|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  | | --- | | **Foundations *Pentecostal Theology- Knowing***  ***the Bible***  I. ***Introduction:*** A series of sweeping waves of revival have coursed across the face of the twentieth century already. At least **four discernible** “times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord” have been manifest in this era, and all seem to have these **two things in common**: (1) they have touched every sector of the Church, with all denominations being impacted to some degree; and (2) they have been uniquely marked by an expanded realization of the role of the Holy Spirit—Third Person of the Godhead—in the life and task of the Church. It is neither sectarian nor self-serving for any Pentecostal to observe the now historical fact that the revival which God used to introduce this succession of revivals bears his own name, one which is drawn from the birth of the Church itself—Pentecost. **At the onset of this century, first in Topeka, Kansas, and then at Azusa Street, in Los Angeles, California**, the manifestation of the Holy Spirit resulted in an awakening which even today continues to affect the Church everywhere. What God did through **Luther** in recovering the message of salvation and did through **Wesley** in recovering the message of holy life and service, He did through the early Pentecostal revival in recovering the dynamism of the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Church. Since then, the evidence abounds to the fact that growth in evangelism has been compounded by broader, warmer response to the Spirit and His workings, as believers everywhere open to seasonal outpourings from Heaven. And now, a time in which we stand expectantly anticipating a new outbreak of God’s Grace across the face of the earth. The renewal of the past two decades has receded as a tide, only to prepare us for the rise of a new and mightier wave of blessing. With deep conviction, I view this lesson as suited to a new age of Spirit-filled service in the authority of Jesus’ name. But it is not only the timeliness of this lesson which gives it special value, it is its uniqueness. The title of this lesson has been thoughtfully chosen, indicating it is answering to a specific need: **“Foundations,”** because we live in a philosophically relativistic culture which has lost any mooring to the steadfast and absolute. The “rooted and grounded” realities of Divine revelation need to be freshly asserted, that this generation of believers be firmly planted and built up “according to the pattern.” The plumb line of God’s Word is the standard with which all teaching and preaching must align, and it is firmly adhered to throughout this book. **“Pentecostal,”** because all truth must be made alive by the Holy Spirit in order to be reproductive and refreshing. **E. M. Bounds** warned of truth without life as the “letter which kills,” and which, though of excellent scholarship, becomes “as barren as a field sown with pearls.” In contrast, the quality inherent in this lesson is that same trait which enabled Peter to rise with a text from Joel in hand, and to infuse it with contemporary relevance. The Holy Spirit wants to speak to **today**, and the vitality of the Spirit manifest herein makes ancient verities throb with life. **“Theology,”** because all that we ultimately need, now or forever, is summarized in knowing God, and in | | although stories and parables are permitted, we should usually communicate biblical knowledge through structure expositions, in plain and direct speech. Let me explain why it is wrong to say that Jesus used parables to make spiritual truths easier to understand.  **First**, Jesus’ disciples did not under even the foundational parable until he explained it to them. In **Mark 4**, after telling the parable of the sower to the crowd (vv. 1-9), his disciples come in private to ask for the interpretation: “And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable” (v.10). Those who obsess about riches are like fields of thistles and thorns that do not allow the seeds of the kingdom to grow (The Shepherd of Hermas). Though God is everywhere, he comes especially near to us in our human nature by sowing the seed of his Word through the incarnation in the ground of our human souls (Clement of Rome). The seed was lost not through the fault of the sower but through the unreadiness of the soil to receive it (Chrysostom). Mark withheld elaborate analytical exposition of the parables because the things signified by them were beyond the power of ordinary words to express (Origen). The parable of the sower is a foundational parable, and Jesus suggest that they would not understand other parables unless they could understand this one. Some people claim that spiritual truths are more difficult to understand when communicated in plain speech, without using parables or allegories. But how can anyone who has ever heard or stated any spiritual truth sincerely assert this. The disciples themselves aid that they preferred Jesus to speak “clearly” and that it was easier for them to understand and believe him when he spoke “‘without figures of speech’ – ‘disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God’” (John 16:29-30). To paraphrase, the disciple said to Jesus, “you have to stop using figures of speech, parables, and | |  | |  |   Solomon. The opening words (1:1) name him, as do sections 10:1—22:16 and 25:1—29:27. A close resemblance between 22:17—24:34 and Chapters 1–9 suggest that Solomon wrote proverbs here as well. Solomon’s relevance is supported by his having written “three thousand proverbs” (1 Kin. 4:32; 5:12, Heb.). The biblical proverbs in 1–29 comprise only 851 verses, compared with the 3,000, fewer than one third.  In his earlier life, Solomon prayed for wisdom, and God gave him an extraordinary endowment (1 Kin. 3:5–28; 10:1). Even when the Queen of Sheba asked him every question she could think of, he answered with an amazing grasp of things. Blessed from God, he certainly would have qualified above others to pen the proverbs in this book. The date of the proverbs would fall within his reign (971—931 B.C.), preferably in the earlier part, before his marriages and his wives’ gods brought a drift from God (1 Kin. 11:1–8).  Proverbs in 25–29 were by Solomon but preserved and copied much later during Hezekiah’s great spiritual revival (25:1; cf. 2 Chr. 29–32), about 715–686 B.C.  Wisdom about prayer would be apt from Solomon’s earlier days. He himself prayed and received remarkable perception. He also led his people in prayer as in dedicating the temple (cf. comments on 1 Kin. 3:8–9).  Agur and Lemuel. After Solomon’s proverbs, writers are said to be Agur (30:1) and King Lemuel (31:1). Agur’s identity is unknown, but God supplied many skilled men in Judah, whether prophets, priests, nobles or scribes. |  | |  | | --- | | **Foundations of Pentecostal Theology** - Guy P. Duffield and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave  © 1983, 1987 by L.I.F.E. Bible College at Los Angeles  **I. Foundations Pentecostal Introduction (pages [pg.] 1-2)**  **Table of Contents (pg. 2-3)**  **CHAPTER ONE**  **The Doctrine of the Scriptures** **(pg. 4).**  **I. Names of the Scriptures (pg. 4-5)**  **II. Divisions of the Scriptures (pg. 5-7)**  **III. Writers of the Scriptures (pg. 7-8)**  **IV. Canon of the Scriptures (pg. 8-12)**  **V. Inerrancy of the Scriptures (pg.12-15)**  **VI. Inspiration of the Scriptures (pg. 15-19)**  **VII. Symbols of the Scriptures (pg. 19-20)**  **VIII. Holy Spirit and the Scriptures (pg. 20-22)**  **IX. How the Scriptures came to us (pg. 22-29)**  **X. Scriptures in English (pg.29-32)**  **References Books**  **1. King James Version (KJV/ASV)**  **2. The Revised Standard Version (RSV)**  **3. New American Standard Bible (NASB)** | |  | | Patristic Real-Life Baptist Church  Virginia Beach, VA 23454  Bible Study  August 2019  Dr. Harry Allen Hall | |

knowing Him in terms of **all** His counsel. It is in that respect that **Drs. Duffield** and **Van Cleave** have served us especially well. They not only expound the riches of traditional theological themes, but with depth and balance provide a development of those facets of God’s Being, Working and Power, which have become better understood to the Church at large in the last fourscore years—the Working of the Holy Spirit **in** the Church, the Gifts of the Spirit distributed **through** the Church, and the Healing Life of Christ **amid** the Church. These and other related themes deserve to be understood and exercised in **all** the Church throughout **all** of the world. This, then, is not a theology for Pentecostals alone. Its Pentecostal quality does not take its thrust from a movement a short century old, but from that Spirit which brought forth the Church on a day by that name. Here is truth for the Body of Christ, which will cause the preaching of the saving Word and the teaching of sound words to glorify Jesus Christ the Lord and to edify His people.

**Table of Contents**

**CHAPTER ONE**

**THE DOCTRINE OF THE SCRIPTURES (page 4-)**

**A. Introduction**

**I. THEN NAMES OF THE SCRIPTURES (pages 4-5)**

A. The Bible

B. Other names

**II. THE DIVISIONS OF THE SCRIPTURES (page 5-7)**

A. The two Testaments

B. Divisions in the Old Testament

C. Divisions in the New Testament

D**.** Chapters and verses

**III.** **THE WRITERS OF THE SCRIPTURES (page 7-8)**

**IV. THE CANON OF THE SCRIPTURES (pages 8-12)**

A. The canon of the Old Testament

B. The Apocrypha

C. The canon of the New Testament

D. Tests used to determine canonicity

**V.** **THE INERRANCY OF THE SCRIPTURES (pages 12-15)**

A. Definition of inerrancy

B. The testimony to inerrancy

**VI.** **THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES (pages 15-19)**

A. Definition of inspiration

B. Revelation, inspiration and illumination distinguished

C. Meaning of inspiration

**VII.** **THE SYMBOLS OF THE SCRIPTURES (pages 19-20)**

A. Mirror

B. Critic

C. Seed

D. Laver and water

E. Lamp and light

F. Fire

G. Hammer

H. Sword

I. Food

**VIII.** **THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE SCRIPTURES (pages 20-22)**

**IX. HOW THE SCRIPTURES CAME TO US (pages 22-29)**

A. Ancient writing materials

B. A Codex

C. Ancient writing instruments

D. Languages used

E. Manuscripts

F. Versions

G. Biblical criticism

H. Evidences for the Biblical text

**X.** **THE SCRIPTURES IN ENGLISH (pages 29-32)**

A. The earliest beginnings

B. John Wycliffe

C. William Tyndale

D. Other Sixteenth Century translations

E. Recent Translations of the English Bible

***CHAPTER ONE***:

**THE DOCTRINE OF THE SCRIPTURES**

A. Introduction: God is a God Who desires to reveal Himself. He does not remain silent like the gods of the heathen, both ancient and modern. The Lord takes pleasure in making Himself known to His creatures. He is pictured as a God of love; love must always communicate itself, and that revelation must come from God Himself. The thoughts of a man can only be disclosed by the man himself. Likewise, only God can make Himself known. The God of the Bible is a God Who speaks. From Creation, all down through history, God revealed Himself by speaking. He spoke and the universe sprang forth. “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth” (Ps. 33:6). Through the years He had conveyed His Will and purposes by speaking to chosen men, with the greatest of all revelations in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God … And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.…” (John. 1:1–14). “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by [lit., in] his Son …” (Heb. 1:1, 2).

1. It has pleased God that all these revelations of Himself should have been preserved for Mankind today in the book we call the Bible. Many **naturalists** have claimed that the only revelation of God they need can be found in nature, and they do not need the special revelation contained in the Bible. It is true, that if God is the Creator of all nature, as the Bible declares that He is, then nature will reveal much about the One Who brought it into existence. But nature’s revelation of God is very limited. Certainly, the God Who created this amazing world, to say nothing of the vast universe of which it is a minute part, must be a God of great Wisdom and Power. But here the revelation stops. Nature tells us nothing of the marvelous Love of God, nor of His Holiness, nor of the Grace that has provided salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. All of God’s great purposes and plans for Mankind are revealed only in the written word, the Bible. There is a view, held rather widely in some intellectual circles, that the Bible is the account of **Man’s age-long efforts to find God**. If this were so, there would be in it no authority or sense of Divine revelation, but merely the account of Man’s groping for truths far above his abilities to obtain. Rather than the **Bible containing Man’s efforts to find God**, it is **the account of God’s efforts to reveal Himself to Man.** It is of the greatest importance, then, that we understand something concerning its origin, its formation, its authority, inerrancy and Divine inspiration. These will be considered under the study of Bibliology.

