

Bible Truths Explained

What God's Word teaches about

THE DIVINE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

Gordon Lyons

KJV Edition

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The Divine Inspiration of The Bible

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I must acknowledge a genuine debt of gratitude to the work of Dr. Charles Hodge. The writings of this theologian from a previous generation have helped considerably in preparing this work. On a number of occasions—as will be seen when reading these studies—I have cited or alluded to Dr. Hodge's remarks in his three-volume *Systematic Theology*. These references have been acknowledged in the footnotes to the study text.

The Divine Inspiration of The Bible

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Preface

In a day when the Bible is being neglected or despised, those who determine, by God's grace, to remain true to the teachings of his holy Word, often face an uphill struggle. In many places, the Word of God is not being taught as thoroughly or as accurately as it should be. Consequently, many of the Lord's people are hungering and thirsting for a sufficient knowledge of the truth. There can be no substitute, of course, for a study of the Bible itself. To this end, these notes have been written in such a way that, from beginning to end, the Bible is employed to teach, explain and illustrate almost every point covered.

We are living in a time of ever changing opinions regarding the Bible. Some people regard the Bible as a great and significant literary work. Others see it as much more than this. In many cases, however, the teaching of God's Holy Word is being disregarded or minimised. This has been happening to such an extent that even within the church, some people live with little or no regard for Biblical standards.

The present author makes no apology for maintaining an uncompromising and unwavering belief in the Bible as the inspired Word of God, and as completely infallible, inerrant and unchanging. From a theological perspective, the teachings presented in these studies fully acknowledge God's sovereignty over his entire creation. All studies in the series, *Bible Truths Explained*, are written from the standpoint of the doctrines of grace.

This study forms the introduction to a series of studies. The series covers all the major teachings of the Bible in terms that the serious reader or student of God's Word should appreciate. The notes are intended for those who have already covered the basics of God's Word elsewhere, and who wish to make further progress in understanding its most precious, important and foundational truths. To this end, most of the studies in the *Bible Truths Explained* series cover a different Bible doctrine in some detail. Extensive use is made of Scripture quotations to illustrate, clarify or prove points mentioned in the text.

Bible Truths Explained is not an academic or critical study of the doctrines of God's Word. It is a generally informative survey of each major doctrine, and is intended for the non-theological reader. Its aim is to stimulate, inform and otherwise to help—however inadequately—the people of God, so that they may come to a fuller understanding of the great and unchanging truths contained in his holy Word.

As the author of this series, I am all too aware of my many shortcomings in attempting such a vast undertaking as this. Unfortunately, and despite my best endeavours to maintain the highest standards throughout, I am sure this work will reflect many of these failings. I have spent over 20 years preparing these studies, and have only now felt able to offer them for publication. I freely recognise the faults and failings of this work. However, I pray most earnestly that the Lord will still use these studies to glorify his holy name, and to encourage and strengthen his people in the faith.

I pray that, by the diligent study of God's Word, the reader may be encouraged to press forward in the faith. I pray too that he or she may glorify God for the great things he has done for them through Christ Jesus. If this is the result, then I will be more than satisfied. My primary concern is for the upbuilding of the church in love; for the honour, praise and glory of God, and for the honour, praise and glory of his Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Bible Truths Explained is being augmented on the web site at 1-word.com by a series of *Expository Notes*. These Notes provide a verse-by-verse devotional and practical series of commentaries on the majority of New Testament books.

I would much appreciate the prayers of the Lord's people for the means to continue this undertaking. I would also request your prayers that both the doctrinal notes and the expository notes will cause those who read them to value God's Word even more.

May God's richest blessing be with all those who love the Lord and cherish his unchanging and infallible Word—the Bible.

Your servant and brother in Christ Jesus,

Gordon Lyons

Part 1

Synopsis: The Divine Inspiration of The Bible

The Bible is plenary inspired. This means that it is entirely or absolutely inspired. From Genesis to Revelation, every part of the sacred Scriptures is God-breathed. In its original form and languages, (Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic) God transmitted his words (or his revealed will) to selected godly men. The Lord did this by the direct operation, guidance, and inspiration of his Holy Spirit. The Bible is not in any sense the expression of man's mind, will or thoughts. Rather, it is the revelation to humanity of God's mind and will. The Bible includes and teaches everything that is necessary for salvation; for assured hope for the future, and for godly daily living. Among the principal matters revealed in God's Word are the subjects of Creation, Providence, and Redemption. The Bible is inspired, authoritative, and infallible in all matters of which it speaks, including matters of doctrine, principle, morals, practice, history, geography and science. The doctrine of *plenary* inspiration stands opposed to the doctrine of *partial* or *limited* inspiration.

The Rule of Faith

The Bible is the Word of God. God's Word consists of 66 books. Thirty-nine of these books are located in the Old Testament, and twenty-seven in the New Testament. The Bible is the only infallible rule or standard of faith and practice. There is no other valid source of information pointing to eternal salvation or faith in God. Nor is there any other valid and authoritative source of information that reveals God's will and purposes for humanity in particular, and for God's creation in general.

That the Bible is the only infallible rule of faith and practice implies belief in the following essential truths:

1. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired Word of God.
2. These Scriptures can never fail, and they can never change.
3. They are of divine authority for faith and practice.
4. Regarding doctrine, teaching or fact, the Scriptures cannot err or be mistaken.

The Holy Scriptures, or the Holy Bible, constitutes the entire revealed will of God for mankind. God designed his written revelation to be the only standard of faith and practice for the church. Sometimes, we refer to this standard as the *Rule of Faith* or the *Analogy of Faith*.

Using the ordinary means of grace,¹ and with the aid of the Holy Spirit, God's people may understand, clearly and sufficiently, the teaching of the Bible for themselves. No other 'infallible' or 'authoritative' interpreter is required to explain the meaning of God's Holy Word.²

This, however, does not preclude the exposition of God's Word by appropriately gifted and Spirit-led individuals, such as pastors and teachers. Nor does it preclude the use of Bible study aids or commentaries to assist in the understanding of God's Word. However, we must remember that no human teacher or pastor, and no book or other aid is infallible (or inerrant). Only the Bible itself is infallible or incapable of error.

¹ 'The ordinary means of grace' includes prayer, reading of the Word, and preaching and teaching of the Word.

² *Above section based on C. Hodge, Systematic Theology, Vol. 1., [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977 reprint] p. 152*

We must always rely, therefore, on the Holy Spirit to grant us discernment to distinguish truth from error, and to keep us in the right way. We must not depend, however, on the opinions of human beings when we should be depending on the clear teaching of God's Word, and should be adapting our lives to the pattern of that Word.

