is *imperfect*. They say God did not preserve His words, only His doctrines; it is conceptual, not verbal preservation. What? Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, and Matt 24:35 tell us explicitly that God will preserve His "pure words," and every "jot and tittle" of His "words." Did not the Lord convey His doctrines through words? Without the words, where the doctrines?

Dr Hills sounded a pertinent warning, "Conservative scholars ... say that they believe in the special, providential preservation of the New Testament text. Most of them really don't though, because, as soon as they say this, they immediately reduce this special providential preservation to the vanishing point in order to make room for the naturalistic theories of Westcott and Hort. As we have seen, some say that the providential preservation of the New Testament means merely that *the same* "substance of doctrine" is found in all the New Testament documents. Others say that it means that the true reading is always present in *at least one of the thousands of extant New Testament*

WHAT KIND OF BIBLE DO YOU HAVE?

The Perfection of the Bible: Three Views

	NOT PERFECT <i>Not Perfect Then & Now</i>	NOT SO PERFECT <i>Perfect Then Not Now</i>	ALL PERFECT <i>Perfect Then & Now</i>
THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL	Liberalism/Modernism, Neo-orthodoxy	Neo-evangelicalism, Neo-fundamentalism	Biblical & Reformed Fundamentalism
DESCRIPTION OF THE BIBLE	Bible <i>is not or becomes</i> the Word of God	Bible <i>contains</i> the Word of God	Bible <i>is</i> the Word of God
VIEW ON BIBLICAL INSPIRATION	Human or Non-miraculous inspiration	Divine inspiration only in Autographs	Divine inspiration in Autographs & faithful Apographs
VIEW ON BIBLICAL PRESERVATION	Denies preservation of words & doctrines	Denies preservation of words / Affirms preservation of doctrines	Affirms preservation of both words & doctrines to the jot & tittle (VPP; WCF 1.8, Matt 5:18)
AUTHORITY	Science Alone	Science plus Bible	Bible Alone (<i>Sola Scriptura</i>)
EPISTEMOLOGY	Intellect not Faith is supreme (See to believe)	Faith subjected more to the Intellect than to the Bible (See to believe)	Faith and Intellect totally subjected to the Bible (Believe to see)
VIEW OF BIBLICAL INFALLIBILITY & INERRANCY	Denies both infallibility & inerrancy	Denies inerrancy / Affirms infallibility (ie, limited inerrancy)	Affirms both infallibility & inerrancy to the jot and tittle (VPI)
ARE THERE MISTAKES / ERRORS IN THE BIBLE?	Full of mistakes, with all kinds of factual discrepancies & actual contradictions	No mistakes only in spiritual matters but not in science, history, geography where discrepancies are actual or factual errors	No mistakes or errors at all, and any discrepancy is only apparent
CHOICE OF ORIGINAL GREEK TEXT	Westcott-Hort Minority & Critical Text Only	Westcott-Hort Minority & Critical Text is Superior	Textus Receptus (Received Text) Only
POSITION ON BIBLE VERSIONS	Only Liberal, Ecumenical, Roman Catholic, Feminist versions acceptable	All versions acceptable whether corrupt or not	Only KJV acceptable since it is the best (most accurate, faithful & reliable)
CHOICE OF BIBLE VERSIONS	RSV, NRSV, TEV/GNB, TNIV	NIV, NASB, NKJV, ESV	KJV Only
TRANSLATION METHOD	Dynamic Equivalence (Contextualisation)	Dynamic Equivalence (Thought for Thought)	Formal Equivalence (Word for Word)
PROponents	Metzger, Aland, Nida, Martini, Wulgren, UBS, WCC, SBL	Lewis, White, Kutilek, Carson, Wallace, Price, Hudson, IBS, NAE, ETS, BJU, CBTS	Burgon, Hills, Otis Fuller, Waite, Cloud, Paisley, Morris, PCC, TBS, DBS, McIntire, ICCB, BPC, FEBC

manuscripts. And still other scholars say that to them the special, providential preservation of the Scriptures means that the true New Testament text was providentially *discovered in the mid-19th century by Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort* after having been lost for 1,500 years.

“If you adopt one of these false views of the providential preservation of Scriptures, then you are logically on your way toward *the denial of the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures*. For if God has preserved the Scriptures so carelessly, why would he have infallibly inspired them in the first place? It is not sufficient therefore merely to *say* that you believe in the doctrine of the special, providential preservation of holy Scriptures. You must *really* believe this doctrine and allow it to guide your thinking. You must begin with *Christ and the Gospel* and proceed according to the logic of faith. *This will lead you to the Traditional text, the Textus Receptus, and the King James Version*, in other words, to the common faith.”

God forbid that we should ever make this anti-biblical statement: “The Bible contains mistakes and errors but they are so small and so minor they should not cause us any worry.” If the Bible contains error, no matter how small or minor, I worry! “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (Jas 2:10). If a person says he believes in a perfect Bible, and yet denies just one verse, yea even a jot or tittle, he is guilty of denying all of the Bible. Jesus warned, “But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matt 18:6).

