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# THE SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

by

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Paul said to Timothy “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

And the Holy Spirit has broken these words to the Lord’s servants all down the centuries and has caused them to understand their nature and meaning. Who will study today, to learn rightly to divide the Word of truth? This writer seeks to do so, and looks to fellowship in this paper with others similarly concerned.

Of necessity textual questions must be considered, and in this field we need the shield of faith as the fiery thrusts of the enemy are encountered, where the battle is hottest, over and about God’s Book.

The Greek word translated “dividing” in the expression “rightly dividing the word of truth” is used only this once in the New Testament. Its basic meaning is “to cut clean” or “to make a straight cut”. But here it is used figuratively and means to dissect or “open up” the Word of truth so as to reveal its nature and to expose its content: to bring out its meaning and the message it contains from God to man. That this is the intended meaning is clear from the use of the word “rightly” with it. It must be opened up to reveal the truth in the right manner in which God intends it to be understood.

The art to be learned and practised by the man of God is the art and process of rightly dividing the Word of truth for the benefit of saint and sinner. It is to break the Word so it will be assimilated and bring refreshment and vision, stamina and maturity, challenge and life to those to whom it will come as the Word of the Lord, accomplishing that which He pleases and prospering in the thing whereto He sends it (see Isa. 55:11).

There are three important things God has done for mankind in relation to His Word. *FIRST* He gave it by verbal inspiration. *SECONDLY* He undertook that it would be always available within the church of God. *THIRDLY* He gave apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers to the church and to the churches to minister the Word to people everywhere.

The headings for discussion are therefore as follows:—

- A. **THE SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH:** its form and structure as God gave it.
- B. **THE PRESERVATION OF THE WORD OF TRUTH.**
- C. **THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD.**
- D. **THE REAL ISSUE:** The Tussle of the Texts.

## **PART A:— THE SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH**

### **THE INSPIRED WRITINGS**

To rightly divide the Word of truth involves understanding and delineating “the form of sound words”. Let us see how it was given, and review the manner of its coming and the form, fibre and structure that must be cut, divided or opened up of God’s men to effect the

mysteries of the work of God.

## THE FORM OR PATTERN OF THE WORDS

In 1 Tim. 1:16 Paul says "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, *for a pattern* of them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting". That is, Paul himself was to be a living pattern or example of heavenly living.

Christ Himself is revealed as the living Word. In life here on the earth He was the Word, the expression or the revealing to man of God and of God's purposes and ways and thoughts. "The Word was God" (John 1:1).

Now the Greek word translated "pattern" in 1 Tim. 1:16 is used only on one other occasion in Scripture and it is there translated "the *form*". This is in 2 Tim. 1:10 which reads "Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus".

This is the text or outward form of the Scripture of truth or of sound words. It is to be "held fast", because these sound words were inspired of God. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The "writings" are ordinary words and letters, but the form of those particular words is so wonderfully sound and perfect, placed together as they are in "all Scripture" that they are living and powerful. The form of that soundness or truth when rightly divided is the Word of God which "is quick and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

The form or text of Scripture sets and binds matter so potent that it also distinguishes between men, for men everywhere reveal themselves whether they are truly the Lord's or not, in how they handle the Word of truth. The Lord Jesus said this: "He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God" (John 8:47). Many of the scholars who have worked on the text of Scripture and on the various translations have revealed the truth of this saying of the Lord. Their translations, paraphrases and writings testify that they "are not of God", for they do not rightly divide the Word of truth. That is, though handling "God's Words", they "hear them not".

## WHICH ARE THE INSPIRED WRITINGS?

"All Scripture is *given*" by inspiration of God". That which is "given" is the inspired "all Scripture".

Through the work of the Holy Spirit in the church, the church has been able to clearly and finally distinguish the truly inspired

writings of Scripture which "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21) and to set them apart from all other writings in the world.

Thus we have the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, and for centuries now spiritual people have had no trouble in distinguishing the inspired books of Scripture from all others.

### **INSPIRATION OF ORIGINAL WRITINGS ONLY**

It is however only the sound words which came through the inspired writers in their original languages which are the inspired and therefore perfect and complete Word of truth. The holy men of God through whom the Word came were "moved of the Holy Ghost" to so speak those words. They are the true words of "all Scripture" which "is inspired of God".