The Rule of Faith (Scripture References)

The following Scriptures illustrate that the Bible is literally the Word of God:

1 Thessalonians 2:13

⁽¹³⁾ For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

⁽¹⁶⁾ All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ⁽¹⁷⁾ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

2 Peter 1:3-4

⁽³⁾ According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: ⁽⁴⁾ Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

The Divine Inspiration of The Bible

The Bible is the revelation of God's will to mankind. God gave this revelation by the direct guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Inspiration may be summarised as follows:

- *Inspiration* is an act of the Holy Spirit whereby he conveys divine truths to the minds of selected servants of God. The Holy Spirit thus inspired the writers of the sacred Scriptures, preserving them from errors in teaching. While inspired by the Holy Spirit of God, these holy prophets and apostles taught, preached and wrote the express words of God. Therefore, the Bible is the infallible Word of God.³

Many Writers—One Author

As we noted earlier, the Bible consists of sixty-six books, thirty-nine of which are contained in the Old Testament, and twenty-seven in the New Testament. The Holy Spirit inspired equally and entirely all sixty-six books. This is known as the doctrine of plenary or complete inspiration.

The Bible is the whole revealed will of God, insofar as he makes known his purposes to and for the human race. This revelation took place gradually over a period of several thousand years. The revelation of God's Word to his own people in particular, and to humanity in general, was written down faithfully and inerrantly by different writers. These inspired writers lived in different ages, and under a variety of different circumstances. Yet, for all these differences, the various books of the Bible form a fully integrated and coherent whole. From beginning to end, God's Word teaches the same moral, spiritual and eternal truths.

³ Above section based on C. Hodge, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 155

The reason for this consistency in teaching is that, although the Bible had many *writers*, it had only one true *Author*. This Author was God himself—acting through his Holy Spirit. Therefore, in its original manuscripts, the Bible was preserved completely free from error, because the Holy Spirit had unerringly guided the human writers.

The Holy Spirit inspired certain godly men, such as the LORD's holy prophets, to record divine truths. God's Spirit, however, did not use these individuals in a mechanical fashion, as though they were merely machines. The Holy Spirit did not override or suspend their rational, intellectual or other natural faculties or abilities. On the contrary, the Spirit of God made full use of these godly men's natural abilities, while at the same time preserving them from error in what they wrote or taught whenever they acted in the name of the LORD and by his express command. Thus, frequently, the prophets would begin their teaching or pronouncements with the expression, '*Thus says the LORD...*' indicating that what they were about to say were the very words of Almighty God. For this reason, to reject the words of God's inspired and holy prophets was to reject the Word of God itself. The same was true concerning the writings and teachings of the New Testament apostles.

Inspiration preserved these writers from *errors in teaching*, and in writing down God's Word. It did not preserve them, however, from *errors in personal conduct*. Of itself, inspiration does not sanctify a person or make him perfectly holy. For example, the Spirit of God inspired David to write many of the Psalms. David, however, tarnished his personal life with some very grievous sins. Similarly, the Holy Spirit inspired the apostle Peter to write two epistles of the New Testament. Peter's conduct, however, was not always above reproach. Nevertheless, inspiration of the Holy Spirit guaranteed that men's sins and failures would not affect the truth of God's Word in any way.⁴ Human beings can fail or err, but God and his Word can never fail or err.

Many Writers—One Author (Scripture References)

The following examples from God's Word show us that the real Author of that Word was God himself. Thus, it is written:

Exodus 20:1

⁽¹⁾ And God spoke all these words...

Exodus 31:18

⁽¹⁸⁾ And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

Zechariah 7:7a

^(7a) *Should ye not hear* the words which the LORD hath cried by the former prophets..?

2 Timothy 3:16a

^(16a) All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God...

⁴ Above section based on C. Hodge, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 155-157,166

Hebrews 1:1-2

⁽¹⁾ God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, ⁽²⁾ Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son...

Part 2

Inspired Men Were God's Instruments

The men whom the Holy Spirit inspired to write down God's words were God's chosen instruments. The words they recorded and later proclaimed were to be received, not as the words of men, but as they were in truth—the words of God.

In the past, those who *heard* the voice of the prophets or apostles were hearing the voice of God speaking through these holy servants by his Spirit. Similarly, today, those who *read* the Word of God are hearing the voice of God speaking through that Word by his Spirit. To this end, the Scripture says:

1 Thessalonians 2:13

⁽¹³⁾ For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

Those who hear God's Word, hear God. Those who refuse to hear and obey God's Word, refuse to hear and obey God.⁵ Thus, the Lord Jesus said:

Matthew 10:40

⁽⁴⁰⁾ He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

The Lord Jesus was the incarnate Word. (John 1:1,14,18) Again, Jesus said:

John 12:47-48

⁽⁴⁷⁾ And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. ⁽⁴⁸⁾ He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

Again, concerning the fact that men were inspired of God to write the words of God, the apostle Peter says:

2 Peter 1:19-21

⁽¹⁹⁾ We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: ⁽²⁰⁾ Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. ⁽²¹⁾ For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as *they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.

Prophecy—i.e., what a prophet of God said—was not human, but divine. It was not the prophet's own interpretation of the mind and will of God. The prophet spoke as the organ of the Holy Spirit. The voice

⁵ Above section based on C. Hodge, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 161

of the prophet expressed the voice of God.⁶ Those, therefore, who refused to hear and heed the words of the prophet, were in fact refusing to hear and heed the voice of God. Those who accepted and obeyed the prophet's message accepted and obeyed the word of God, and received the blessing of the Lord.

Inspired Men were God's Instruments (Scripture References)

The following Scriptures exemplify that the prophets were not expressing their own thoughts or ideas, but the revealed mind, will and purposes of God:

Exodus 34:27

⁽²⁷⁾ And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.

Isaiah 8:19-20

⁽¹⁹⁾ And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? ⁽²⁰⁾ To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is because there is no light in them.*

Jeremiah 23:22

⁽²²⁾ But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.

Jeremiah 23:28-29

⁽²⁸⁾ The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What *is* the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD. ⁽²⁹⁾ *Is* not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer *that* breaketh the rock in pieces? (see vv.13-32)

Jeremiah 23:36

⁽³⁶⁾ And the burden of the LORD shall ye mention no more: for every man's word shall be his burden; for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the LORD of hosts our God. (see vv.33-40)

Ezekiel 2:7

⁽⁷⁾ And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they *are* most rebellious.

Ezekiel 3:16-18

⁽¹⁶⁾ And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, ⁽¹⁷⁾ Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. ⁽¹⁸⁾ When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked

⁶ This paragraph based on C. Hodge, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 159

from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. (see vv.19-21)

Ezekiel 3:27

⁽²⁷⁾ But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbearth, let him forbear: for they *are* a rebellious house.

1 Corinthians 1:18

⁽¹⁸⁾ For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

1 Corinthians 1:21

⁽²¹⁾ For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (see vv.17-25)

1 Corinthians 2:13

⁽¹³⁾ Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (see vv.1-16)

Inspiration and Infallibility

Since the Bible is fully inspired of God, it is infallible; i.e., it is incapable of failure or error regarding any matter of which it speaks. The infallibility and divine authority of the Scriptures is due to the fact that they are the express words of God. Moreover, they are the express words of God because they were given by inspiration of God's Holy Spirit.⁷

As we have said, the Bible is infallible regarding every matter of which it speaks. However, while God's Word is wholly true and accurate, we must correctly interpret and understand the Bible's teaching. We must compare each verse or passage with the surrounding context, and with other related passages. We should never extract or isolate an individual verse from its immediate context, in order to support a particular doctrine or point of view. To do so would be to misquote and misapply the Word of God.