**Bibliology** - the topic in systematic theology that deals with issues of the nature and character of the Bible. Bibliology attempts to understand what kind of book the Bible is, how it is authoritative for Christian faith and practice, and to what extent and in what manner the Bible is to be understood as divine revelation.

**i. THE NAMES OF THE SCRIPTURES:**

1. The Bible. Our English word “Bible” comes from the Greek word *biblos* meaning “a book.” “The Book [*biblos*] of the generation of Jesus Christ” (Matt. 1:2); also, from *biblion*, a miniscule form of *biblos*, meaning “little book.” “And there was delivered unto Him the book [*biblion*] … and when he had opened the book [*biblion*]” (Luke. 4:17). The word *biblos* comes from the word given to the inner pulp of the papyrus reed on which ancient books were written.

2. Other Names. The Bible is also called “**The Scripture**” (Dan. 10:21; Mark. 12:10, 15:28; Luke 4:21; John 2:22, 7:38, 10:35; Rom. 4:3; Gal. 4:30; 2 Pet. 1:20), and “**The Scriptures**” (Matt. 22:29; Mark 12:24; Luke 24:27; John 5:39; Acts 17:11; Rom. 1:2; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; 2 Tm. 3:15; 2 Pet. 3:16). These terms signify “**Holy writings**.” Once Paul uses “**the holy scriptures**” (Rom. 1:2), and once “**the sacred writings**” (2 Tm. 3:15 RSV), and once “**the oracles of God**” (Rom. 3:2). One of the most descriptive and satisfying names is “**The Word of God**” (Mark 7:13; Rom. 10:17; 2 Cor. 2:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12).

a) ***Old Testament names***; Exod. 20:1; words: Exod. 32:28, 34:19; Lev. 10:7, 23:5; counsel Dan. 4:27; works are truth Dan. 4:37; interpretation Dan. 4:24; man ignorance Dan. 2:27-28, 2:47; wisdom promised Dan. 1:17; ancient Job 12:12; Ps. 77:5; Dan. 7:9, 7:21-22. Writing Exod. 32:16; Deut. 10:4, 31:24-26; 1 Chr. 28:19; 2 Chr. 2:11, 21:12-15, 35:2-4, 36:22-23, Ezr. 1:1-2, 1:4-7; Esther 1:21-22, 3:12, 3:14, 4:8, 8:8-9, 8:13, 9:26-28, 13:9; Dan. 5:7-8, 5:15-17, 5:25, 6:8-10; Is. 38:9-10; Ezk. 3:9.

b) The authorship, the historical occasion of the writing, the main theme, and other points of especial interest are brought out. Whenever possible the aim has been to strike the “key note” of the book and open up its deeper spiritual meaning.

**II. THE DIVISIONS OF THE SCRIPTURES:**

A. **The Two Testaments**. The Bible is divided into two sections known as the Old and the New Testaments. The word “testament” was originally translated “covenant,” and signifies the thought that each is a covenant which God made with His people. There are thirty-nine (39) books in the Old Testament and twenty-seven (27) in the New Testament. An easy way to remember these numbers is to take the number of letters in either “Old Testament” or “New Testament.” In either case you have three and nine letters. Three **placed** beside nine gives the number of books—39—in the Old Testament, while three **multiplied** by nine—27—gives the number of books in the New Testament.

B. **Divisions in the Old Testament (OT)**. The Hebrew Old Testament was commonly divided into three sections:

1. **The Law** (*Torah*), 5 books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

**Torah** - the first part of the Hebrew canon, corresponding to the Pentateuch (first five books). It is traditionally translated “law” based upon the Greek translation of Hebrew *tȏrȃ* in the Septuagint, *nomos*. More recent attempts at translation use “instruction” as a way to avoid the theological and judicial associations of law, and to acknowledge that *tȏrȃ* is more than law in the narrow, legal sense. The Torah encompasses all that the first five books of the Bible contain—saga, laws, songs, genealogies, and so forth. The term can also be used of the OT as a whole, including even the Talmud, so it comes to have the sense of God’s revelation as a whole and not just commands or laws. Instructive are passages such as Psalm 1:2, where the righteous “delight” in Torah, and Psalms 19 and 119, which are extended poems on the worth of Torah. Torah sets forth the fundamentals of Israelite faith and functions as the norm for judging all subsequent experiences of God.

2. **The Prophets** (*Nebhiim-[nuh VEE eem]* ), 8 books:

a) **Former Prophets**—Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, and

b) **Latter Prophets**—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, The Twelve.

c) **The Writings** (*Kethbhim [kih THOO veem*]), 11 books:

(1) **Poetical Books**—Psalms, Proverbs, Job;

(2) **Five Rolls** (*Megilloth*)—Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Esther, Ecclesiastes;

(3) **Historical Books**—Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles.

These divisions are in keeping with Jesus’ words, “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” (Luke. 24:44). Sometimes the Old Testament is more briefly referred to as “the law and the prophets” (Matt. 5:17 RSV; 11:13; Acts 13:15). Even more briefly, the term “law” seems to include the other divisions (John. 10:34, 12:34, 15:25; 1 Cor. 14:21).

C. **Divisions in the New Testament (NT)**.

1. Biographical (4 books): Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.

**Biographical** - dealing with a particular person’s life: *biographical information.*

2. Historical (1 book): Acts.

3. Pedagogical (ped•a•gog•i•cal ) (21 books): Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude.

**Pedagogical -** (most commonly understood as the approach to teaching) refers more broadly to the theory and practice of learning, and how this process influences, and is influenced by, the psychological development of learners.

4. Prophetic (1 book): Revelation.

Sometimes the following alternate divisions are suggested:

a) The Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

b) The Acts of the Apostles

c) The Epistles of Paul (including Hebrews)

d) The General Epistles

e) The Book of Revelation.

D. **Chapters and Verses.**

1. The Bible was not originally divided into chapters and verses as we know it today. For convenience of reference, these were added at comparatively recent dates. It used to be assumed that the chapter divisions were first introduced by Cardinal Hugo, who died in A.D. 1263. Later investigations have attributed them to Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, who died in 1228. The New Testament was first published with verse divisions by **Robert Stephans in 1551**. The first Bible to be published entirely divided into verse was the Geneva Bible of 1560. It is of considerable importance that the student realize that these divisions were not in the original texts and were not inspired. Most of the divisions are very helpful, but some have proven to be quite misleading in that they have come right in the middle of the subject being dealt with; and there is the tendency to think that a new subject is being introduced when a chapter ends and a new one begins. One must, many times, completely ignore the chapter division. Two simple examples of this are as follows: In Acts chapter twenty-two, Paul’s address is cut off from the events that led up to it as recorded in the previous chapter. John 7:53 and 8:1 read together, without the chapter break, present a significant contrast: “And every man went unto his own house. Jesus went into the mount of Olives.” According to figures given by **William Evans**, the English Bible, **KJV**: “contains **1,189** chapters, **31,173** verses, and **773,692** words. Of these, 929 chapters, 23,214 verses, and 592,439 words occur in the Old Testament, and 260 chapters, 7,959 verses, and 181,253 words in the New.”

**III. The Writers of the Scriptures**

A. The Bible is one Book, but it is also many books written by at least forty (40) different authors, over a period of not less than 1,500 years, many of whom never saw each other. Yet its **unity and continuity** are so apparent it is easy to think of it having just one author—and that none other than God Himself.

B. Of the sixty-six different books in the Bible, the authors of fifty-five (**55**) are well identified by history and tradition. The eleven (**11**) books whose authors are not known are: Judges, Ruth (guess work-Samuel could have been the writer), 1 and 2 Samuel (guess work-Samuel up to 1Sam. 25 [hiss death]; Nathan and Gad completed the writing [1 Chr. 29:29 ASV], could have been the writer), 1 and 2 Kings (guess work-Jeremiah is the traditional writer; modern scholarships assigns the authorship to “the prophets”, 1 and 2 Chronicles (guess work-probably Ezra), Esther (guess work- could Mordecai have been the writer), Job (guess work- Elihu) and Hebrews (guess work-the writing is Pauline. In my opinion, peter identifies Paul as the writer [2 Pet. 3:15-16; 1 Pet. 1:1]). Some books, such as Genesis, Judges, 1 and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles, cover such long periods of history it is possible that they are collections of ancient records brought together and edited by some individual chosen by God, toward the end of the historical period described in the book. For instance, Moses could be the compiler of the book of Genesis. If this is so, then the actual number of writers contributing to the Bible, may be considerably more than forty. Psalms and Proverbs each have several authors. The superscriptions which appear at the head of many of the Psalms suggest at least seven different writers. In addition to Solomon, as the author of Proverbs, Agur is mentioned in 30:1 and King Lemuel in 31:1.

C. All of the authors, possibly excepting Luke, were Jews and wrote in the context of the Jewish religion. Yet, the words they wrote have the most universal appeal and interest, to people of all nations, of any words ever written.

D. It is most interesting to note the variety of occupational backgrounds which are represented by those authors who are known:

* Two of the writers were kings—David and Solomon
* Two were priests—Jeremiah and Ezekiel
* Luke was a physician
* Two were fishermen—Peter and John
* Two were shepherds—Moses and Amos
* Paul was a Pharisee and a theologian
* Daniel was a statesman
* Matthew was a tax collector
* Joshua was a soldier
* Ezra was a scribe
* Nehemiah was a butler.

The background and occupations of the others are largely unknown.

**IV. The Canon of Scriptures**

1. The word “canon” comes from the Greek *kanon*, meaning “a measuring rod or reed,” and signifies a rule, a standard. Hence, the Canon of the Bible consists of those books considered worthy to be included in the Holy Scriptures. According to authors Selby and West:

2. Canonization was the result of a centuries-long development, whereby only those writings that proved useful for faith and worship were elevated to such a decisive role. The Canon, that is to say, was determined not so much by Rabbinic or Church decree as by the intrinsic merit of each separate book and its reception by the worshipping community for the inspiration or edification it offered.”

Another author expresses it this way: “The various books possessed and exercised divine authority long before men ever made pronouncements to that effect. Ecclesiastical councils did not give the books their divine authority, but merely recognized that they both had it and exercised it.”