God's Word thus verifies that the original writings were inspired but subsequent copies and translations to other languages need to be viewed differently for there is no Scripture which warrants that any such copies or translations as such are "inspired of God".

### **MINISTRY OF THE WORD**

Those who have taken the Word of God and given oral or written ministry on it and from it, have often been wonderfully empowered and helped by the Holy Spirit, but it is never claimed for any such that their words are in every part perfect and verbally inspired of God. There is always a difference between the Lord and any servant of His in the church and similarly between the true divine text and the words given in ministry from it.

### **THE MAKING OF COPIES**

As we shall see, God has always had His way of preserving the true text for the church, although the original autographs in the actual handwriting of the inspired writers or of their amanuenses are no longer available. While this is true, it cannot be claimed for any particular copier that his copy was inspired and therefore a perfect copy. The thousands of copyists made mistakes in copying, and they were clearly not inspired, for so many of the copies are demonstrably not true copies.

### **TRANSLATIONS**

Some translations encase the Word of God in a very full measure in the vernacular languages. Here God works in a wonderful way through the working of His Spirit among His servants to provide something very precious to the people of God. It is a form of ministry and as such is a gift of God to the church. But still there is always a difference in that the original was inspired, and the translation is of another and necessarily lesser order. Some translations have very honoured positions in this category and as will be shown later, this

is particularly the case with the English Authorised Version. But it must be remembered always that the A.V. and its compeers are translations and as such are part of the work of the ministry of the Word by translators, and are not the original breathings of God, which were in other languages.

### THE PERFECTION OF SCRIPTURE

“Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him. Add thou not unto His words lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Prov. 30:5-6).

It cannot be altered, nor have parts added or deleted. “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God . . . ” (Deut. 3:2). See also the solemn warnings in the last few verses of the last book of the Bible (Rev. 22:18-19) given to those who should add or take away from the words of Scripture. And “the Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). In its coming it is “that which is perfect” (1 Cor. 13:10) and it is to be “held fast” by the church unto whose care it has been entrusted. The church is to “*HOLD FAST* the form of sound words” (2 Tim. 1:13) and it is to be seen “*HOLDING FORTH* the word of life” (Phil. 2:16). God’s Word is “settled in heaven” and “thy faithfulness unto all generations” (Psa. 119:89-90). “Thou has magnified thy word above all thy name” (Psa. 138:2).

### PART B:— THE PRESERVATION OF THE WORD OF TRUTH

While the Scripture as originally written was inspired of God and is perfect in word and letter, jot and tittle, can we say that it is true it may be known today, so that we may be sure in all points as to what that original text was?

This writer does believe so, for four principal reasons:—

1. God’s declared purpose and intention in giving it would be thwarted if this is not so.
2. The Holy Spirit’s and Christ’s commitment to the church require it.
3. The living church of God being charged to hold fast and hold forth the Word has indeed done so notwithstanding all the inroads of the enemy.

#### 1. GOD’S PURPOSE

God’s purpose was to give “that which is perfect” to man, and “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God . . . that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:17). *IT IS NECESSARY* that God should preserve His Word intact for each generation if this Scripture is to have relevance throughout the age. And God does not make implicit promises of this order that He does not honour and fulfil. “Thy faithfulness is unto all generations” (Psa. 119:90).

## **2. CHRIST'S COMMITMENT**

The Lord Jesus made a special announcement to His own loved ones that He would send the Holy Spirit to be with them in a new way, for clearly stated purposes. He said that it was necessary that He Himself should "go away", so that He could "send Him unto you" (John 16:7).

One of the determined purposes of the sending of "the Comforter" was that "when He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into *ALL TRUTH*" (v. 13).

He was saying that further truth would be given to the church by "the Spirit of truth" and that the Spirit of truth would guide the church into "all truth".

What Christ called in advance "all truth" is what Paul called "the Word of truth" in writing to Timothy (2 Tim. 2:15) and what he called elsewhere "all Scripture" (2 Tim. 3:16). Daniel saw it in prophetic prospect and called it "the Scripture of truth" (Dan. 10:2) and we now see it is "that which is perfect" (1 Cor. 13:10). "All truth" is "the Word of truth" and it can mean nothing else.

The Lord's announcement given in John 16:13 is clearly that when He was departed, and the Holy Spirit was sent, His own, (who immediately became His church) would have the "all truth" of the "Word of truth". Has the Lord not done this? Of course He has. And every generation of the church has had in its hands "all truth" in the form of the Holy Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments.