We must compare each passage of Scripture, and ensure that it agrees with other related passages of Scripture. Sometimes, we refer to this procedure as the *analogy of faith* or the *analogy of Scripture*. If there is an apparent contradiction, then it is likely that we have misinterpreted or misunderstood one or more passages. Again, we must make some allowance for the language of everyday speech or customary usage. Many everyday expressions should not necessarily be understood literally. (See below on *Language of Customary Usage*.)

Inspiration and Infallibility (Scripture References)

The following passages illustrate the total trustworthiness, and infallible nature, of God's Word:

Proverbs 30:5-6

⁷ This paragraph based on C. Hodge, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 153

⁽⁵⁾ Every word of God *is* pure: he *is* a shield unto them that put their trust in him. ⁽⁶⁾ Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar. (Cf. Ps. 18:30)

Isaiah 40:8

⁽⁸⁾ The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever.

Jeremiah 1:9

⁽⁹⁾ Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. (see vv.4-12)

Matthew 24:35

⁽³⁵⁾ Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Luke 24:25-27

⁽²⁵⁾ Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ⁽²⁶⁾ Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? ⁽²⁷⁾ And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. (see also vv.44-47)

Luke 24:32

⁽³²⁾ And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?

John 6:63

⁽⁶³⁾ It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

⁽¹³⁾ For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

Hebrews 12:25

⁽²⁵⁾ See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more *shall not* we *escape*, if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven:

1 Peter 1:23-25

⁽²³⁾ Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. ⁽²⁴⁾ For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: ⁽²⁵⁾ But the word of the Lord endureth forever.

{Isaiah 40:6-8} And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

1 Peter 4:11

⁽¹¹⁾ If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God...

Inspiration Extends to All Parts of Scripture

The Bible is inspired, equally and entirely, in all its parts (plenary or complete inspiration). Inspiration is not confined to moral and spiritual truths. It extends equally to all statements of fact. This includes doctrinal, practical, scientific, historical and geographical statements. All alike are the inspired Word of God. When correctly interpreted (i.e., as God intended his truth to be understood), every statement and claim of the Bible must be accepted as true and accurate. Inspiration is not confined to those facts that are more obviously important, or which are involved in matters of doctrine. Inspiration and infallibility extends to everything that the sacred writers assert to be true.

Christ and his apostles make no distinction as to the authority of the Law, the Prophets the Psalms or any other canonical writings. They quote the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses), the historical books, the Psalms, the Prophets and other writings such as Proverbs, as all and equally the Word of God. They refer to such infallible truths as the creation of man, Adam's apostasy (the fall of man), God's covenant with Abraham, and the giving of the Law upon Mount Sinai. These are examples of *doctrinal facts*, referred to by the Lord Jesus and by his apostles. Similarly, they refer to *historical facts* such as the Noahic Deluge or great flood, the dividing of the Red Sea (and of the Jordan River), and the swallowing of Jonah by a great fish. The Lord Jesus and his apostles quote these incidents as literal truths. We must accept them as such.⁸

Inspiration Extends to All Parts of Scripture (Scripture References)

That the entire Bible is the inspired and authoritative Word of God is exemplified by the following Scriptures:

Matthew 5:17-19

⁽¹⁷⁾ Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. ⁽¹⁸⁾ 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. ⁽¹⁹⁾ Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Romans 15:4

⁽⁴⁾ For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

2 Timothy 3:16a

^(16a) All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God...

2 Peter 1:21

⁸ Above section based on C. Hodge, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 163-164

⁽²¹⁾ For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.

2 Peter 3:1-2

⁽¹⁾ This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in *both* which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: ⁽²⁾ That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: (See also 2 Pet. 2:21)

2 Peter 3:5-7

⁽⁵⁾ For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: ⁽⁶⁾ Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. ⁽⁷⁾ But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

Revelation 22:18-19

⁽¹⁸⁾ For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: ⁽¹⁹⁾ And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book. (See also Deut. 4:2; 12:32)

Equally Inspired, but not Equally Important

The Holy Spirit of God equally inspires every book of the Bible. However, this does not mean that every book is of equal importance. As the Word of God, all canonical books without exception have *equal authority*. Not all books, however, are intended for teaching in doctrine or for instruction in righteousness. For instance, the books of Chronicles are the inspired, authoritative and historical records of the Hebrew people. These books provide us with important and invaluable genealogical and historical information. However, they do not provide the same degree of doctrinal, moral or practical instruction as, for example, the Gospels or the Epistles.

Equally Inspired, But Not Equally Important (Scripture References)

The following examples illustrate the difference in relevance and importance between one class of Scripture record and another:

1 Timothy 1:3-4

⁽³⁾ As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, ⁽⁴⁾ Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: *so do*.

Titus 2:1

⁽¹⁾ But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

Titus 3:9

⁽⁹⁾ But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. (See also 2 Tim. 2:23-24)

Part 3

No Contradictions

Some people suggest that the Bible is full of mistakes and contradictions. Such a claim reveals either a lack of awareness of God's truth, or a considerable degree of misunderstanding or spiritual blindness regarding the contents and truths of God's Word. Correctly interpreted and understood, each part of the Bible harmonises fully with all the other parts. Minor discrepancies in the text can be accounted for by transmission errors during copying or translation of the extant manuscripts. These minor errors, however, did not exist in the *original* manuscripts.

No Contradictions (Scripture References)

These Scriptures illustrate the unerring quality of God's Word in all its parts:

Proverbs 30:5a

^(5a) Every word of God *is* pure [i.e., tried or true]

2 Peter 1:20-21

⁽²⁰⁾ Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. ⁽²¹⁾ For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Minor Errors in Translation

In their original manuscripts, and because of the Holy Spirit's inspiration, the Scriptures were totally free from error. Today, however, no original manuscripts remain. We are now dependent on copies of the originals. It is from these copies that the different versions of the Bible have been translated.

These versions may contain some minor errors in the transcription of the text. However, in modern (true) translations of the Bible, these errors have been reduced to a minimum. The mistakes remaining relate principally to minor textual details, including the occasional difficulty in determining a precise name, location, or number. There are, however, no errors in doctrine; i.e., in any matters relating to what we must believe or how we must live (faith and practice). Nor—where the original meaning and translation is preserved—are there any errors in matters that are of a practical, scientific, historical or geographical nature. In all these matters, the Bible is entirely accurate and wholly to be believed.

Translations and Paraphrases

Translations

Translations of the Bible try to maintain the closest possible literal accuracy of the text, insofar as linguistic idiom will allow. This category generally endeavours to provide as close as possible to a word-for-word rendering of the text (within the rules of grammatical construction). Differences in grammar and syntax between Hebrew and English, or Greek and English words and phrases, however, often requires the re-arrangement or partial re-arrangement of sentences. Usually, this is done with the greatest care, and only to preserve and reflect the true meaning of the text. Careful reconstruction of certain sentences helps to preserve the clarity and power of God's Word for the average reader.