A. The Canon of the Old Testament.

1. Any consideration of the actual times when the canon of the Old Testament was closed leads to a variety of opinions among Biblical scholars. The Old Testament says nothing on the subject; although, it does give many suggestions of the beginnings of the writings of God’s laws that they might be kept for the people. Exodus chapter seventeen tells of the victory of the children of Israel over Amalek as Moses’ hands were held aloft before the Lord, and verse fourteen reads: “And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua.…” Exodus 24:3, 4 records the writing of God’s words and judgments: “And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do. Moses wrote all the words of the Lord.…” Deuteronomy chapter thirty-one gives the account of Moses writing the Law, which was to be kept and read to the people of Israel every seven years:

And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests of the sons of Levi … and Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing (vv. 9–11).

This occasion could well mark the very earliest beginning of the Old Testament Canon, for we read: “And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites … saying, Take this book of the Law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee” (Dt. 31:24–26). Joshua, Moses’ successor, also wrote words, “in the book of the law of God” (Jos. 24:26). Samuel recorded certain events of his day in a book. We read: “Then Samuel told the rights and duties of the kingship and he wrote them in a book and laid it up before the Lord” (1 Sm. 10:25 RSV). Prophets in later times engaged in writing books. God speaks to Jeremiah, and says: “Take a scroll and write on it all the words which I have spoken to you against Israel and Judah and all the nations, from the day that I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah until today” (Jer. 36:2 RSV). Later generations are found consulting the writings of their predecessors. Daniel searches “in the books” and finds the prophet Jeremiah limited the duration in which Jerusalem was to be ravaged by the enemy to seventy years (Dn. 9:2). Later, when the people were assembled back in Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity, it was the Law of Moses that was read and honored (Neh. 8:1–8). During the reign of Josiah in Judah, the book of the Law of the Lord, which had been lost, was found: “And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord” (2 Kgs. 22:8). Josiah gathered the elders of Judah and Jerusalem together, “and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord” (2 Kgs. 23:2). Thus, we see the beginnings of what later became the Old Testament Scriptures.

2. George L. Robinson, in his article in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, after careful consideration of the many evidences available, concludes (following the Hebrew’s threefold division of the Old Testament) that the books of the Law were recognized as canonical during the time of Ezra (444 BCE); that the Prophets were recognized as such sometime later (around 200 BCE) and that the Writings received authorization around 100 BCE. Robinson is not saying that there were three separate canons, but that “there were three separate classes of writings, which between 450 BCE and 100 BCE doubtless stood on different bases, and only gradually became authoritative.”

**(B.C. change to BCE and A.D. change to CE)**

3. Other scholars hold to the belief that there were only two periods of canonization corresponding to “the law and the prophets,” and that the Old Testament Canon was completed about 400 BCE. Which of these positions is correct, is difficult to say? What is important is that the Old Testament Canon was, no doubt, complete at the time of Christ. Jesus referred to it as “The Scriptures,” saying, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life” (John. 5:39). We read: “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Lk. 24:27). In Luke 11:51 (RSV) there is an interesting statement of Jesus in which He spoke of the time “from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary.” Jesus was referring to the martyrs of the Old Testament. Abel was the first, as recorded in Genesis chapter four and Zechariah was the last, recorded in 2 Chronicles 24:20-21. In the Hebrew Bible, 2 Chronicles is the last book, while Genesis is the first. Thus, Jesus not only put His stamp of approval upon the entire Old Testament, from Genesis to 2 Chronicles, but gave indication that these books were in existence, and were approved at the time He was here on earth.

4. As further evidence of the completeness of the Old Testament Canon at this time, we have the testimony of the celebrated Jewish historian Flavius Josephus. In his writings, *Against Apion*, he states:

For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another, (like the Greeks have) but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which we justly believe to be divine … and how firmly we have given credit to these books of our own nation is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them, to take anything from them or to make any change in them; but it is become natural to all Jews immediately, and from their very birth, to esteem these books to contain Divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be, willingly to die for them.

5. In our Christian Bibles, there are thirty-nine (39) books in the Old Testament, while the Jewish Old Testament counts only twenty-four (24). This is explained by the facts: the twelve books of the Minor Prophets (Hosea through Malachi) are only one book; also, the following are only one book each—1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah. Thus, though there is no difference in the wording, the Hebrew Old Testament lists nine fewer titles. Josephus counted twenty-two (22), because he joined Ruth to Judges and Lamentations to Jeremiah.

B. The Apocrypha.

1. The word “Apocrypha,” as usually understood, means “Apocryphal Books” and refers to fourteen books which have been added to the Old Testament, and held to be part of the sacred canon, particularly by the Roman Catholic Church. Protestants generally do not include these in the Bible. The word literally has come to mean “hidden” or “concealed.” The Septuagint (LXX), the translation of the Old Testament into Greek made between 280 BCE and 180 BCE contained the apochryphal books. Jerome included them in his Latin translation of the Old Testament, called the Vulgate. These books are not a part of the Hebrew Bible. The Reformers were largely responsible for eliminating the Apocrypha from the Bible, because they contain things which are inconsistent with Protestant doctrine (e.g. the doctrines of prayer for the dead, and intercession to the saints). The following are the fourteen books which are in the Apocrypha, sometimes scattered throughout the Old Testament, and sometimes printed at the end of the Old Testament: **1 Esdras, 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, The Rest of Esther, The Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, with the Epistle of Jeremiah, The Song of the Three Holy Children, The History of Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, The Prayer of Manasses, 1 Maccabees, and 2 Maccabees.** Although parts of almost all the books of the Old Testament Canon are either quoted or directly referred to in the New Testament, there is no quotation or reference to any of the Apocryphal books.

C. The Canon of the New Testament.

1. It is much easier to trace the canonization of the twenty-seven (27) books of the New Testament than that of the Old Testament. There is much more evidence available. The books of the New Testament were written during the last half of the first century CE. The newly formed Christian church had the Old Testament Scriptures as the basis for their faith but, in addition to this, great importance was placed on the words of Jesus and the teachings of the Apostles. Thus, it was not long until the Gospels were being placed alongside of the Old Testament. The authority of the Apostles is fully attested. John declares, “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you” (1 Jn. 1:3); Peter says they “were eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Pet. 1:16); and of the early believers we read: “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship” (Acts 2:42).

2. Because the epistles of Paul were written to meet a specific need of a local church or individual, these would be cherished for their spiritual value and would be read in the churches. On several occasions, Paul gave definite instructions that his letters should be read and circulated. To the Thessalonian church he wrote: “I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren” (1 Thess. 5:27). To the church at Colosse he admonished: “And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea” (Col. 4:16). In order that this might be done, it is conceivable that a copy of the Colossian and Laodicean letters would have to be made. As this practice spread, it is easy to see that before too many years, compilations of Paul’s letters would be available.

3. The New Testament suggests a rather widespread distribution of these writings. John was instructed: “What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia” (Rev. 1:11). James was addressed “to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad” (James. 1:1). Peter’s first epistle was written “to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia” (1 Pet. 1:1). There is a strong suggestion of an early compilation of a canon of the New Testament to be recognized with the Old Testament Scripture:

And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction (2 Pet. 3:15, 16).

4. During the early years of the second century, the effect of the Church Fathers began to be felt. These were gifted students, teachers and church leaders. In their letters to the early churches they quoted profusely from the books which were to become the New Testament Canon. These letters bear distinct witness to the value of the book from which they quoted, placing them above their own words. Strange to say, a noted heretic, the Gnostic Marcion [not a likeable person] (140 CE) was used to inspire the recognition of some of the New Testament books, particularly the Epistles of Paul. **Marcion** **complied his own canon**, which included Luke’s gospel and ten of the Pauline epistles. **He rejected the Pastoral Epistles, Hebrews, Mark, John, Acts, the General Epistles and Revelation.** His actions brought forth much criticism, and a closer study of the books which he rejected. By the end of the second century, all but seven of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament were recognized as canonical. The seven books which were not fully recognized at that time were: Hebrews, 2 and 3 John, 2 Peter, Jude, James and Revelation.

5. Additional impetus toward the formation of a definite canon of the New Testament came from the persecutions ordered by Emperor Diocletian (302–305), at which time he ordered that the Scriptures should be burned with fire. Thus, it became necessary that a determination be made as to which books were Scripture. Christians must decide which books were worth suffering and dying for. The question of the canon had an earnest, practical significance. Within twenty-five years of the Dioclesian persecutions, **Constantine**, the new emperor, had embraced Christianity and ordered Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea and church historian, to prepare and distribute fifty copies of the New Testament. Thus, it was necessary to decide which books should be included.

6. It is not difficult to understand that, at the time the canon was being considered, there were many books in existence which would lay claim to consideration. These writings were generally divided into what has been called the pseudepigrapha and the apocrypha. In the former are included a group of spurious and heretical books which are considered false writings. They were virtually never recognized by any council nor quoted by the Church Fathers. Many heretical doctrines, such as those held by the Gnostics, who denied the Incarnation of Christ; the Docetics, who denied the reality of Christ’s humanity; and the Monophysites, who rejected the dual nature of Christ are found in these books. Over 280 of these have been listed, grouped under the headings: Gospels, Acts, Epistles, Apocalypses and Others. Geisler and Nix state: “Whatever fragments of truth they preserve are obscured both by their religious fancy and heretical tendencies. The books are not only uncanonical but are not of much value for religious or devotional purposes. Their main value is historical, revealing the beliefs of their composers.”

7. The books listed as the New Testament Apocrypha were those which were held in high esteem by at least one of the Fathers. Though they contain much helpful information concerning the history of the Early Church, they have never been accepted into the canon of the New Testament. Some of the most popular of these are: The Epistle of Pseudo-Barnabas (70–79), The Epistle to the Corinthians (96), Shepherd of Hermas (115–140), The Didache Teaching of the Twelve (100–120), Epistle to the Laodiceans (4th century?), Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians (108), and The Seven Epistles of Ignatius (110).

8. Athanasius (born about 298 A.D.), in one of his pastoral epistles, lists all twenty-seven books of the New Testament as Scripture. At the third council of Carthage (397) the Western Christian churches settled on the final form of the New Testament Canon. Thus, by the end of the fourth century all twenty-seven books were received. So, Geisler and Nix conclude: “Once discussions resulted in the recognition of the twenty-seven canonical books of the New Testament canon there have been no moves within Christendom to add to it or take away from it.”

D. Tests Used to Determine Canonicity.

The following principles were used to determine a book’s place in the canon:

1. *Apostlicity*. Was the book written by an Apostle, or one who was closely associated with the Apostles? This question was especially important in relation to Mark, Luke, Acts and Hebrews; inasmuch as, Mark and Luke were not among the original twelve and the authorship of Hebrews was not known.

2. *Spiritual content*. Was the book being read in the churches and did its contents prove a means of spiritual edification? This was a most practical test.

3. *Doctrinal soundness*. Were the contents of the book doctrinally sound? Any book containing heresy, or that which was contrary to the already accepted canonical books was rejected.

4. *Usage*. Was the book universally recognized in the churches, and was it widely quoted by the Church Fathers?

5. *Divine inspiration*. Did it give true evidence of Divine inspiration? “This was the ultimate test; everything finally had to give way to it.”