## **3. THE HOME OF THE WORD OF GOD**

In the same way that the Old Testament Scriptures called by Paul "the oracles of God" (Rom. 3:2) were originally committed to the Jews, so with the New Testament, the committal has been to the churches (Rev. 22:16).

Christ "loved the church and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). The next verse then records a further wonderful truth about "the Word". The record says that He so gave Himself for the church "that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word". Many mysteries are contained in this verse, but for present consideration behold the importance of the Word to Christ and His Church! It is for the sanctifying and cleansing of Christ's church. The church has thus ever been the repository of the Word of God. It has also lived and been kept alive in the hearts and souls of the myriads of the church militant, all down the ages.

In Old Testament times the ark of the covenant, the tabernacle and the temple (where the Lord placed His Name) were the places of deposit and safe keeping of the oracles of God. In Josiah's day when the people had in large measure departed from the God of Israel, the priests found the Book of the Law, where it ought to be, "in the house of the Lord" (2 Kings 22:8).

The house of God today "is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). Not a Bible school:



not a seminary: neither is it the Vatican nor a convent or monastery. God's house where the Word belongs is the temple of God, "which temple ye are" (1 Cor. 3:17). "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16).

Thus it was, that from the time "that which is perfect" was revealed and manifested, its keeping was with the churches. First it was with the Greek-speaking churches — which were in the regions where it was first given. None of the original writings have survived, but the churches everywhere cherished copies which have been copied again and again and handed down from generation to generation. Each successive generation of God's people has had available many copies of the Scriptures.

Even through the dark ages there have always been bodies of simple churches in which the true Scriptures have been revered and treasured and held fast and sure\*.

The true Word of God has always been loved and held by people who lived it out in their lives. The written words were also continually absorbed into the hearts and lives and memories of the Christians of each generation of the church. The original writings were copied with meticulous care, and compared diligently with their source copies and with other copies. Many copies were made and the constant writing and re-writing provided its own check of copy with copy. Divergencies were early found and corrected, especially where the Word of God was in the hearts and memories of many of the Lord's people.

Further, a wealth of letters of the early Christian fathers has been preserved and these writings so abound in quotations from the early copies of the Scriptures that it is possible to establish proof of what the originals contained in thousands of passages from this source.

It is not claimed that the memories of men are infallible as such. But the general acceptance by the Lord's people of the agreement of many copies, discarding the minority which show divergences, seems clearly the Spirit's way of bringing an assurance to the church as to what the preserved Scriptures are.

## TRANSLATIONS

In the same way the general process of establishing the true record is partly achieved by translations made into other languages, and these or subsequent copies compared with the existing texts later. An instance of this is in the use made of the Greek "Septuagint" version in relation to the O.T. Scriptures and of such translations as the Armenian and Syriac and Latin versions of the N.T. Scriptures.

It is not claimed that any such translation is inspired, any more than copies are inspired. But the spiritual understanding and help received from the Holy Spirit's guidance which was surely involved in the making of the many translations, is a divine providence which

\* See "The Pilgrim Church" by E. H. Broadbent for an account of such churches.

has resulted in something extremely close to inerrancy. The English A.V. is the most wonderful example of this.

Where such translations have general acceptance with the spiritual peoples of the vernacular languages, they can surely be seen and known to be the Word of God for all practical purposes to the peoples of those languages.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE A.V.**

In what form then is the preserved true Word of God found today?

### **(a) Old Testament**

The English A.V. is a wholly acceptable translation of the O.T. which is based on the Masoretic text preserved and handed down by the Jews to whom "were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. 3:2). To this must be added the Septuagint Greek translation of the O.T. This must be regarded as it is used in quotations of some O.T. passages in the N.T.

The church's spiritual discernment is required to recognise the true text and it seems to the writer that except for one or two very minor items it has already done so. The church's acceptance of the A.V. version of the O.T. does involve a general recognition that it is derived from the true O.T. text.

### **(b) New Testament**

There is no printed Greek text which can in all points claim acceptance with the people of God. The A.V. differs from the printed Greek texts in some few respects. It was drawn rather from the whole body of existing Greek manuscripts, in all points requiring elucidation and discernment. That is, the A.V. represents a discerning by the translators of what they considered to be the true text preserved from a majority of the thousands of existing texts of the Byzantine stream of texts, supported with reference to quotations from earlier texts in the writings of the early Christian fathers.