A good translation of the Bible is the most accurate and most reliable for study purposes. For several centuries—until the latter part of the 1900's—the most popular translation of the Bible was the King

James Version (or Authorised Version). This version remained the first choice of Christians for nearly four centuries. However, despite the undeniable beauty of style and language of the King James Version, it does contain some textual discrepancies. Although these are relatively minor, a more modern translation is sometimes preferable for greater clarity and improved accuracy. (This is assuming one does not have access to copies of reliable Hebrew and Greek texts. Copies in the original languages should take precedence over any English or other translations.)

Paraphrases

A paraphrase of the Bible endeavours to maintain overall accuracy of the text. However, the intention of this category is to provide a general thought-for-thought rendering of the text, rather than a more literal rendering. This involves making some degree of alteration to a closely literal English rendering of the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek text. This departure from the original rendering, therefore, is more pronounced in a paraphrase than would be the case with a (true) translation of the Bible. Although, usually, the translators have made these changes with care, we should treat a paraphrase of the Bible with caution. In its place, a paraphrase can prove very valuable, and can make for easier reading of the text. Nevertheless, we must not consider a paraphrase of the Bible to be as literally accurate as a translation.

A paraphrase may prove useful for comparative or general reading purposes, or for providing basic instruction. Even then, however, it should be used with discretion, lest undue dependence should be placed upon this type of version. For serious study purposes, we should not depend on a paraphrase of the Bible to the same extent as a reliable translation.

Apocrypha is Not Inspired

Some versions of the Bible—notably, those versions used by members of the Roman Catholic faith—contain more than the recognised 66 books. This is because the RC translators have included various apocryphal writings in their versions. Among these apocryphal writings are 1 and 2 Esdras, The Wisdom of Solomon, and 1 and 2 Maccabees.

The Hebrew canon of the Holy Scriptures does not include any of the fifteen or so books of the Apocrypha. All—except 2 Esdras—are present however in copies of the Greek version of the Old Testament known as the Greek Septuagint, and usually abbreviated, LXX. Because of their exclusion from the Hebrew canon, most conservative evangelical Christians reject the apocryphal books. They do not consider them being in any way inspired or God-breathed. Since they form no part of the canon of sacred Scripture, these books have no authority in any matter of faith or practice.

Apocrypha is Not Inspired (Scripture References)

The following examples show how the Lord Jesus quoted from, or referred to, the Old Testament Scriptures, as accepted among the Jews of his day. At no time did the Lord's quotations from, or allusions to, the Old Testament include a reference to any of the Apocryphal books. Thus, it is written:

Luke 24:24-27

⁽²⁴⁾ And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found *it* even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. ⁽²⁵⁾ Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ⁽²⁶⁾ Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? ⁽²⁷⁾ And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Luke 24:44-45

⁽⁴⁴⁾ And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning

me. ⁽⁴⁵⁾ Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures,

Romans 3:1-2

⁽¹⁾ What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision? ⁽²⁾ Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

In each case, the Scriptures referred to was the Word of God as understood and commonly accepted by the Jewish people; as faithfully preserved by a succession of Jewish scholars, and as daily used in the synagogue and temple. The Old Testament Scriptures (or *Scrolls*) were referred to collectively under three heads: the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. Neither the Jews, nor the Lord Jesus, recognised or accepted any other books or scrolls as part of the canon of sacred Scripture.

Part 4

Purpose of the Bible

The Bible Reveals God to All Humanity

The Bible is the Word of God to all people world-wide. What the Bible says is what God says. The purpose of the Bible is to reveal to mankind everything he needs to know about God and about his relationship to God. In his fallen and unregenerate condition, mankind remains alienated from God by sin, and is abiding under God's righteous and holy wrath. (John 3:36)

The Bible also reveals to men and women God's one and only way of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. By the operation of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God penetrates to the deepest recesses of a person's soul. The Spirit and the Word powerfully convince men and women of their sin. Both the Spirit and the Word then convict individuals of their need of redemption. In the case of the elect, the Spirit of God draws these men and women irresistibly—yet *freely and willingly*—to faith in Christ. Thus, the Scripture says:

Hebrews 4:12-13

⁽¹²⁾ For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged 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. ⁽¹³⁾ Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

John 16:8

⁽⁸⁾ And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: (See also vv.9-11)

John 5:24

⁽²⁴⁾ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

John 6:37

⁽³⁷⁾ All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

John 6:44-45

⁽⁴⁴⁾ No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁽⁴⁵⁾ It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. (See also Isa. 54:13; Jer. 31:33-34)

John 6:64-66

⁽⁶⁴⁾ But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

⁽⁶⁵⁾ And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

⁽⁶⁶⁾ From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. (See vv.35-71)

However, if man does not heed the message of the living Word of God, then he has no hope of salvation:

John 5:39-40

⁽³⁹⁾ Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. ⁽⁴⁰⁾ And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

John 6:66

⁽⁶⁶⁾ From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

1 John 5:9-12

⁽⁹⁾ If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. ⁽¹⁰⁾ He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

⁽¹¹⁾ And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ⁽¹²⁾ He that hath the Son hath life: *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

The Bible Reveals God to All Humanity (Scripture References)

The following passages illustrate that God reveals his will and ways to all humankind in the Bible alone. These passages also reveal that a person cannot understand fully or savingly the truth of the Bible unless God's Holy Spirit illuminates his mind and regenerates his soul. Thus, it is written in the Word of God:

Psalms 119:18

⁽¹⁸⁾ Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

Psalms 119:97-100

⁽⁹⁷⁾ O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. ⁽⁹⁸⁾ Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they *are* ever with me. ⁽⁹⁹⁾ I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies *are* my meditation. ⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

Psalms 119:105

⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Psalms 119:130

⁽¹³⁰⁾ The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

Isaiah 48:17-18

⁽¹⁷⁾ Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I *am* the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way *that* thou shouldest go. ⁽¹⁸⁾ O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea:

Isaiah 48:22

⁽²²⁾ *There is* no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.

Isaiah 55:6-7

⁽⁶⁾ Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: ⁽⁷⁾ Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. (See vv.8-9)

Isaiah 55:10-11

⁽¹⁰⁾ For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: ⁽¹¹⁾ So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it. (See vv.12-13)

Luke 24:32

⁽³²⁾ And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?

Luke 24:45

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures,

John 20:31

⁽³¹⁾ But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Romans 1:16-17

⁽¹⁶⁾ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the

Greek. ⁽¹⁷⁾ For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written. The just shall live by faith. {Hab. 2:4} (see vv.2-3)

Romans 10:17

⁽¹⁷⁾ So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (See vv.1-21)

Romans 16:25-26

⁽²⁵⁾ Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, ⁽²⁶⁾ But now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

1 Corinthians 2:14

⁽¹⁴⁾ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

A Famine of Hearing God's Word

Proverbs 29:18

⁽¹⁸⁾ Where *there is* no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy *is* he.