**V. The Inerrancy of the scriptures**

A. Definition of Inerrancy.

1. The inerrancy of the Scripture means that in its original autographs the Bible contains no mistakes. In the original languages in which it was written, it is absolutely infallible—without error whatever. This has been the position of all the confessions of the great evangelical churches down through the years.

2. In contrast to this, atheists, agnostics and liberal theologians have declared the Bible to be full of errors. Indeed, there are those who teach a “limited inerrancy,” claiming the Bible to be inerrant in matters of faith and practice, but not necessarily so in scientific and historical matters. The problem with this position is, who is going to decide what is true and what is not? If one cannot have a positive faith in the infallability of this Book, how can he speak with final authority when it comes to matters of eternity? Why is this question so vitally important? Why cannot one come to the Bible as he does any other book? When he reads any other book, a man will take what he believes and leave that with which he is not in accord. Why cannot he do the same, as many are advocating, with the Bible?

B. The Testimony to Inerrancy.

1. *From whence does this doctrine of inerrancy come.*

a) From the Scriptures themselves. It claims to be inspired by God. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16). “For the prophecy came not in old times by the will of men, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet. 1:21).

b) Old Testament Writers. The writers of the Old Testament are most explicit in claiming they were speaking the Word of God. They claim 3,808 times to be transmitting the very words of God. Moses declared: “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it” (Dt. 4:2). The Psalmist cried: “The law of the Lord is perfect … the testimony of the Lord is pure” (Ps. 19:7 NASB). Samuel declared: “The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue” (2 Sm. 23:2). Isaiah wrote: “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken” (Is. 1:2). Jeremiah quotes the words of the Lord to him: “Whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak … behold I have put my words in thy mouth” (Jer. 1:7, 9). Ezekiel tells of his commission: “Thou shalt speak my words unto them” (Ez. 2:7), and “Speak with my words unto them” (Ez. 3:4). Each and all of these declared that they were speaking God’s words. Thus the Old Testament testifies concerning itself.

c) New Testament Writers. The New Testament writers also bear witness to the fact that the Old Testament was God speaking.

(1) In the Gospels. “All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophets” (Matt. 1:22). “As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began” (Luke 1:70). “For David himself said by the Holy Ghost …” (Mark. 12:36).

(2) In the Epistles. The Apostles also gave their witness to the perfections of the Old Testament Scriptures. Paul said of the Law that it was holy, and “the commandment, holy and righteous and good” (Rom. 7:12 NIV). The writer of Hebrews regarded the Word of God as living and effectual, going so far as to judge even our feelings and innermost thoughts. (Heb. 4:12). James describes the Word as “the perfect law of liberty” (Jas. 1:22–25). He regarded its complete authority when he issued the warning: “Think ye the scripture saith in vain?” (Jas. 4:5). John brings the written revelation to a close with the words:

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: 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 (Rv. 22:18, 19).

Thus, toward the beginning, (Dt. 4:2; 12:32), in the middle (Prv. 30:6), and at the end of the Scriptures (Rv. 22:18, 19), God warns against tampering with His Word, by adding to or taking from its message.

d) Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself bore witness to the Scripture. Christ specifically confirmed the whole of the Old Testament. He did not find one error or inconsistency in it. He continually based His arguments and exhortations on it. He declared, “… one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Mt. 5:18). Discussing just one word with the Jews, He said, “The scripture cannot be broken” (Jn. 10:35). In Luke 24:44 Jesus said, “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.” These three sections comprise all of the Old Testament.

e) Jesus referred to many Old Testament persons and events, and thus bore testimony to the authenticity and authority of the Old Testament. It is interesting to note, from the following list, that Jesus put His stamp of approval on some of the events and miracles of the Old Testament which have always been under greatest question by the critics. He approved the account of the following:

* Creation and marriage—Matthew 19:5
* The Deluge and Noah’s ark—Luke 17:26, 27
* The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah—Luke 17:28, 29
* The destruction of Tyre and Sidon—Matthew 11:21, 22
* Circumcision—John 7:22
* The Passover—Matthew 26:2
* The Law—John 7:19
* The Commandments—Matthew 19:7–9
* The Jewish law of divorce—Matthew 19:7–9
* The fact of the burning bush—Mark 12:26
* The type of Jonah and the great fish—Matthew 12:40
* The repentance of Ninevah—Matthew 12:41
* The glory of Solomon—Matthew 6:29
* The wisdom of Solomon—Matthew 12:42
* The Feast of Tabernacles—John 7
* David eating the shewbread—Matthew 12:3
* The priests profaning the Sabbath—Matthew 12:5
* The heavens shut up in Elijah’s day—Luke 4:25
* The story of Naaman the leper—Luke 4:27
* The record of the brazen serpent—John 3:14, 15
* The murder of Abel and Zacharias—Matthew 23:35
* The mission of Messiah—Luke 4:16–21
* The mission of John the Baptist—Matthew 17:10–13
* The mission of Elias—Matthew 17:10–13
* Daniel and his great prophecy—Matthew 24:15.

2. *The Bible is a unique revelation of truth*.

The Bible is a revelation of truths about which Man can never know apart from what it tells him. Man asks: Who am I? From where did I come? Where am I going? What about immortality, Heaven, Hell, judgment, eternity? What does Man know, what can he know apart from the Bible? Many are virtually making their own god. What good is a god that a man can make himself? He does not need such. If he can make him, then man is bigger than his god, and so does not need him. No one, or no nation, has ever revealed a god such as the God of the Holy Scriptures. Chafer says the Bible is infinite because it discloses truth concerning the Infinite God, infinite holiness, infinite sin, and infinite redemption. It seems to prove itself infinite, for “no human mind has fully comprehended its message or measured its values.” The Christian is not embarrassed in the least that he cannot explain everything about God. God would not be God if this were possible. One never worships what he can understand. It is only when he gets beyond the realm of his own comprehension that he bows his head and lifts his hands in worship.

Who is Jesus? What is He like? Can He do anything for the human soul? Does He have anything vital to say to Mankind? Does, indeed, Man’s eternal soul’s welfare depend upon Him? Some would advocate that we do not worry about the infallibility of the Bible—just follow Jesus! Some liberal teachers have said, “Christ alone is the Word of God! We believe without reservation in the Word of God, but it is Jesus alone Who is the Word.” This sounds very pious, but what does Man know about Jesus apart from what is revealed in the Bible? Our total source of information about Him is in this Book. If one cannot depend upon the Word for information about other things, then how can he be sure it is correct in what it tells us about Jesus?

3. *The Bible is an unchanging revelation*.

Much of the uncertainty and unbelief in the Bible have come from the so-called scientists. Because the inerrancy of the Bible is on the level of observable facts, it is most open to attacks from the skeptical and unbelieving scholars. Science has assumed an aura of authority and almost infallibility. Many have made a virtual god out of it. The word “science” simply means “knowledge,” and is to be neither worshipped nor feared. The significant thing about science is that it is constantly having to change its conclusions as fresh facts come to life. Scientific textbooks only a few years old are virtually out of date today, while the Bible has not had to be altered in the least degree over the thousands of years since it was written. Why should one doubt a Book that has withstood the centuries, and every attack leveled against it, for sciences that have to be revised every few years? The Bible is not a textbook of science, but it has never been proven wrong in any scientific fact. The Genesis account of Creation still stands.

4. *The Bible is right morally and spiritually*.

Most important of all, the Bible is right morally and spiritually. It is not in the scientific realm that the Bible demonstrates its greatest accuracy, but in the moral and spiritual realm. Myer Pearlman concludes his section on Bibliology with the words: “Intellectual defenses of the Bible have their place; but after all, the best argument is the practical one. The Bible has worked. It has influenced civilizations, transformed lives, brought light, inspiration and comfort to millions. And its work continues.” And Scripture declares: “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” (1 Thess. 2:13).

**VI. The Inspiration of the Scriptures**

The Bible is an inerrant, infallible book—a Book of words, phrases and sentences which, as it was originally written, contains no errors whatsoever. This Book was written by man—fallen, weak, sinful man. Man, with all the potential of misunderstanding, misinterpretation, lack of memory, even the possibility of malicious falsehood. Yet it is claimed the Book he wrote contains no evidence whatever of all these natural weaknesses. In fact, it is claimed that not only was all that he wrote perfectly right—nothing must be removed from the record—but he left nothing out that should have been written—nothing must be added to it. It is not easy to believe that such a thing could be possible for one man of a fallen race. But this was accomplished through more than forty (40) different men, who lived over a span of more than 1,500 years; and many of them never saw nor conversed with each other, yet their writings in no way disagree. Only a miracle, and that a long-extended miracle, could bring this to pass. How could such a thing be possible? Through the mystery and miracle of Divine Inspiration!

A. Definition of Inspiration.

The Bible reveals the source of its magnificence: “All scripture is God-breathed.” This does not mean that the writers were “breathed into by God,” but that the Word was produced by the creative breath of God.

The Greek word in this passage *theopneustos* very distinctly does not mean “inspired of God.” … [it has] … nothing to say of inspiring or inspiration: it speaks only of “spiring” or “spiration.” What it says of Scripture is, not that it is “breathed into by God” or is the product of the Divine “inbreathing” into its human authors, but that it is breathed out by God, “God-breathed,” the product of the creative breath of God. In a word, what is declared by this fundamental passage is simply that the Scriptures are a Divine product, without any indication of how God has operated in producing them. No term could have been chosen, however, which would have more emphatically asserted the Divine production of Scripture than that which has been employed. The “breath of God” is in Scripture just the symbol of His almighty power, the bearer of His creative word.

Just as God breathed into Adam the “breath of life,” so He breathed into the body of Scripture the breath of His life. We also read, in 2 Peter 1:21: “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” This verse literally reads: “For the prophecy was not borne [or brought] by the will of man at any time, but men spoke from God, being borne [or brought] by the Holy Spirit.” Benjamin Warfield says:

The term here used is a very specific one. It is not to be confounded with guiding, or directing, or controlling, or even leading in the full sense of that word. It goes beyond all such terms, in assigning the effect produced specifically to the active agent. What is “borne” is taken up by the “bearer,” and conveyed by the “bearer’s” power, not its own, to the “bearer’s,” goal, not its own. The men who spoke from God are here declared, therefore, to have been taken up by the Holy Spirit and brought by His power to the goal of His choosing. The things which they spoke under this operation of the Spirit were, therefore, His things, not theirs.

B. Revelation, Inspiration, and Illumination Distinguished.

It is important to distinguish between revelation, inspiration, and illumination. Revelation is that act of God by which He directly communicates truth not known before to the human mind—truth which could not have been known in any other manner. Inspiration has to do with the communication of the truth. Evans says: “Revelation discovers new truth, while Inspiration superintends the communication of that truth.”