As the canon of Scripture was only settled by the church after much spiritual exercise, so the English A.V. was the result and product of up to 200 years of spiritual exercise by English servants of God and it was completed with the extensive help of God's servants who had laboured for a similar period in Europe in the wider work of evaluating the Greek manuscripts. Of course the invention of printing gave impetus to the whole spiritual exercise as then it was possible to multiply copies and to distribute widely to God's people.

In the same way that the canon of Scripture was accepted by the early church, so also was the A.V. accepted by the English section of the church. It has been the Bible used more than any other in the whole history of the church world-wide. It is the Bible used for the greatest period of church activity on earth. That the A.V. has been so fully accepted by such a preponderance of spiritual people for so long and with such world-wide effect under the hand of God,



convinces this writer that those words and lines so taken and used by the A.V. translators from the majority Byzantine traditional texts do indeed represent the true preserved text of the N.T.

If in any possible expression the A.V. could be in doubt by the church, then the reference must be again, not to Elvior's, Beza's, Stephanus' or Erasmus' or any other of the printed Greek texts, called Textus Receptus or otherwise, but to the whole volume of evidence of the majority manuscripts with the help of the writings of the early fathers. God's Word is surely there, and is not lost but it has been preserved within the active keeping and living of God's people. But it is always the church's responsibility to recognise and act upon God's Word, to cherish and hold it fast. It is spiritually discerned, and will not ever be the product of modern computerised systems.

### **THE AUTHORISED VERSION AS A WHOLE**

The A.V. so satisfyingly translates the true texts of both the O.T. and N.T. into English, that it is only extremely minor questions that could be raised about it textually. It is indeed the Word of God which in the original languages from which it was translated, was given by inspiration of God. "It is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). It is also surely "the holy scriptures", "which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (v 18).

### **PART C:— THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD**

In considering the text of Scripture it must always be remembered that the form of sound words is intended to be rightly divided and ministered to the church and to men generally. It has a potency which God's servants must release and with the Spirit's help use to God's glory. There is a sense in which the letter is dead but the word is life and power.

God not only gave the Word itself but He gave evangelists, pastors and teachers to expound and explain it. All the work of God's servants of the Reformation period in relation to textual matters and translations has been of this order, and the wide range of God-given abilities and the understanding of His servants helps to explain the acceptance given to the A.V.

But the further point to be stated under this head in relation to the texts of Scripture, is that God still has godly and spiritual servants who understand the original languages and who can still contribute further to elucidate meanings from the Greek and Hebrew which are sometimes unavoidably hidden in the English translation. No language can be exactly reproduced in another language because words and expressions often do not relate precisely. Often the nearest respective expressions have meanings slightly diverse. Further, lang-

languages live and change as their peoples do. The vernacular languages all change in some forms of expression and in meanings of words and phrases. Servants of God learn also how to relate such changes in ministering the Word of God.

Even without a first-hand knowledge of Greek or Hebrew many of the Lord's servants have learned how to use the helps of lexicons and concordances and interlinear texts so that they are able to learn shades of meaning and of truth which the original texts hold bound and which do not appear from the frame of the words used in the English or other translation. This does not mean that the translation is deficient as such, but that something further can often be obtained by reference to the root meaning of the word or expression in the original. This is work for those equipped by God Himself to so serve their fellows.

Ephesians 4:11-16 is a passage which shows God's purpose in giving teachers as well as other gifts to the church "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ".

Such servants of the Lord will continue to take and break the Word of God to their fellows until the whole body of Christ is translated to meet the Lord in the air.

All God's people need help of one another. The work of translating Scripture to vernacular languages and of understanding all the shades of meaning from the original texts and of teaching these things to others is a work that only some of God's people are equipped for. But in the churches all may listen to God's Word and the Spirit of God will minister it and break it to God's people through those whom He endows with grace and gifts suitable for the purpose.

In relation to the text of Scripture and in holding fast, and holding forth the Word of life, the Holy Spirit has seen to it that the "all truth" has ever been available to the church and also that it has had the teachers and instructors and helps it has needed to bridge language barriers and to help God's people to obtain the wealth and comfort and joy, as well as the challenge and directives it contains.