Amos 8:11-12

⁽¹¹⁾ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: ⁽¹²⁾ And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find *it*. (See vv.13-14)

The Sufficiency of the Bible

The Bible is the full and sufficient revelation of God's will for all mankind. It addresses those who are lost, showing them the dreadful and never-ending penalty they must pay if they refuse to repent. In all his dealings with individuals, God is sovereign. God's sovereignty, however, does not absolve these individuals of their personal responsibility toward him, and toward his Word.

The Bible also addresses those who are seeking to know the Lord. In clear and unmistakable terms, the Holy Spirit reveals to them the one and only way of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In addition, and in a special way, the Bible addresses those who belong to the Lord. In the pages of the Bible, the Holy Spirit reveals the ways and will of God for every individual believer, and for each believing family. No additional revelation is—or ever will be—necessary. In its 66 books, the canon of Scripture stands entire and complete. In all things relating to life and godliness, it is fully sufficient.

Thus, the Scripture says:

2 Peter 1:3-4

- ⁽³⁾ According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: ⁽⁴⁾ Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. (See vv.5-12)

The Sufficiency of the Bible (Scripture References)

The Word of God is fully sufficient. No additional sacred books will ever be necessary, and God has forbidden anyone from either adding to or subtracting from his holy Word. Thus, God's Word says:

Deuteronomy 4:1-2

- ⁽¹⁾ Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do *them*, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you. ⁽²⁾ 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 which I command you. (See vv.3-14)

Deuteronomy 6:4-7

- ⁽⁴⁾ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: ⁽⁵⁾ And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.
- ⁽⁶⁾ And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: ⁽⁷⁾ And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. (See vv.13-25)

Joshua 1:8

- ⁽⁸⁾ This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. (See vv.6-9,16-18)

Luke 16:29-31

- ⁽²⁹⁾ Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. ⁽³⁰⁾ And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. ⁽³¹⁾ And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

John 5:39-40

- ⁽³⁹⁾ Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. ⁽⁴⁰⁾ And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

Galatians 1:8-9

⁽⁸⁾ But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. ⁽⁹⁾ As we said before, so say I now again, if any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. (See vv.6-7)

2 Timothy 3:14-15

⁽¹⁴⁾ But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*; ⁽¹⁵⁾ And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (See vv.16,17)

Hebrews 4:12

⁽¹²⁾ For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged 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. (See v.13)

Revelation 22:18-19

⁽¹⁸⁾ For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: ⁽¹⁹⁾ And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

Part 5

Limits of Biblical Revelation

The Bible reveals everything that is necessary to salvation, and to the belief and practice of our faith. However, it does not reveal everything that there is to know about God, or about the universe that he created. There is much about the infinite God that our finite minds could never begin to comprehend. Similarly, there is much about the created universe that the Bible does not attempt to explain. These details are not relevant to the plan of salvation, or to holiness of life.

Concerning the material universe, the Bible tells us that God created all things by his word or command. The Bible also tells us that God's almighty and sovereign power is, at this time, preserving everything in the entire universe.

The Bible is not a science textbook; but no science textbook has the authority to contradict the clear teaching of God's Word. Where the Bible speaks on scientific matters, God's Word is totally accurate and wholly to be believed. Here again the Bible is infallible. We should take care, however, to ensure that we *correctly interpret* and understand God's Word.

Limits of Revelation (Scripture References)

The following Scriptures indicate that God has not revealed certain matters to mankind, although he has revealed everything that is relevant to salvation and godly conduct:

Deuteronomy 29:29

⁽²⁹⁾ The secret *things belong* unto the LORD our God: but those *things which are revealed belong* unto us and to our children forever, that *we may do* all the words of this law.

Mark 13:32

⁽³²⁾ But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

Acts 1:6-7

⁽⁶⁾ When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? ⁽⁷⁾ And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

God's Revelation Regarding Creation

The Bible is quite explicit about both the origins of the created universe (including this planet) and about the creation of man. Thus, God's Word expressly says:

Genesis 1:1-3

⁽¹⁾ In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. ⁽²⁾ And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

⁽³⁾ And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. (See vv.4-31)

Genesis 2:1

⁽¹⁾ Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.
(See vv.2,3)

Nehemiah 9:6

⁽⁶⁾ Thou, *even* thou, *art* LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all *things* that *are* therein, the seas, and all that *is* therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.

John 1:3

⁽³⁾ All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. (See vv.1-2,10)

Colossians 1:16-17

⁽¹⁶⁾ For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:
⁽¹⁷⁾ And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

Man's Knowledge is Finite

People may deny God's involvement in either the creation of the world, or the creation of man (Adam and Eve). However, the Genesis account of creation is the testimony of the living, eternal and infinite God. God's Word is authoritative, infallible, and final. Therefore, we must believe what God says in his Word about his creation. It would be utterly unreasonable and irrational to doubt or question the express teaching of God's Word.

We must also remember that man's opinions and theories concerning the creation of the universe are merely expressions of the sum of acquired human knowledge (empirical knowledge). To this acquired knowledge, we may add human—and therefore potentially fallible—interpretations of specific, but limited, data. However, without repeatable evidence, these theories do not, and cannot, amount to scientifically verifiable facts.

As believers, we have no complaint with established or proven scientific *facts*. Nothing can be discovered through scientific research and enquiry, and established as fact, that will be contradicted by the Word of God. Where they overlap, the truths of God's Word, and scientifically established and proven facts, agree completely. For, directly or indirectly, scientific *facts* derive their data and proofs from God's revelation in nature; e.g., from information provided by the study of faunae, florae and fossils.

However, concerning the different *theories* or *hypotheses* proposed from time to time by various schools of learning—including some disciplines of 'science'—this is another matter. Clearly, a theory or hypothesis is not an established and verifiable fact. To place more faith in the opinions and theories of man, therefore, than in the clear testimony of God's Word, is to fail to appreciate the finite nature of man's knowledge and understanding. If we truly believe in an all-powerful God, then we must believe that his infinite knowledge far exceeds the finite knowledge and understanding that humanity possesses concerning God and his creation. Mankind can discover only what God permits him to discover.

God's Revelation Regarding Preservation

God did not create the universe only to leave it to govern itself. By his almighty and sovereign hand, the Lord God controls everything that happens throughout the universe. Nothing in the universe is outside his knowledge or control, and nothing can interfere with his power to preserve his own creation. The following Scriptures illustrate God's preserving power over his creation:

Job 10:8

⁽⁸⁾ Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me. (See vv.9-11)

Job 10:12

⁽¹²⁾ Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.

Job 12:10

⁽¹⁰⁾ In whose hand *is* the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.

Job 14:5

⁽⁵⁾ Seeing his days *are* determined, the number of his months *are* with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass; (See also Ps. 139:16)

Job 34:14-15

⁽¹⁴⁾ If he set his heart upon man, *if* he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; ⁽¹⁵⁾ All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust. (See v.20)

Job 12:15

⁽¹⁵⁾ Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up: also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth.