All that is in the Bible was not directly revealed to men. There is much history and many personal observations recorded there. What we are assured of is that the record is true. The Holy Spirit directed and influenced the writers so that, by inspiration, they were kept from every error of fact and doctrine. The Bible records the words and acts of God, men and the Devil. It is very important to take careful note of who is speaking. Dr. Wm. Evans has expressed it well:

Though all Scripture is inspired, it does not stamp with divine authority every sentence which it reports as uttered by the men of whom it speaks, nor does it mark with divine approval every action which it relates as performed by those with whose biographies it deals. In the book of Job, for example, Inspiration gives with equal accuracy the language of Jehovah, the words of Satan, and the speeches of Job and his three friends; but it does not therefore place them all on the same level of authority. Each speaker is responsible for his own utterances. Neither Satan, Job nor his three friends spoke by inspiration of God. They gave utterances to their own opinions; and all that Inspiration vouches for is that no one of them is misrepresented, but that each one spoke the sentiments that are attributed to him in Scripture.

Some confuse inspiration with illumination. Illumination refers to the influence of the Holy Spirit, common to all Christians, which helps them grasp the things of God. “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14). This illumination of spiritual things is promised to all believers and can be experienced by them. “In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight” (Lk. 10:21). Peter speaks of an interesting example where prophets were given inspiration to record great truths but were not given illumination to understand the exact meaning of what they prophesied.

Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify.… Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you … (1 Pet. 1:10–12).

Some try to explain the inspiration of the Scriptures as the result of this experience of illumination. They assert that within Man there is this spark of divine light which only needed to be fanned, as it were, to enable men of old to write the Bible. Myer Pearlman points out two specific differences between illumination and inspiration:

(1) As to duration, illumination is, or can be, permanent. “The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Prov. 4:18). The anointing that the believer has received of the Holy One abides in him, says John. “But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 John 2:27). On the other hand Inspiration was intermittent; the prophet could not prophesy at will, but was subject to the will of the Spirit. “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man,” declares Peter (2 Peter 1:21), “but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” The suddenness of prophetic inspiration is implied by the common expression, “The word of the Lord came to such an one.” A clear distinction is drawn between the true prophets, who speak only as the word of God comes to them, and the false prophets who speak a message of their own devising. (Jer. 14:14; 23:11, 16; Ezk. 13:2, 3).

(2) Illumination admits of degrees, Inspiration admits of none. People vary as to the degree of their illumination, some possessing a greater degree of insight than others. But in the case of Inspiration, in the Bible sense, a person is either inspired or he is not.

C. The Meaning of Inspiration.

What does this word “inspiration” really mean as it is applied to the Bible? Unfortunately, not all churchmen are agreed. Therefore, we have various theories of inspiration:

1. *Liberal views of inspiration*.

The liberal theologian’s view is expressed particularly in the statement: “The Bible contains the Word of God.” This suggests that it also contains a varied admixture of the words of men. Their position may be stated as follows: From place to place within the Book are to be found revelations which God at times gave to pious men, much as He illumines men’s minds today with insights into Divine truth. The Bible is a sort of religious scrap book in which are recorded stories, legends, geneologies, and love poems, classified, arranged and rearranged without any regard to chronological or literary perfection. The dangerous part of this view is that it places into the hands of finite, feeble and fallible Man the power to determine what and where God is speaking. Thus, Man is given power over Infinite Truth rather than taking a place under it.

2. *Neo-orthodox views of inspiration*.

These may be summarized by the statement that: “The Bible becomes the Word of God.” Let us consider two of these neo-orthodox views:

a) The existential view popularized by Barth.

This teaches that there are many human errors and imperfections in the Bible—even in the autographs. But the Bible becomes the Word of God when He chooses to use this imperfect channel to confront man with His perfect Word. This is accomplished by a personal encounter by God with man in an act of revelation. In this existential experience—crisis encounter—the meaningless blobs on the page leap from the Bible to speak to man concretely and meaningfully. At this “moment of meaning” the Bible becomes the Word of God to the believer.

b) The demythologizing view of Bultmann and Neibuhr. The Bible must be stripped of religious myth in order to get at the real meaning of God’s self-giving love in Christ. One must look through and beyond the historical record, with all its myth and error, to the super-historical. Events, such as the Fall of Man, the Crucifixion and Resurrection, are not necessarily the objects of verifiable and factual history. Hence, the Bible becomes a revelation when, by the proper (demythological) interpretation, one is confronted with absolute Love as set forth in the “myth” of God’s self-less love in Christ.

How, we ask, can the gospel writer be wrong in an area we can check him, history, and right in an area, doctrine, where no checks are possible? These men refuse to believe that God performed the miracle of giving us, by inspiration, an infallible Bible, but are ready to believe that God daily performs the greater miracle of enabling men to find and see, in the fallible words of men, the infallible words of God. It is very difficult to see why God would make use of error to teach us truth.

Again, how can a simple believer have faith in a book when he is told only parts of it are true? He is told to sort it out and keep what is good. But how will he go about classifying the pages of the Bible as inspired, partially inspired, or not inspired? By what authority can he say this, or this, is not the mind of God? To attempt to decide what is not is to put oneself above the Scriptures and to lose the Divine message entirely. As has been suggested before, in these views there is a confusion between revelation and illumination. The Bible is not merely God’s word when Man hears and understands it. It is God speaking, whether Man is listening or not. The Bible declares itself to be the Word of God. Any other position is wholly unbiblical.

There are some, claiming to be evangelicals today, who teach that there are many historical and scientific errors in the Bible. Yet, they quickly assure us that in matters pertaining to the plan of salvation it is completely inerrant. How can one be so certain that the Bible is correct in soteriological matters when it is in error in historical and scientific facts? It sounds very much as if it is men, not God, who are telling us what to believe. If the Bible is not completely inerrant, fully infallible, then there is no final authority to its message.

While the Liberal contends the Bible merely **contains** the word of God, and the Neo-orthodox asserts the Bible **becomes** the word of God in an existential “moment of meaning,” the Orthodox or Conservative position is that the Bible is the word of God.

3. *The conservative views*.

The Bible is the Word of God. Yet, within the conservative school there is a divergence of opinion regarding what is involved in inspiration. Thus there are the following conservative theories of inspiration:

a) The Verbal Dictation Theory. This theory states that every word, even the punctuation, is dictated by God, much as a business executive would dictate a letter to his secretary. This is often called “mechanical inspiration” or “verbal dictation.” Fundamentalists are often accused of subscribing to this method of inspiration, but only a small percentage of them actually do. The great weakness of this theory is that it eliminates any possibility of a personal style in the writings of the divinely chosen author—a phenomenon which is clearly observable.

b) The Inspired Concept Theory. In an endeavor to compensate for the dangers of the Verbal Dictation Theory, some conservatives have adopted the idea that God gave the thoughts to the men chosen and left them to record these thoughts in their own words. Thus, only the thoughts, not the words, are inspired. This has been called “dynamic inspiration”. This explains the Bible’s humanity but weakens its divinity. The mechanical theory deifies the human aspect of the Bible while the dynamic theory humanizes the divinity.

c) The Verbal, Plenary Inspiration View. This view holds that all the words written are God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16). “Verbal” signifies the words, and “plenary” means “full,” or “complete,” as opposed to partial. Thus it is held that the words themselves, and all of them, are inspired. God gave full expression to His thoughts in the words of the biblical record. He guided the very choice of the words used within the personality and culture-complex of the writers; so that, in some inscrutable manner, the Bible is the Word of God, while being the words of men.

Charles Hodge has expressed the meaning of verbal inspiration well:

It is meant that the Divine influence, of whatever kind it may have been, which accompanied the sacred writers in what they wrote, extends to the expression of their thoughts in language, as well as the thoughts themselves,—the effect being, that in the original autograph copies, the language expresses the thought God intended to convey with infallible accuracy, so that the words, as well as the thoughts, are God’s revelation to us.

Inspiration, then, is the process whereby Spirit-moved men (2 Pet. 1:21), produced Spirit-breathed writings (2 Tim. 3:16). L. Gaussen gives us an excellent definition of inspiration in the following; it is: “that inexplicable power which the divine Spirit put forth of old on the authors of the Holy Scripture, in order to their guidance even in the employment of the words they used, and to preserve them alike from all error and from all omission.”

It is recognized that here we are in an area of mystery. Just how infallible inspiration was brought about is something finite minds cannot comprehend. That there is a Divine side to the process cannot be denied. But that there is a human aspect is equally clear. God used men. We recognize both elements, but we cannot reconcile them. Perhaps the best illustration is the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. Christ has both a Divine and human nature. The Scripture also has a heavenly and earthly aspect. In both Christ and the Scripture, the human side is perfect, as is the Divine. It is wrong to try to explain away the Divine Nature of Christ in order to understand His human nature, as the Arians did. It is equally wrong to sacrifice His true human nature in order to explain that He is Divine, as the Docetics did. So, it is wrong to deny that the words of Scripture are both human and Divine in their nature.

The mistake is to try to explain the inexplicable, and to fathom the unfathomable. The means, or process, of inspiration is a mystery of the providence of God, but the results of this process is a verbal (the words), plenary (extending to all the parts equally), inerrant (errorless) and authoritative record.

**VII. The Symbols of the Scriptures**

Many times, the Bible uses symbolic language in order to teach. Often spiritual truth can be conveyed more realistically by the employment of symbols, which bring a picture to the human mind. Thus, there are a number of symbols used throughout the Scripture for this purpose. We list those which are most apparent.

A. A Mirror.

“For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror …” (Jas. 1:23–25 NASB). This illustrates the revealing power of the Word.

B. A Critic.

“For the word of God … is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). “The Greek of Heb. 4:12 reads, ‘The Word of God is … a critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart.’ ”

C. Seed.

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever” (1 Pt. 1:23). (See also: Lk. 8:5–15, note especially v. 11, “The seed is the word of God”; Is. 55:10, 11; Jas. 1:18.) This symbol suggests the generative power of the Word. It is a life-giving Word.

D. Laver and Water.

“That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word …” (Eph. 5:26). “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from ours sins in his own blood” (Rev. 1:5b). (Also: Ps. 119:9; Jn. 15:3.) The laver stood between the worshipper and the tabernacle, providing a means of cleansing. The same Word that reveals one’s defilement, also provides a means of cleansing.

E. A Lamp and Light.

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Ps. 119:105). (See also v. 130.) “For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light …” (Prv. 6:23). These symbols speak of the illuminating, guiding influence of the Word in a darkened world. The Word is that “… more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place” (2 Pt. 1:19).

F. A Fire.

“Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord.…” (Jer. 23:29); “Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay” (Jer. 20:9). As the word “fire” is used here it seems to suggest a consuming impulse and energy. “My heart was not within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue” (Ps. 39:3).

G. A Hammer.

“Is not my word … like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” (Jer. 23:29). This figure suggests the power of the Word, constantly applied, that will eventually break the heart that is as hard as a rock.

H. A Sword.

“And take … the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God …” (Eph. 6:17). “For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword.…” (Heb. 4:12). This is the believer’s one offensive weapon in his contest with the “principalities” and “powers” and “rulers of the darkness of this world … [and] spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12).

I. Food.

“I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food” (Jb. 23:12b).