## **PART D:— THE REAL ISSUE**

### **THE TUSSLE OF THE TEXTS**

The question being raised about the preservation of the original text is not the real issue today.

The real issue is the challenge of those who claim that a few N.T. texts lost to view and use for many centuries and found of recent times, should override the Byzantine texts, and so require new English versions. All but one of the new versions of our times are based on this premise.

The real issue of the day concerns the claims made for these lost and found texts. The reasons and grounds for rejecting such claims are overwhelming and complete.

### **ALL TRUTH and NOT ALL TRUTH**

The true Word of God referred to above is "all truth" as has been shown. What then of the modern versions which claim to be the Scriptures but which are different in form and which teach differently?

The thing that needs to be stated clearly and plainly and which cannot be over-emphasised, is that all the untruthful versions come from texts other than the traditional texts which were used by the faithful church continually up to the Reformation and to the time of the invention of printing.

### **THE TUSSELE OF THE TEXTS**

The texts which form the authority behind the A.V. number over 4,000 and they wonderfully agree to support the readings from which the A.V. is drawn.

The only challenge comes from a very few texts and in the main, from just two texts known today as Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus. These texts came to the attention of students when found about the mid-nineteenth century. They were found, one in the Vatican library and the other in the Russian Greek Orthodox Church monastery at Mount Sinai.

Both manuscripts had been lost and were not in use for over 1,000 years. Scholars agree that they appear to be the only two copies remaining of a group of fifty copies which were made under the direction of Eusebius of Caesarea about or shortly after the year A.D. 331. Eusebius in turn was instructed to do this by the Emperor Constantine after he decided to popularise christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire. He of course effected the marriage of heathenism with christianity which eventually produced the system known today as Roman Catholicism which Scripture calls "the great whore" (Rev. 17:1) and "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth" (v. 5).

Eusebius was that kind of churchman suited to Constantine's purpose. He was imbued with the teachings of Origen and also of Arius, and the differences between the N.T. copies he produced and those of the traditional Byzantine texts, in the main reveal his leaning towards and sympathy with those erroneous teachings.

Further both Vaticanus and Sinaiticus have been changed and altered in a great many places since they were first written and the alterations show the bias towards error of those who then held the copies and made the changes. Both also contain the spurious and rejected writings known as the Apocrypha.

The history of these manuscripts is that they came from a questionable source at a time of retrogression in the spiritual conditions of the times. They were originally written and held and changed by

“modernists” of the period. They were in bad hands until they became lost for want of constant use. And they were lost for 1,000 years or more, until found to the joy of modern “modernists” who have made much use of them. They find that in a great deal of detail they are useful to support the teachings which produce and further ecumenism and which are at the root of what is known as “the New Evangelism” or “Neo-Evangelism” or what is otherwise called “modernism”. It is error. It is not the Word of truth.

In his writings on the texts J. W. Burgon compares the stream of texts from which the A.V. springs, with those found more recently. He says “I am utterly disinclined to believe, so grossly improbable does it seem that at the end of 1,800 years, 995 copies out of every thousand, suppose, will prove untrustworthy, and that the one, two, three, four or five which remain, whose contents were till yesterday as good as unknown, will be found to have retained the secret of what the Holy Spirit originally inspired”.

Burgon continues, “I am utterly unable to believe, in short, that God’s promise has so utterly failed, that at the end of 1,800 years, much of the text of the Gospel had in point of fact to be picked by a German critic out of a wastepaper basket in the convent of St. Catherine; and that the entire text had to be remodelled after the pattern set out by a couple of copies which had remained in neglect during fifteen centuries, and had bequeathed their witness to copies made from them . . . Happily, Western Christendom has been content to employ one and the same text for upwards of three hundred years.”

If, as is alleged, important parts of the truth of God were hidden for centuries in the Vatican and at Mount Sinai, then millions of God’s people, all over the longest period of church history, have been deprived and deluded in believing that they held the true Word of God, and God has been made a liar.

## **WESTCOTT AND HORT**

The two men mainly responsible for providing a modern New Testament for modernists were two Greek scholars Dr B. F. Westcott and Dr F. J. A. Hort, who produced a new Greek text incorporating a great deal of material from Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. The doctrinal views of these men are at least as much suspect as those of Eusebius, Origen and Arius. Accordingly the original purpose of the false texts is now perpetuated in the English and other translations which are based on the Greek texts of Westcott and Hort or on the Nestle’s Greek text which further implements this policy.