Psalms 135:6-7

⁽⁶⁾ Whatsoever the LORD pleased, *that* did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. ⁽⁷⁾ He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures. (See also Deut. 28:12)

Matthew 6:26

⁽²⁶⁾ Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? (See vv.25-34)

Matthew 10:29-30

⁽²⁹⁾ Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. ⁽³⁰⁾ But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. (See vv.26-30)

Language of Customary Usage

When reading and considering the teaching of God's Word, there are places where it is appropriate and necessary to make due allowance for the language of customary or common usage. For instance, when the Bible speaks of the rising and setting of the sun, it is using an everyday form of speech. Thus, for example, the following Scripture says:

Psalms 113:3

⁽³⁾ From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD's name *is* to be praised. (See also Mal. 1:11)

Linguistic idioms such as these must not be applied literally to make the Bible appear to teach something that is not factually correct. There are a number of places in the Word of God where parabolic, metaphorical or other forms of figurative language are used. An examination of the immediate context and the application of the analogy of Scripture (comparing one passage with other related passages) will help prevent misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

Part 6

Supreme Authority of the Bible

Concerning his immortal soul, and his relationship to God, the Bible is the supremely authoritative source of instruction for all humanity. It is not just one source among many. The Bible is the *one and only* source of instruction given to us by the only true and living God. There is no other.

This supreme authority concerns not only what we must believe, but also how we must live (faith and practice). To this end, Charles Hodge wrote:

*Everything is right which they [the Scriptures] command, and everything is wrong which they condemn.*⁹

On every matter concerning our faith, and on every matter relating to moral standards, we must fully believe and completely obey God's Word. The teachings of the Scriptures are not to be accepted or rejected as we please, or interpreted according to our own personal viewpoints on certain matters. We are required to accept, observe, and obey everything in the Word of God: Everything that is applicable to believers living by God's grace under the terms of the New Covenant.

The Moral Law Remains in Effect

It is a mistake to believe that the moral standards of the Old Testament are not applicable to Christians because they are not living under law but under grace. The whole Bible—Old and New Testaments—is the Word of God, and we must regard it as such. From this it follows that—unless they have been expressly revoked in the New Testament—the moral laws of the Old Testament still apply today.

We must not confuse the moral law, however, with the ceremonial laws, or with the laws of rituals and ordinances. When Christ died at Calvary and rose triumphantly three days later, he brought to a conclusion the OT ceremonial laws with all their statutes and ordinances. However, concerning the OT teaching as a whole, the Lord Jesus made it abundantly plain that he had not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfil them. Thus, the Scripture says:

Matthew 5:17-19

⁽¹⁷⁾ Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. ⁽¹⁸⁾ 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. ⁽¹⁹⁾ Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Christ did indeed fulfil all the requirements of God's law on our behalf. The Lord Jesus obeyed God's law perfectly and entirely for every one who would call upon his name. In addition, Jesus bore God's wrath and curse on our behalf. Consequently, God has justified us freely, fully and forever; i.e., he has declared us righteous in his sight. In forensic terms, God has acquitted us of all charges and cleared us of all guilt. We are not, therefore, under obligation to the law in any legal sense. For, in the legal sense, the law was our schoolmaster—our tutor or instructor—to make us aware of our sins. Since we could not keep it, the law could never save us. Indeed, its purpose was not to save us, but to condemn

⁹ C. Hodge, *Princeton Sermons*, [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1879, 1979 reprint] p. 289

our sin, and to lead us to Christ—the only Saviour from sin’s dominion and penalty. Thus, the Scripture says:

Galatians 3:23-26

⁽²³⁾ But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. ⁽²⁴⁾ Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ⁽²⁵⁾ But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. ⁽²⁶⁾ For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

However, we must not confuse the legal aspect of the law with the moral aspect, as is done in some circles. Christ satisfied all the legal and moral demands of the law. This, however, does not mean that we can now live without reference to God’s moral and spiritual standards. The moral law of God remains fully in force. The Ten Commandments and other moral laws and principles are still as binding on us now as they were in the days of Moses. They do not bind us, however, to a covenant of works, supposedly leading to eternal life. That was never the true purpose of God’s law. Rather, they bind us in the moral and spiritual sense. They oblige us to heed and obey the entire Word of God, out of love for God, and with a due regard for his unchanging and infallible Word.

The Moral Law Remains in Effect (Scripture References)

The following passages from God’s Word demonstrate the manner in which the moral law is to be observed. We should note that the primary requirement of God’s moral law is love:

Matthew 22:34-40

⁽³⁴⁾ But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. ⁽³⁵⁾ Then one of them, *which was a lawyer*, asked *him a question*, tempting him, and saying, ⁽³⁶⁾ Master, which *is the great commandment in the law?*

⁽³⁷⁾ Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. ⁽³⁸⁾ This is the first and great commandment. ⁽³⁹⁾ And the second *is like unto it*, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. ⁽⁴⁰⁾ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Cf. Deut. 6:5; 10:12; Lev. 19:18,34)

John 14:15

⁽¹⁵⁾ If ye love me, keep my commandments.

John 14:21a

^(21a) He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me...

John 14:23a

^(23a) Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words...

John 14:24

⁽²⁴⁾ He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

John 15:10

⁽¹⁰⁾ If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

John 15:12-14

⁽¹²⁾ This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.
⁽¹³⁾ Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. ⁽¹⁴⁾ Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

Romans 13:8-10

⁽⁸⁾ Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. ⁽⁹⁾ For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. ⁽¹⁰⁾ Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law. (Cf. Exodus 20:13-15,17; Deut. 5:17-19,21; Lev. 19:18)

Galatians 5:13-14

⁽¹³⁾ For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. ⁽¹⁴⁾ For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (Cf. Lev. 19:18)

1 John 5:2-4

⁽²⁾ By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. ⁽³⁾ For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. ⁽⁴⁾ For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.

Proof of the Validity of the Moral Law

Far from abolishing the moral law, the Lord Jesus expounded, clarified, and thereby intensified this law. We need only consider one example of Jesus' teaching to see this exemplified. Thus, the Lord says:

Matthew 5:27-28

⁽²⁷⁾ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: ⁽²⁸⁾ But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. (See vv.21-26; Exodus 20:14)

In thus expounding the seventh commandment, Jesus was making it abundantly clear that the sinful thought is just as blameworthy in the sight of God—and as polluting to the soul—as the sinful word or deed.

The moral law, therefore, remains in effect. If we fail to heed any of the instructions in God's Word—whether by our thoughts, words or deeds—this is wilful disobedience to the living God. God will not hold those guiltless who do not seek to obey his Word in full. If anyone refuses to heed the teaching of the Bible, he is treating the living God with contempt; for the Bible makes known God's standards for all people. Moreover, if in a court of law, contempt be a serious offence, how much more serious must it be to show contempt for God?

Proof of the Validity of the Moral Law (Scripture References)

The following Scriptures show the effect that God's Word, and his moral standards, ought to have on our lives:

James 1:21-25

- ⁽²¹⁾ Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. ⁽²²⁾ But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves: ⁽²³⁾ For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: ⁽²⁴⁾ For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. ⁽²⁵⁾ But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

James 2:8-10

- ⁽⁸⁾ If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself {Lev. 19:18}, ye do well: ⁽⁹⁾ But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convicted of the law as transgressors. ⁽¹⁰⁾ For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all. (See vv.11-13; cf. v.9 with Lev. 19:15 below)

Leviticus 19:15

- ⁽¹⁵⁾ Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: *but* in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.