1. *Milk*. “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby …” (1 Pt. 2:2). (See 1 Cor. 3:1, 2).

2. *Bread*. “… Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Mt. 4:4).

3. *Meat*.

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil (Heb. 5:12–14).

4. *Honey*. “How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Ps. 119:103).

**VIII. The Holy Spirit and the Scriptures**

Inspiration accounts for inerrancy, and inerrancy proves inspiration. This miracle of infallible inspiration is said to be the ministry of the Holy Spirit. This might well be the very greatest ministry in which the Spirit is engaged. All Spirit-filled believers have known, to some degree, the miracle of Divine inspiration by the Holy Spirit, but never to the extent experienced by the writers of Scripture.

The Pentecostal Movement has been accused of being an experience-centered movement, and indeed it is! But it is also a Bible-centered movement. It is beautiful to see how the Holy Spirit and the written Word are always in perfect agreement. This must be so, because the Word is the result of the inspiration of the Spirit. The following list of references, where the Holy Spirit and the Word are mentioned together, illustrate the importance of recognizing the ministry of both the Spirit and the Word, and demonstrate the harmony between the Word and the Spirit:

* 2 Samuel 23:2 The SPIRIT of the Lord spoke by me and His WORD was in my tongue.
* Proverbs 1:23 I will pour out my SPIRIT unto you, I will make known my WORDS unto you.
* Isaiah 40:7, 8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the SPIRIT of the Lord bloweth upon it … The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the WORD of our God shall stand forever.
* Isaiah 59:21 My SPIRIT that is upon thee, and my WORDS which I have put in the mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth.
* Zechariah 4:6 This is the WORD of the Lord … not by might, nor by power, but by My SPIRIT saith the Lord.
* Matthew 22:29 Ye do err, not knowing the SCRIPTURES, nor the POWER of God.
* Mark 16:20 Confirming the WORD with SIGNS following.
* Luke 12:12 The HOLY GHOST shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to SAY.
* John 3:34 He … speaketh the WORDS of God: for God giveth not the SPIRIT by measure unto Him.
* John 6:63 It is the SPIRIT that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the WORDS that I speak, … they are SPIRIT, and they are life.
* John 14:26 The HOLY GHOST, … shall … bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have SAID unto you.
* Acts 1:16 SCRIPTURE must needs have been fulfilled, which the HOLY GHOST by the mouth of David spake.
* Acts 4:31 They were all filled with the HOLY GHOST, and they spake the WORD of God with boldness.
* Acts 6:10 They were not able to resist the wisdom and the SPIRIT by which he SPAKE.
* Acts 10:44 While Peter yet spake these WORDS, the HOLY GHOST fell on them.
* Acts 10:37, 38 The WORD … which was published throughout all Judea … how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the HOLY GHOST …
* Acts 11:15 As I began to SPEAK, the HOLY GHOST fell on them.
* Acts 11:16 Then remembered I the WORD of the Lord … ye shall be baptized with the HOLY GHOST.
* Acts 13:4, 5 Being sent forth by the HOLY GHOST … they preached the WORD of God.
* Acts 15:7, 8 That the Gentiles … should hear the WORD … giving them the HOLY GHOST.
* Acts 16:6 They … were forbidden of the HOLY GHOST to preach the WORD in Asia.
* Acts 18:25 Being fervent in the SPIRIT, he SPAKE and TAUGHT diligently …
* Acts 28:25 Paul had spoken one WORD, Well spake the HOLY GHOST by Isaiah …
* Romans 15:18, 19 To make the Gentiles obedient by WORD and deed through mighty signs and wonders by the power of the SPIRIT of God.
* 1 Corinthians 2:13 We speak the WORDS which the HOLY GHOST teacheth.
* 1 Corinthians 12:8 For to one is given by the SPIRIT the WORD of wisdom.
* 1 Corinthians 12:8 To another the WORD of knowledge, by the same SPIRIT.
* 2 Corinthians 6:7 By the WORD of truth, by the POWER of God.
* Ephesians 1:13 After that ye heard the WORD of truth … ye were sealed with that HOLY SPIRIT of promise.
* Ephesians 6:17 The sword of the SPIRIT, which is the WORD of God.
* 1 Thessalonians 1:5 Our Gospel came not unto you in WORD only, but also in power, and in the HOLY GHOST.
* 1 Thessalonians 1:6 Received the WORD in much affliction, with joy in the HOLY GHOST.
* 1 Timothy 4:12 Be thou an example of the believers in WORD … in SPIRIT …
* Hebrew 2:3, 4 First began to be SPOKEN … God bearing witness with … gifts of the HOLY GHOST.
* Hebrews 6:4, 5 Partakers of the HOLY GHOST, and have tasted the good WORD of God.
* 1 Peter 1:12 That have preached the GOSPEL unto you with the HOLY GHOST.
* 2 Peter 1:21 The prophecy came not … by the will of man: but holy men of God SPAKE as they were moved by the HOLY GHOST.
* 1 John 5:7 There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the WORD, and the HOLY GHOST.

If any people should be people of the Word of God, it should be those who believe in the Pentecostal Baptism with the Holy Spirit. They have an inspirational ministry. They believe in prophecy, in speaking with other tongues with interpretation, in inspirational revelations. How can one tell if these come from God or not? Just because one claims to have a revelation from the Lord does not mean it should be accepted as if it was from God. There needs to be a norm, a final court of appeal, by which all manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit can be judged. In fact, the Scripture admonishes the judging of all prophecy, which Paul recognizes as perhaps the greatest of the gifts. “Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge” (1 Cor. 14:29). “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Is. 8:20). There is such a “court of appeal” to which one can come. It is the written Word, which the Holy Spirit inspired. Peter calls it “a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as a light that shineth in a dark place” (2 Pet. 1:19). Those who minister, in any capacity whatever, are never so fully “in the Spirit” as when they are doing so in full accord with the clearly revealed teaching of the Bible, the Word of God. “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches,” is an admonition which is given seven (7) times in the book of Revelation (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22) and each time it follows a written epistle from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

**IX. How the Scriptures came to us**

The story of how our Bible came to us, in the form with which we are familiar, is a long and fascinating one. It begins with the original manuscripts, or as they are sometimes called, “autographs.” These original writings were penned by men of old who were moved upon by the Holy Spirit. (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20, 21).

For years, skeptics claimed that Moses could not have written the first part of the Bible because writing was unknown at that time (1500 BCE). The science of archaeology has since proven that writing was known thousands of years before the time of Moses. The Sumerians were adept at writing in about 4000 BCE, and the Egyptians and Babylonians almost as far back in history.

A. Ancient Writing Materials.

1. *Stone*.

Many famous inscriptions have been found in Egypt and Babylon inscribed on stone. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments written on tables of stone (Ex. 31:18; 34:1, 28). Two other examples are the Moabite Stone (850 BCE), and the Siloam Inscription found in Hezekiah’s tunnel by the Pool of Siloam (700 BCE).

2. *Clay*.

The predominate writing material in Assyria and Babylonia was clay, formed into small tablets and impressed with wedge-shaped symbols called cuneiform writing, and then baked in an oven or dried in the sun. Thousands of these have been uncovered by the spade of the archaeologists.

3. *Wood*.

Wooden tablets were used quite extensively by the ancients for writing purposes. For many centuries, these were the common writing surface in Greece. Some believe that this type of writing material is referred to in Isaiah 30:8 and Habakkuk 2:2.

4. *Leather*.

The Jewish *Talmud* specifically required that the Scriptures should be copied on the skins of animals, on leather. It is most certain, then, that the Old Testament was written on leather. Rolls were made by sewing skins together that were from a few feet to 100 or more feet long. The text was written in columns perpendicular to the roll. The rolls, 18–27 inches high, were rolled on one or two sticks.

5. *Papyrus*.

It is almost certain that the New Testament was written on papyrus, inasmuch as it was the most important writing material at that time. Papyrus is made by shaving thin sections of the papyrus reed into strips, soaking them in several baths of water, and then overlapping them to form sheets. One layer of the strips was laid cross ways to the first, then these were put in a press that they might adhere to each other. The sheets were made 6–15 inches high and 3–9 inches wide. Rolls of any length were made by pasting sheets together. These usually averaged about 30 feet long, although one has been found which is 144 feet in length.

6. *Vellum or parchment*.

Vellum came into prominence through the efforts of King Eumenes II of Pergammum (197–158 b.c.). He endeavored to build up his library; but the King of Egypt cut off his supply of papyrus, so it was necessary for him to secure some new type of writing material. This he did by perfecting a new process for the treatment of skins. The result is known as vellum or parchment. Though the terms are used interchangeably now, originally vellum was made from the skins of calves and antelopes, while parchment was from the skin of sheep and goats. From these is secured a fine quality leather specially and carefully prepared for writing on both sides. This was used several hundred years before Christ, and about the fourth century A.D. it supplanted papyrus. Almost all the known manuscripts are on vellum.

B. A Codex.

A codex is a manuscript in book form, rather than a roll. About the first or second centuries A.D. the sheets of writing material were put together in a book form instead of joining them side by side to make a roll. The codex was easier to carry and made it possible to have much more scripture in one place.

C. Writing Instruments.

Black ink for writing was made from soot or lampblack and gum, diluted with water. The Essenes, who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls, used burned lamb bones and oil. It is remarkable how well the writing has been preserved to this day. The writing instruments were a chisel for use on stone, and a stylus made of metal or hard wood for use on the clay tablets. For use on the papyrus or vellum, pens were devised. These were made from the hollow stalks of coarse grass or reeds. The dry reed was cut diagonally with a knife and shaved thin on the point, which was then split. In order to keep these in good condition, scribes carried a knife with them. Thus, the derivation of our word “penknife.”

It must be understood that, as far as we know, none of the original manuscripts are in existence. Some may yet be discovered, but it is doubtful. No material biblical object has yet been found.

D. Languages Used.

The Bible was originally written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. These languages are still spoken in some parts of the world today. Hebrew is the official language of the State of Israel. Aramaic is spoken by a few Christians in the environs of Syria. Greek, though quite different from New Testament Greek, is spoken by millions of people today.

1. *Hebrew*.

Almost all the thirty-nine (39) books of the Old Testament were written in Hebrew. The block-like letters were written in capitals, without vowels, without spaces between words sentences or paragraphs, and without punctuation. Vowel points were added later (between 500 A.D. and 600 A.D.) by the Masoretic scholars. Hebrew is known as one of the Semitic languages.

2. *Aramaic*.

A kindred language to Hebrew, Aramaic became the common language of Palestine after the Babylonian captivity (c. 500 b.c.). Some portions of the Old Testament were written in this language: one word as a place-name in Genesis 31:47; one verse in Jeremiah 10:11; about six chapters in the book of Daniel (2:4b–7:28); and several chapters in Ezra (4:8–6:18; 7:12–26).