The first main English versions of Scripture so based were the “Revised Version” of 1881 and the “American Standard Versions” that followed.

These in turn have been followed by a shoal of versions all similarly based, some more radical and further from the truth of God than were the R.V. and the A.S.V.



## **THE EXCLUSIVE BRETHREN VERSIONS**

Among those who were accepted among the recognised Greek scholars of the last century were the Exclusive Brethren J. N. Darby, W. Kelly and Dr Tregelles. These men belonged to the same scholastic training grounds with Westcott and Hort and Dr Tichendorf (the German critic and discoverer of Codex Sinaiticus). They were all contemporaries of one another, shared a consuming interest in Greek scholarship and were all naturally interested in the finding of the old Eusebian texts and in studying them.

Dr Tregelles was really on the outside of true "Brethrenism". He never had any part with so-called "Open Brethren Assemblies", and he became estranged from Darby by taking the part of Newton in the great division which separated the Exclusive Brethren from the Open Brethren Assemblies and from the main line of the work of God which the early Brethren movement produced. Dr Tregelles went to Rome and spent a considerable time poring over Codex Vaticanus. He continued as Newton's friend and that association involved him in Newton's doctrines and in an unhealthy friendliness with the Church of Rome and all it represents spiritually. He became a fadist for the Vatican text and identified with the general stance and views of Westcott and Hort on textual matters.

## **DARBY AND KELLY**

This writer has a useful set of the writings of Darby and Kelly, Mackintosh, Grant and other Exclusive brethren, and he finds them helpful in many ways. It is true that they had godly light in many areas of truth, particularly in dispensational truth. But they are not Pauls who can be followed in all matters. They also made serious mistakes. It is on their responsibility that the Exclusive denominations with all their absurdities have been foisted on to Christendom.

It is certain that Darby and Kelly have a particular responsibility for adopting and using the Vatican and Sinai texts and so causing their followers generally to accept them also. They should have been able to see the evil and the error in those texts. But it is consistent that men who should have been able to see the evil in denominationalism and yet lead into it, made a similar error in not discerning the true text of Scripture. The Name and Word of the Lord are involved in these questions. His Name is involved in the church issue; His Word, of course, in the textual one.

## **THE "OPEN BRETHREN" MAGAZINES**

As has been shown in the writer's booklets "The Doctrine of Prophecy" and "The House of God", not only are the Exclusive meetings a group of denominations, but the "Open Brethren" as presented by the monthly magazines "The Witness" in England, "Interest" in America and "The Treasury" in New Zealand is clearly a late-age addition to the denominational lists. These papers make no bones about it that they represent the Open Brethren denomination



in their respective spheres. It was not so originally, but it is so now. Only a few brave little meetings here and there look to the Lord only as their Head, and do not accede tutelage and control to magazine and other hierarchical headquarters, "regional oversights", Bible schools, Stewards Trusts and other Open Brethren denominational institutions.

As such, the Open Brethren are also freely accepting the whole range of modern versions of Scripture. In New Zealand one of "The Assembly" Bible schools stumps for the N.I.V. (New International Version), and "The Treasury" advertises and sells through its bookshop connections many of the modern versions. In effect it gives the official line for that denomination that any of many versions will do, and of course the precision and perfection of the truth of God is lost in the process. It is now "old hat" to have a reading from the A.V. The requirement for "ear tickling" calls for ever more outlandish renderings, and the people generally do not understand that a great deal of this is from false texts and that it is not properly related to the true inspired Word of God.

A recently published article in "The Treasury" was very revealing. The writer of this article speaks therein of "our own godly brethren J. V. Darby and S. P. Tregelles", forgetting that they would have repudiated such a connection as would be involved in the charge of being "ours" by the Open Brethren denomination. They were never connected with the Open Meetings, and both did all in their power to persuade brethren from fellowshiping with such. Also, as has been shown above, Darby and Tregelles belonged to different Exclusive camps, and would not have expected to be put together at all.