I believe in a perfect God who has given us a perfect Bible. “*Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar*” (Rom 3:4)! Since God said it, that settles it, and my duty is simply to *believe it!* This kind of faith ought to be instilled in every Christian. We need to cleave on to the very words of God and never doubt the veracity of His words! No one has all the answers. God has all the answers, and sometimes He allows false prophets (like Westcott and Hort with their Accursed Text), and false doctrines (like limited inerrancy and imperfect preservation) to come into the scene in order to test whether we love Him or not (Deut 13:3, Ps 139:21-22). Would we doubt or question Him, or would we trust and obey His every word no matter what man may say? “Man shall not live

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by bread alone, but by *every word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt 4:4).

Instead of the rationalistic approach that begins with the opinions of man and then work backwards to the truth of God, which confuses it, we ought to take the faith approach. That is why Hills warned that if we do not really apply the logic of faith consistently and allow it to reach its logical conclusion, we would end up ultimately denying the very Word of God itself. It is thus no surprise that anti-VPP fundamentalists are prepared to call what are apparent contradictions in the Bible “errors.” In denying VPP they effectively deny VPI as well. They are not able to say they have a perfect Bible.

Can we afford to believe in a Bible that is less than perfect? If God is incapable of giving us a perfect Bible, what makes us so sure that He is capable of preserving our salvation to the very end? We are thrown into all kinds of doubts. If we doubt our Bible, we might as well doubt our salvation (cf 1 Cor 15:14-19). If we as biblical fundamentalists are unwilling to affirm that we have a perfectly flawless Bible *today*, something is seriously wrong somewhere! *Absolute and unquestioning faith in God’s infallible and inerrant Word is the only solution!* “The law of the LORD is *perfect*, converting the soul” (Ps 19:7).

Affirmation of VPI and VPP

It is absolutely vital for those who love God and His Word to affirm the twin doctrines of VPI and VPP. Here is a summary statement of my faith in a perfectly inspired and preserved Bible today:

- (1) I do affirm the biblical doctrine of providential preservation that the inspired words of the Hebrew OT Scriptures and the Greek NT Scriptures are “kept pure in all ages” as taught in the Westminster Confession.
- (2) I do believe that “the Texts which are closest (ie, purest) to the original autographs of the Bible are the Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text of the Old Testament, and the Traditional Greek Text for the New Testament underlying the King James Version.”
- (3) I believe that the purity of God’s words has been faithfully maintained in the Traditional/Byzantine/Majority/Received Text, and fully represented in the Textus Receptus that underlies the KJV. Providential preservation is not static but dynamic.

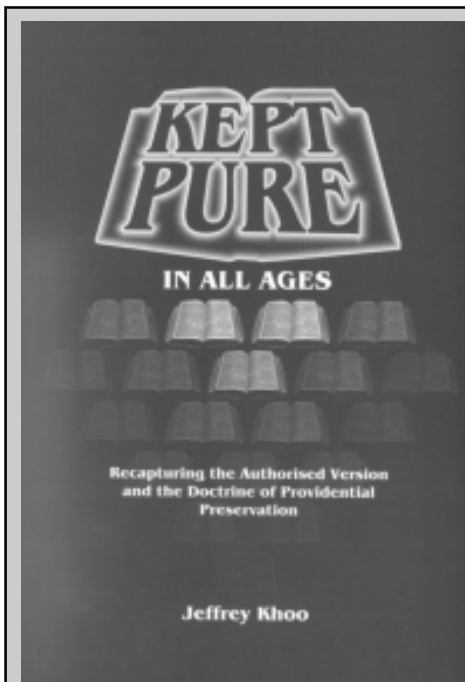
FEBC Faculty and Board Take the Dean Burgon Oath Affirming a Perfect Bible



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

A PLEA FOR A PERFECT BIBLE

- (4) I do believe that God's providential preservation of the Scriptures concerns not just the doctrines but also the very words of Scripture to the last jot and tittle (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33, Rev 22:18-19).
- (5) I do not deny that other faithful Bible translations, including foreign language ones, that are based on other editions of the Textus Receptus can be deemed the Word of God.
- (6) I do believe in the verbal plenary inspiration and total inerrancy of Scripture. I do not believe there are any scribal errors in our present Bible, and any alleged errors are only apparent and not errors at all.
- (7) I do not believe we need to improve on the TR underlying the KJV. I do not want to play textual critic, and be a judge of God's Word. I accept God's special hand in His providential work of perfect Bible preservation during the Reformation.



KEPT PURE IN ALL AGES

by Jeffrey Khoo

There is a battle to be fought today. It is a battle for the Bible. The battle in the last century concerned the doctrine of Bible inspiration. In this new century, the battle concerns the doctrine of Bible preservation. The doctrine of inspiration is meaningless without the doctrine of preservation. The same God who inspired His Word has promised to preserve His Word. The Westminster Confession affirms the twin doctrines of Bible inspiration and Bible preservation: "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.*"

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