Aramaic continued to be the vernacular of Palestine for several centuries, so we have some Aramaic words preserved for us in the New Testament: *Talitha cumi* (“little girl, get up”) in Mark 5:41; *Ephphatha* (“be opened”) in Mark 7:34; *Eli eli, lama sabachthani* (“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”) in Matthew 27:46. Jesus habitually addressed God as *Abba* (Aramaic for “father”). Note the influence of this in Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6. Another common Aramaic phrase of early Christians was: *Maranatha*, which means “Our Lord comes” (1 Cor. 16:22).

3. *Greek*.

Though the spoken language of Jesus was Aramaic, the New Testament was written in Greek—Koine Greek. The hand of God can be seen in this, because Greek was the universal language of the first century, and this made possible the spread of the Gospel throughout the then-known world.

E. Manuscripts.

1. *Definitions*.

The word “manuscript,” as it is used today, is restricted to those copies of the Bible which were made in the same language in which it was originally written. At the time the Bible came to be printed (1455 A.D.), there were over 2,000 manuscripts in possession of certain scholars. Each is by no means complete. Some contain only small portions of the original text but put together a full text can be secured. At present, there are some 4,500 manuscripts of the New Testament.

This number is significant when it is considered that scholars are willing to accept ten or twenty manuscripts of classical writings to consider a work genuine. Virgil, for instance, lived and wrote about the time. of Christ. No original of his work is in existence. In fact, the earliest copy of his work is dated 300 years after his death. Yet if ten or twenty manuscripts are found to agree, scholars will accept the work as genuine. Contrast ten or twenty with thousands of manuscripts of the Bible. The manuscripts, of course, were made by hand.

2. *Classifications*.

They are divided into two classes:

a) Uncials (from Latin *uncia*—inch). These are so called because they were written in large capital letters on fine vellum. These are the older manuscripts.

b) Cursives. Later came the cursive manuscripts, so called from being written in a “cursive” or running hand. These date from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries A.D. Of the 4,500 manuscripts extant, about 300 are uncials and the remainder cursives. There probably would have been a great many more, had it not been for Diocletian’s order to destroy these in 302 A.D. Of the 300 uncials in existence today, about 200 of them are manuscripts copied on vellum, which date from the fourth to the ninth centuries. In addition to these there are about seventy papyri documents which date from the second to the fourth century. Broken pieces of pottery, known as “ostraca,” were often used in olden days for writing material, and about thirty of these have been found on which portions of Scripture were written. These papyri and ostraca have only recently come to light and serve to add considerably to our knowledge of the New Testament text.

3. *Sinaitic Manuscript—Codex Aleph*.

One of the earliest of the uncial manuscripts (340 A.D.), the Sinaitic was discovered in 1844 by Dr. Constantine Tischendorf, a German Biblical professor and scholar, at the monastery of St. Catherine at Mt. Sinai. Written in Greek, it contains a part of the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament into Greek, and all of the New Testament, plus about half of the Apocrypha; also the Epistle of Barnabas and much of the Shepherd of Hermas. It contains 364½ leaves of excellent vellum, 131½ inches wide and 14 7/8 inches high. Each page has four columns about 2½ inches wide, except the Poetical Books where there are two wider columns. Each column has forty-eight (48) lines.

Dr. Tischendorf discovered the pages of the manuscript at the monastery where the monks were using them to light their fires. He rescued forty-three leaves of the vellum; but it was not until fifteen years later that he was able to procure the remaining pages, with the help of the Czar of Russia, in return for some gifts to the monastery at Sinai. In 1869, the work was deposited in the Imperial Library at St. Petersburg (now Leningrad). In 1933, the Union of the Socialist Soviet Republic (USSR) sold it to the British Museum for 100,000 English pounds (about $500,000). There it resides today. A formerly unknown room was discovered in the monastery of St. Catherine in 1975, and thirteen more pages of Sinaiticus were found in it. Along with the Vaticanus, the Sinaitic is considered to be one of the two most important manuscripts in existence. It is the only one which contains the completely New Testament.

4. *Vaticanus Manuscript—Codex B*.

This famous uncial is dated from the fourth century (350, possibly 325 A.D.). It is in Greek, and contains: the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, (with the exceptions of the books of Maccabees and the Prayer of Manasses), and the New Testament. Genesis 1:1–46:28; 2 Kings 2:5–7, 10–13; and Psalms 106:27–136:6 are missing from the Old Testament. Mark 16:9–20; John 7:53–8:11 and Hebrews 9:14 to the end of the New Testament, including the Pastoral Epistles, (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon) and Revelation, (but not the General Epistles: James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John and Jude), are missing from the New Testament.

As the name suggests, this manuscript is now in the Vatican Library in Rome where it was first catalogued in 1481. It contains 759 leaves, 617 of the Old Testament and 142 of the New. The pages are 10 inches wide and 10½ inches high. Each page contains three columns of forty-two (42) lines, except the Poetical Books which have two columns. It is considered to have the most exact copy of the New Testament known. It is interesting to note that it does not contain Mark 16:9–20, but the scribe left more than a column blank at this place; as though he knew of these verses but was undecided whether to include them or not.

5. *Alexandrian Manuscript—Codex A*.

This, the last of the three greatest uncials being considered here, dates back to the fifth century (around 450 A.D.). While it is of both the Old and New Testament, some parts are missing. From the Old Testament: Genesis 14:14–17; 15:1–5, 16–19; 16:6–9; 1 Kings 12:18–14:9; and Psalms 49:19–79:10. From the New Testament: Matthew 1:1–25:6; John 6:50–8:52; 2 Corinthians 4:13–12:6.

This manuscript is comprised of 773 leaves, 639 of the Old Testament and 134 of the New. The size is 10¼ inches wide and 12¾ inches high. Each page has two columns of fifty (50) or fifty-one (51) lines. It was probably written in Alexandria, Egypt. It is said to have been presented to the Patriarch of Alexandria and has won for itself the name “Codex Alexandrinus.” It is now in the National Library of the British Museum in London, England. It does not quite measure up to the high standard of the Vatican and the Sinaitic Manuscripts.

Only two more of these old uncials manuscripts will be mentioned here. There are many others—mostly smaller portions of the Old or New Testament. However small these portions may be, each adds its testimony to the accuracy of the present Scriptures.

6. *Ephraem Manuscript—Codex C*.

This contains portions of both Old and New Testaments. There are now only sixty-four (64) leaves of the Old Testament and 145 leaves of the New Testament. The pages are 9½ by 12¼ inches. Each page has one wide column of 40–46 (usually 41) lines. It is thought to have been written in Egypt, probably Alexandria, and is dated back to the fifth century (around 450 A.D.).

This manuscript is what is called palimpset, meaning “rubbed out.” Vellum parchment was scarce and expensive, so sometimes writings were rubbed out and other writing was inscribed over, or as in this case, between the original lines. In the twelfth century the original writings of this manuscript were partially erased and the sermons of the Syric Father Ephraem (299–378) were written between the lines. For this reason it is called the “Ephraem Manuscript.”

Near the end of the seventeenth century, a student of the library thought he saw traces of an older writing under the sermons of Ephraem. In 1834, by means of a strong chemical solution, the original writings of the Greek Bible were partially restored. In 1840, Tischendorf brought out the underlying text more fully and was the first to read it successfully. In 1843–45 he edited and published it.

7. *Beza Manuscript—Codex D*.

This dates from the sixth century (around 550 A.D.). With some omissions, it contains the Gospels, 3 John 11–15 and the Acts. It is located in the library at Cambridge University, England. It is made up of 406 leaves, each 8 X 10 inches, with one column of thirty-three (33) lines to a page. This is the oldest known manuscript to be written in two languages. The left hand page is in Greek, while the corresponding text in Latin is on the right side opposite. In 1562, it was found in the monastery of St. Irenaeus at Lyons, France, by Theodore Beza, the great French Biblical scholar who went to Switzerland and became assistant to, and successor of, John Calvin, the famous Protestant reformer in Geneva. In 1581, Beza gave the manuscript to Cambridge University.

8. *Lectionaries*.

One further word needs to be added in order to make the story of the New Testament manuscripts complete. Included in the manuscripts is a group of material known as the “lectionaries.” The term “lection” refers to a selected passage of Scripture designed to be read in public services. Thus a lectionary is a manuscript especially arranged and copied for this purpose. Some were uncials and some cursives. Most of them are from the Gospels, but some are from Acts and the Epistles. Studies have shown that these were copied more carefully than an ordinary manuscript; therefore, they provide excellent copies for comparisons. More than 1,800 lectionaries have been enumerated.

F. The Versions.

After the manuscripts, the next most important form of the Scriptures, which bears its ancient witness, is the versions. A version is a translation from the original language of a manuscript into another language. There are many, many versions; but only a few will be considered as examples spread over the years to the present time.

1. *The Septuagint*.

This is perhaps the most important of the versions because of its early date and its influence on other translations. The Septuagint Version is a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek. It was begun about 200 B.C. and finished around 180 B.C. It is probably the oldest attempt to reproduce a book of any language into another language. This is the oldest scriptural document which we have.

“Septuagint” means “seventy.” The abbreviation of this version is LXX. It is sometimes called the “Alexandrian Version,” because it was translated in the city of Alexandria in Egypt. This notable work is called the “Septuagint” because of an old legend that seventy-two scholars came from Palestine (six from each of the twelve tribes of Israel) to Alexandria, where they are said to have completed the work in seventy-two days. According to the story, which is certainly pure fiction, the scholars were isolated from each other, placed one or two to a cell, and when their translations were compared, they were identical!

It is now believed that the translation was done by Alexandrian Jews rather than Palestinian. The work was done in Alexandria. The Pentateuch represents the best of the translation. Other portions of the Old Testament are excellent, but some are more of an interpretation or commentary. In addition to the thirty-nine (39) books of the Old Testament, it contains all, or part, of the fourteen (14) books known as the Apocrypha. The Septuagint was commonly used in New Testament times and has been of great use in subsequent translations.

2. *The Samaritan Pentateuch*.

The Samaritan race came into being after the Assyrians conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel, in 721 B.C., and carried most of the ten tribes into captivity. Sargon, king of the Assyrians, sent many idolatrous people from his eastern provinces into Israel (2 Kings. 17:5, 6, 24). These inter-married with the Israelites who were still in the land, thus forming the Samaritan race, a mixture of Israelites and heathen. They set up a rival worship to the Jews, building a temple on Mt. Gerizim. The Samaritans accept only the Pentateuch.

The Samaritan Pentateuch is a Hebrew Pentateuch written in Samaritan letters. It is not a translation, but a form of the Hebrew text itself. The date for its writing is about 430 B.C. Second Kings 17:26–28 tells of a priest, from among the Jews taken captive in Assyria, being sent back to Samaria to teach the people. It is believed he took with him a copy of the Hebrew Pentateuch and that the Samaritan Pentateuch was made from this.

In the work, there are said to be about 6,000 variations from the Hebrew text. Most of these are of minor importance, except where the Samaritans deliberately made alterations to suit their particular beliefs. There are probably around 100 copies of this version in different places in Europe and America. The oldest known dated manuscript (1232) is in the New York Public Library. There is a Samaritan roll at Nablus (ancient Shechem) in Israel, which appears to be very old.