But the force of the article was to support Darby and Tregelles in their use of the lost texts. The writer of the article also approved the R.V. taken as it is from the same texts. However while approving Darby's, Tregelles' and R.V. versions, he disapproved the more recent versions from the same texts, and by letter to the writer of this present article he said this:— 'I should wish to vindicate myself, however, in respect of your concern that my article in Treasury "appears to give general approval to the whole rash of modern versions." The charge is not without some justification I fear, but this is owing to the omission of some 8 or 10 lines of this article in the printed issue'. A copy of the article as submitted to Treasury was supplied. In this, the relevant paragraph reads as follows:—

'The "higher critics", namely those who decide on *philosophical* grounds whether this or that Scripture is "believable" or not, are quite a different proposition, and into that we cannot enter. It is all too apparent that many of the recently published "Bibles" are in this class. In any case most of them are useless for serious study of the Purpose of God, paying little or no attention to the principle of parallelism of passages in the original, and having no concordances or text-finders to assist in their use. We need say nothing about the infamous "New English Bible" concerning which one of our own esteemed Bible teachers has

stated that its producers “began by throwing the Grammar and Lexicon out of the window” — a fact which is evident in their rendering of the very first verse of the first Book of the Old Testament’.

All the words from “It is all too apparent . . . ” to the end of the paragraph were deleted by “The Treasury”, and a false impression is given, so that it does not appear from the article as printed that the author deplored the many modern versions which “The Treasury” would not so denounce. Also the Treasury deleted from that article the following statement: “The A.V. remains probably the best version for public reading”. Such unauthorised editing of such an article is reprehensible from every point of view.

However, the writer of the article, “The Treasury” and the “infamous” versions, all accept the use of the lost texts, born and steeped in error. Darby, and the writer of the article, would not produce or approve such outlandish versions as the “infamous” versions, but all the versions in view stem from the same false source, and they “add” to or “take away” from Scripture. They are particularly strong in the “take away” field, deleting many words and verses and passages from God’s holy Word. Besides this there are very many changes of words and expressions and of meaning.

### **THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT**

Another group of so-called “Evangelicals” which has its own characteristic attitude to questions relating to the versions is that of the Charismatic Movement. The evil of this movement is shown in the writer’s booklet “The Doctrine of Tongues”, but in relation to the texts of Scripture a further warning is needed.

Charismatic groups “say” they always honour the Scriptures and in many cases they accept the true text and the A.V. However, by avidly accepting visions, dreams, interpretations of tongues and prophecies as further revelations from God, they in effect add to Scripture. These additions called “revelations”, often conflict with Scripture, but are still treasured above the Word of God itself. They need to learn that “all truth” is “that which is perfect” and that the whisperings of dreams and visions come from another source altogether in as far as they belong to the spirit world.

The danger is that God’s people should be drawn into a group who say they accept the true text as the Word of God, but who do not do so wholeheartedly. The Mormons do the same thing when they lay on the table the Bible together with the Book of Mormon, both being regarded as of equal value.

### **THE REVISED VERSION**

While many of the changes made in the R.V. are due to the use of the spurious lost-found texts, other portions are translated from texts which read the same as those from which the A.V. comes. It is interesting to compare such passages, for the translations reveal the

relative spiritual values of each. It can often be seen very clearly that the new translation does not capture the breath of heaven and of God which emanates from the A.V.

However where the only question is different opinions on different translations from the same Greek words and expressions, this in itself is not of such great concern. It becomes a matter of expressing in English what is spiritually understood to be the meaning of the passage.

## TO SUMMARISE

At all points in the history of the church, the true Word of God has been available without the need for looking in obscure places, and the idea of "lost" parts of the Word of God is foreign to all Scripture and to its holy Author.

The fact that "lost" texts were found last century has created a problem which is not of God at all. "God is not the author of confusion" (1 Cor. 14:33). The whole thing comes of Satan's machinations.

The most widespread work of God of the whole church age was that which developed world-wide, based on the rock of the A.V. It should also be seen that that true work of God is now in a large measure of disarray and disintegration as modern versions based on the false texts have caused confusion unknown before among the professors of christianity. The "departure" or "falling away", foretold in 2 Thess. 2:3 is now advancing before our eyes, and this occurrence runs currently with the proliferation of the false texts and versions with which it is closely related.

God's Word will never be lost. But while never lost, it can be hidden in the heart. "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart" (Psa. 119:11).

There cannot be two or more different Words of God. Let us rightly discern the Word of truth, treasure it and cleave to it. God helping us, we must hold it fast, and hold it forth to all men everywhere, without fear or doubt.

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