Leviticus 19:16a

- ^(16a) Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people... (See vv.17-18)

James 4:11-12

- ⁽¹¹⁾ Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of *his* brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. ⁽¹²⁾ There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

Part 7

Matters of Conscience

If any matter is not explicitly taught as doctrine, or covered by a moral or spiritual guideline or principle of God's Word, then no-one can compel us to obey or observe that teaching or practice. Where nothing of a questionable or sinful nature is involved, then each believer has the freedom to treat such matters according to his or her own conscience. In the absence of Scriptural precept or principle, matters of conscience must be determined privately—before God—by each individual believer.

No one has the right to require us to obey or observe any unwritten or unscriptural tradition; i.e., any teaching or tradition that is not expressly recorded in the Word of God. Again, no one can impose on us the decisions or decrees of the visible church, or the resolutions of church committees, conferences, or any other collective bodies. If it cannot be shown to us from the Scriptures, no person has the authority to declare this or that matter to be right or wrong, true or false. We must not allow our consciences to be bound by the rules or opinions of men.

God's People bound by God's Word Alone.

If we would stand fast in our freedom in Christ Jesus, then we must adhere steadfastly to the principle that—in matters of religion and morals—the Scriptures alone have authority to bind the conscience.¹⁰ In all these matters, *the people of God are bound by nothing but the Word of God.*

At times, of course, an individual believer may and should seek the advice of the leaders of his or her church. In such cases, the church leaders must restrict themselves to giving counsel based on the teaching and principles of God's Word. They must not attempt to impose their own personal convictions upon another believer. It is to his own Master that the believer stands or falls: and Christ is able to make him stand. Where, on some matters, the Scriptures are silent, we must not presume to speak with biblical authority.

Conscience Not Bound by Any Man (Scripture References)

The following passages from God's Word demonstrate that no believer is at liberty to exalt himself above any other believer. These Scriptures also show that, in matters of indifference, each believer should act according to his conscience in the sight of God. No believer, however, should attempt to impose his own personal opinions or convictions upon his fellow-believers.

Thus, God's Word says:

Matthew 23:8-10

⁽⁸⁾ But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren. ⁽⁹⁾ And call no *man* your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. ⁽¹⁰⁾ Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, *even* Christ. (See vv.1-12)

Acts 4:18-20

⁽¹⁸⁾ And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. ⁽¹⁹⁾ But Peter and John answered and said unto

¹⁰ Above section based on C. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1., [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977 reprint] p. 183

them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. ⁽²⁰⁾ For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. (See also Acts 5:29)

Galatians 5:1

⁽¹⁾ Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (See vv.2-15)

Galatians 5:13-15

⁽¹³⁾ For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. ⁽¹⁴⁾ For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. {Lev. 19:18} ⁽¹⁵⁾ But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

Colossians 2:16-17

⁽¹⁶⁾ Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: ⁽¹⁷⁾ Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ. (See vv.18-23)

A Higher Law than Freedom of Conscience

We have noted the Christian's right to exercise freedom of conscience in all matters of indifference. Now, we take note of a higher principle of God's law. This principle says that we must love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength; and that we must love our neighbour as ourselves. If, however, we love our neighbour as ourselves, we would not wish to do anything that may hurt or harm our neighbour. Indeed, out of genuine concern for their welfare, we would avoid those things that we knew were offensive or objectionable to our neighbour. We would do this even if there were nothing intrinsically wrong or sinful with the action involved.

If, however, we would—or should—make such concessions to our neighbour, how much more should we make the same concessions to our own spiritual family; i.e., to our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ? If the freedom to choose according to our conscience, meant we were doing something that offended our brother or sister in the Lord, are we then acting in love?

There are times when our right to choose must give way to another's spiritual and moral welfare. This involves the case of the weaker brother, which we will now consider.

The Weaker Brother

The apostle Paul recognised each individual believer's right to decide matters of indifference according to his conscience. However, the same apostle declared in several places that this right to decide according to conscience must not be the means of causing a weaker brother or sister to stumble or fall. If in doubt about the effects a particular action might have on a weaker believer, then the stronger brother or sister must not knowingly cause offence.

Apostolic Instructions

In the early days of the church, many of the believers were undecided about whether they should eat meat previously offered in sacrifice to idols. Some of the believers thought that the meat became polluted by being offered to these idols. Others, however, had no such problems about eating this meat, believing as they did that a non-existent entity (supposedly represented by an idol) could not pollute anything.

To avoid this matter from resolving itself into disputes and splits between believers, the early church wrote to the apostles at Jerusalem seeking their advice. The apostles considered the matter and wrote back as inspired by the Holy Spirit. Their reply is given below:

Acts 15:28-29

⁽²⁸⁾ For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; ⁽²⁹⁾ That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well, Fare ye well. (See also Acts 15:19-20; Acts 21:25)

Food Offered to Idols

There was nothing intrinsically wrong with the meat offered in sacrifice to idols. The meat was of the finest quality. However, for the sake of the less mature or weaker saints in their midst, the apostles advised the churches to abstain from eating such food. This would ensure that a weaker brother or sister was not offended. Such offence could be caused when the spiritually weaker person saw another believer eating meat known to have been offered to idols. Equally, a weaker believer could be offended if he were to see a 'more mature' believer eating such food at an idol's temple. In the latter case, the weaker believer might assume (mistakenly) that the stronger believer had been taking part in the sacrifices offered to idols. This was another very good reason why the apostles advised the people of God to keep away from such food.

Blood

In addition, the apostles advised God's people to abstain from blood. Drinking of blood was commonly associated with pagan rituals and sacrifices. More importantly, however, the OT Scriptures expressly forbade such an act. Blood represented life. Indeed, the Scripture asserts that the life of the flesh is in the blood. (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:11,14)

Strangled Animals

The apostles at Jerusalem also required the believers to abstain from the meat of strangled animals. This would avoid giving unnecessary offence to Jewish Christians. They believed that—in accordance with Old Testament law—the animal had to be killed in a specific manner before they were at liberty to cook and eat it. The method used by Gentiles did not satisfy these requirements. For this reason, many Jewish believers did not feel able to eat such meat. (Lev. 17:13; Deut. 12:16)

Sexual Immorality

The last requirement delivered by the apostles relates to sexual immorality. Like today, immorality was rife in Paul's day. It had even begun to make inroads into the church. However, God expressly forbids sexual relations of any kind outside of marriage. Therefore, no believer was to scandalise the church by committing sexual immorality. This would be a sin against the Lord. In addition, by defiling their bodies, they would be defiling God's temple since the body was the dwelling place of his Holy Spirit. Furthermore, by their evil example, they might not only deeply offend another believer but also entice him to sin against his own body and against the Lord. (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2; 10:8; Eph. 5:3)

Love before Liberty

In matters of conscience and indifference, none of us is qualified to judge other believers for what they do. If that person is acting according to his conscience, and according to God's will for his life, then we cannot criticise him because we may not agree with his actions. One day, we will all answer to God for our actions, whether right or wrong. In the meantime, however, let us not put any stumbling block before those who believe they are doing right in the eyes of God.

Concerning matters of indifference and conscience, the apostle Paul writes:

Romans 14:4

⁽⁴⁾ Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. (See vv.1-12)

Romans 14:13

⁽¹³⁾ Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way.

Romans 14:14-16

⁽¹⁴⁾ I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. ⁽¹⁵⁾ But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. ⁽¹⁶⁾ Let not then your good be evil spoken of: (See vv.17-18)

Romans 14:19-21

⁽¹⁹⁾ Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. ⁽²⁰⁾ For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence. ⁽²¹⁾ *It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

Romans 14:22-23

⁽²²⁾ Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. ⁽²³⁾ And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. (See also Rom. 15:1-7; 1 Cor. 10:23 – 11:1)

Thus, we must observe that the Lord grants us liberty to exercise our conscience in all matters of indifference. However, this freedom of conscience should be subordinated to our love and concern for the moral and spiritual wellbeing of our brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Part 8

Obedience to Spiritual Leaders

God's Word requires that everyone submit to those whom he has set in authority over them. In the civil and legal realm, this includes civic rulers and governors together with judges, sheriffs, magistrates, and other officers of the law. In the moral and spiritual realm, it includes pastors, elders, and deacons. In this latter category, where the Holy Spirit has called and appointed these individuals to watch over the souls of God's people, they are responsible to God for feeding his flock, and for protecting that flock from false teaching. In consideration of these things, God's Word says:

Hebrews 13:17

- ⁽¹⁷⁾ Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you.

1 Peter 5:2-4

- ⁽²⁾ Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;
⁽³⁾ Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being examples to the flock. ⁽⁴⁾ And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. (See v.1)

The Holy Spirit Applies the Word

It is not the opinions of men upon which we must rely for a correct understanding of God's ways and will for our individual lives. Rather, it is the Holy Spirit of God. The Lord Jesus has given us the Holy Spirit to seal us unto God and also to teach us and guide us into all truth. Thus, the Scripture says:

John 14:26

- ⁽²⁶⁾ But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 16:13-15

- ⁽¹³⁾ Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. ⁽¹⁴⁾ He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show *it* unto you. ⁽¹⁵⁾ All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show *it* unto you. (See also 1 Cor. 2:6-16)

But how can a believer come to know all the truth of God, if he or she does not spend time prayerfully studying and meditating on the Word of God? How can the Holy Spirit guide a believer from God's Word, if he or she does not make regular use of the appointed means of grace? In this instance, the means of grace are the public preaching and teaching of the Word of God, and the private daily searching of the Scriptures for ourselves. Thus, God's Word says:

Acts 2:42

⁽⁴²⁾ And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Acts 17:11

⁽¹¹⁾ These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

1 Timothy 4:13

⁽¹³⁾ Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

1 Timothy 4:16

⁽¹⁶⁾ Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

The Bible is the sole source of food for the believer's soul, and of light for his life. Each one of God's redeemed children needs to spend time listening to the teaching of God's Word. Each son or daughter of God also needs to study and meditate upon that Word, privately and prayerfully.

Deuteronomy 32:45-47

⁽⁴⁵⁾ And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel: ⁽⁴⁶⁾ And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. ⁽⁴⁷⁾ For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life: and through this thing ye shall prolong *your* days in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.

The Holy Spirit Applies the Word (Scripture References)

The Holy Spirit is the one who imparts life to the soul through the reading of God's Word. It is by this means also that the Spirit of God carries out the ongoing work of sanctification. Apart from the spiritually energising work and illuminating power of God's Spirit, we would not be able to comprehend the significance of God's Word or understand its spiritual truths. Thus, we must seek to read the Word of God prayerfully—and this is essential—and with the guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Concerning the essential work of the Holy Spirit in understanding and applying God's Word, the Scriptures say:

John 6:63-64a

⁽⁶³⁾ It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life. ^(64a) But there are some of you that believe not...

2 Corinthians 3:5-6

- ⁽⁵⁾ Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency *is* of God; ⁽⁶⁾ Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. (See vv.1-18)

1 Corinthians 2:9-16

- ⁽⁹⁾ But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. {Isaiah 64:4} ⁽¹⁰⁾ But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

- ⁽¹¹⁾ For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. ⁽¹²⁾ Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. ⁽¹³⁾ Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ⁽¹⁴⁾ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. ⁽¹⁵⁾ But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

- ⁽¹⁶⁾ For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? {Isaiah 40:13}

But we have the mind of Christ. (See vv.1-8)

Defending the Truth against False Teaching

We, who by God's grace *know* the truth, must hold steadfastly *to* the truth. Many people will attempt to discredit God's Word. Often, this is because they do not want God's Word to condemn their sinful deeds, or to remind them that they are living under God's wrath and will yet face his final judgment. Thus, we must hold fast to the truth. With much love and concern for the lost, we must present the truth to them in all its living power. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we must feed the unadulterated truth of God's Word to his own people. Only then will the church and people of God be properly equipped to grow in the faith, and to defend themselves against the enemy and against false teaching. For these and other reasons, God's Word says:

1 John 2:20

- ⁽²⁰⁾ But ye have an unction [*anointing*] from the Holy One, and ye know all things. (See vv.18-25)

1 John 2:26-27

- ⁽²⁶⁾ These *things* have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. ⁽²⁷⁾ But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

2 Timothy 2:14-18a

⁽¹⁴⁾ Of these things put *them* in remembrance, charging *them* before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, *but* to the subverting of the hearers.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. ⁽¹⁶⁾ But shun profane *and* vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. ⁽¹⁷⁾ And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; ^(18a) Who concerning the truth have erred...

2 John 1:9-11

⁽⁹⁾ Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. ⁽¹⁰⁾ If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him Godspeed: ⁽¹¹⁾ For he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds. (See vv.7-8)

Epilogue

In studying these notes on the divine inspiration of the Bible, we have now completed our introductory study to the series, *Bible Truths Explained*. We have laid our foundation for these studies on God's eternal and infallible Word, the Bible. Each of the *Bible Truths Explained* subjects that follow this introduction will consider one of the major Bible truths or doctrines. This will include the Bible's teaching on such subjects as *the fall of man, sin, predestination, repentance, faith, regeneration, justification, sanctification*, and many more (although not necessarily in this order). We hope that you will follow these subsequent studies of these most precious and foundational truths, and that by so doing God will bless you richly through your prayerful and careful searching of his eternal living Word.

May God continue to bless you in your work and service for him, and may you yourselves be a great blessing to others as you seek to bring them into contact with the truths of God's Word.

Let us, then, depend on God, and on his Son, Jesus Christ. He will provide for our every need. Let us live by the Spirit; faithfully bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit. Then, we will experience the power of the Lord in our lives; together with that sorrow or persecution to which the Lord has called us. To God be the glory for what he has done!

Jude 1:24-25

⁽²⁴⁾ Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, ⁽²⁵⁾ To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.