As the message of Christianity spread beyond Palestine, the need for translations of the Scriptures into the languages of those being evangelized became apparent. Thus we have many versions, of which only a few will be dealt with. Compared to the manuscripts, they are of secondary value, but they do help some in the understanding of the original text.

3. *Syriac Version*.

The Syriac language was the chief language spoken in the regions of Syria and Mesapotamia. It is almost identical with Aramaic.

a) The Old Syriac. This has only been known to exist for a little over 100 years. There are two chief manuscripts of this work:

(1) The Curetan Syriac is a fifth century copy of the Gospels consisting of eighty (80) leaves. It is named after Dr. Curetan of the British Museum who edited it.

(2) The Sinaitic Syriac was discovered at St. Catherine’s Monastery at Mt. Sinai. It is a palimpset and only about three-fourths of it is decipherable. The date assigned is the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century A.D.

b) The Peshitta. The word “peshitta” means “simple,” or “common.” Thus it has been known as the Syric Vulgate, or Authorized Version of the Church of the East. It has been in use since the fifth century A.D. It contains all of the New Testament, with the exceptions of 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude and Revelation. There are about 250 manuscripts in existence. It has been a valuable aid to textual criticism and has had a wide circulation, even in China. There is an English translation done by George Lamsa.

4. *The Latin versions*.

It is of interest to us to note that the first English Bible was made from the Latin.

a) The Old Latin. This goes back to a very early date, possibly as far as 150 A.D. There are about twenty copies in existence. It is of primary importance as a witness to the genuineness of the Bible text, because of its antiquity and its faithfulness to the text which it translates.

b) The Latin Vulgate.

The “vulgate” means “common,” or “current.” This is the great version of the Bible in the Latin language. Because of the many mistakes of the copyists of the Old Latin Version, Damasus, bishop of Rome, secured the services of Jerome to produce a revision as an authoritative standard for the Latin-speaking churches. This he did in Bethlehem: the New Testament (382–383 A.D.) and the Old Testament (390–405 A.D.).

It is scarcely possible to over-estimate the influence of Jerome’s Vulgate on our Bible. For more than a thousand years every translation of the Scriptures in Western Europe was based on this work. Eventually the Vulgate was made the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church and is such to this day. Actually, the Roman Catholic Bible in English is a translation of a translation; and is not, as the Protestant Bible, a translation from the original Greek language. After the invention of printing in 1450, the Vulgate was the first book ever printed from moveable type (1455).

G. Biblical Criticism.

1. *Higher criticism*.

There are two types of Biblical Criticism which come under the topic of Bible Introduction. The first of these has often been called “Higher Criticism” or “Historical Criticism.” This has to do with the examination of the various books of the Bible from the standpoint of their history. For instance it deals with age, authorship, genuineness and canonical authority. It traces their origin, preservation and integrity. It shows their content and general character and value. It is a discipline which has rendered valuable service to the ascertaining of a genuine canon of Scripture. Sometimes the expression “Higher Criticism,” has been considered extremely detrimental to a proper and reverent attitude toward the Holy Scriptures. This is true where the scholar has lost sight of the inspiration of the Word and has inserted his own attitude of skepticism and unbelief.

2. *Lower criticism*.

The second type of criticism has been referred to as “Lower Criticism.” This has for its object the ascertaining of the exact words of the original texts of the Bible. Its method is to gather together and compare ancient manuscripts, ancient versions, and ancient quotations of Scripture and determine the true reading of every doubtful passage.

H. Evidences for Biblical Text.

The sincere Biblical critic uses three main sources of evidence for the determining of the true wording—that closest to the original manuscripts. Two of these have been referred to previously: the manuscripts and the versions. A third valuable source needs to be considered. It is that of the writings of the Early Church Fathers.

1. *The Church Fathers*.

These men were called “fathers,” which is synonymous to “teachers.” These were the great leaders, theologians, teachers and scholars of the first few centuries after Christ. These men were dedicated Christians who wrote sermons, commentaries, and harmonies. They earnestly contended for the Faith against the inroads of paganism.

The following are some of the better-known names from a group that is said to number about 200 men during the first seven centuries:

* For the period 96–150 A.D.: Clement of Rome, Hermas, Ignatius, Polycarp.
* For the period 150–325 A.D.: Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertulian, Cyprian, Tatian.
* For the period 325 A.D. on: Eusebius, Athanasius, Jerome, Augustine.

These men quoted freely from the Bible, not only citing all twenty-seven books of the New Testament, but virtually every verse in those twenty-seven books. Geisler and Nix assert: “Five Fathers alone, from Irenaeus to Eusebius, possess almost 36,000 quotations from the New Testament.”

Some years ago Sir David Dalrymple was at a dinner with a group of scholars, when the question was asked, if the whole New Testament were destroyed in the fourth century, would it be possible for it to be put together from the writings of the Church Fathers of the third and second centuries? Two months later he said to one of the companies, “The question aroused my curiosity, and having all existing works of the Fathers from the second and third centuries, I commenced to search. Up to this time I have found all the New Testament except eleven verses.”

**The testimony of the writings of the Church Fathers to the geniuses of the text is of so great importance, first, because of their devotion to God and His Word, they were careful in their copying of the Scriptures. And, secondly, because they lived so close to the apostolic days. It is probable that they had access to manuscripts not in existence today. There is the possibility some had access to the very originals.**

2. *The Dead Sea Scrolls*.

First discovered in March of 1947, by a young Bedouin goatherder in a cave near the northern end of the Dead Sea, the Dead Sea Scrolls, about 350 rolls in all, have been considered one of the greatest archaeological finds of the twentieth century. Written by the Essenes, between the first century before and the first century after Christ, the Scriptural portions of these scrolls give us manuscripts hundreds of years older than any other. Portions of every book of the Old Testament, with the exception of Esther, have been found. Of especial interest are the scrolls of the book of Isaiah, because one of the two which has been found gives the entire book of this great prophet. Here is a Hebrew manuscript of Isaiah 1,000 years older than any other that has come to light. In a remarkable way, the Scrolls confirm the accuracy of the Masoretic text of the Old Testament.

3. *The Papyri*.

Of great interest to Bible scholars are a number of quite recent discoveries (1931) of papyri found in graves in Egypt. These have been often called the most important gain for New Testament text-criticism since Tischendorf announced the discovery of the Sinaitic Codes. These papyri have been acquired by a noted manuscript collector, A. Chester Beatty. Others are in the possession of the University of Michigan and private individuals. They contain parts of the Old Testament in Greek: considerable portions of Genesis, Numbers and Deuteronomy, and parts of Esther, Ezekiel and Daniel. Three manuscripts in the group are of New Testament books: portions of thirty leaves of the Gospels and Acts, eighty-six leaves of the Pauline Epistles and ten leaves out of the middle section of the book of Revelation. This material is of greatest importance, for it dates from the third century or earlier. The text is of such high quality that it ranks with the Vatican and Sinaitic Codices.

The John Rylands Fragment is a small piece of papyrus only 3½ by 2½ inches in size. Though it is so small, it is recognized to be the oldest manuscript of any part of the New Testament. It is written on both sides and contains a portion of the Gospel of John: 18:31–33, 37, 38. It was obtained in 1920.

Papyrus Bodmer II—in 1956, Victor Martin, a professor of classical philology at the University of Geneva, published a papyrus codex of the Gospel of John. This included chapters 1:1 through 14:26. It is dated 200 A.D. and is probably the oldest book of the New Testament in substantial condition.

4. *Encouraging statements*.

a) The doctrines of Scripture. Whatever variant readings the textual critics have discovered, it is a recognized fact that none of these in any way alter any doctrine of the Christian faith.

b) Purity of the text. “Wescott and Hort, Ezra Abbot, Philip Schaff, and A.T. Robertson have carefully evaluated the evidence and have concluded that the New Testament text is over 99 percent pure.”

**X. The Scriptures in English**

A. Earliest Beginnings.

The beginnings of the English Bible go back to the seventh century, when an uneducated laborer by the name of Caedmon arranged stories from the Bible in verse form. In the next century, the first actual translation into English was done by Aldhelm, who translated the Psalms in 705 A.D. The Venerable Bede, early English historian, finished translating the Gospel of John with virtually his last breath (735). Toward the close of the ninth century, King Alfred, a godly king, translated the Ten Commandments, other laws of the Old Testament, the Psalms and the Gospels, though these were unfinished at his death. About 1000 A.D., Aelfric, Archbishop of Canterbury, translated the Gospels, the first seven books of the Old Testament, Esther, Job and a part of Kings.

B. John Wycliffe.

John Wycliffe, Oxford teacher and scholar, is one of the really important names in the story of the Bible becoming available in the English language. With the help of some of his students, he translated the entire Bible into English from the Latin Vulgate. The work was finished in 1382, the first translation of the entire Bible into English. A revision of this work, to harmonize the different styles of those who did the translating, was done by John Purvey who thoroughly corrected and revised Wycliffe’s translation in 1388. This revised edition held sway until the sixteenth century.

C. William Tyndale.

William Tyndale has been called “the true father of the English Bible.” In 1516, the monk-scholar Erasmus published the first printed New Testament in Greek. Tyndale sought to translate this into English, but he found so much opposition from the Roman Catholic Church that he had to flee to Hamburg, Germany. Here he finished the translation and sought to have it printed in Cologne. By this time Tyndale had become associated with Martin Luther and the Reformation. Thus, the enemies of the Reformation became Tyndale’s enemies also. He had to flee from Cologne with the sheets of his partially printed New Testament.

It should be noted that in 1450 Johann Gutenberg, of Mainz, Germany, invented the printing press, though it had been known for many centuries in China. In 1454, he invented printing from moveable type and the first book from his press was the Latin Vulgate (1455), known as the “Mazarin Bible” because copies of it were found in the library of Cardinal Mazarin at Paris.

Tyndale found a more friendly environment at Worms, Germany, where the printing of his translation of the New Testament was completed in 1525. Early the next year, copies of his translation were smuggled into England and bought up with enthusiasm. However, the Romish authorities condemned the translation as heresy and copies were bought up and publicly burned. In the meantime, Tyndale continued his work of translating the Old Testament into English. He finished the Pentateuch in 1530, the book of Jonah in 1531, and revised Genesis in 1534. Tyndale was betrayed and imprisoned in 1534. After sixteen months in prison, he was strangled and burned at the stake. His dying words were, “Lord, open the King of England’s eyes.” The King James, Authorized Version, is practically a fifth revision of Tyndale’s work. It can be seen what a debt is owed to him.

D. Other Sixteenth Century Translations.

1. *The Coverdale Bible*.

In 1535, the Coverdale Bible was printed. It has the distinction of being the first complete Bible printed in English. It was the work of Miles Coverdale, a personal friend of Tyndale. It was a translation of a translation, from the German and Latin. It was the first Bible to have the King of England’s approval.

2. *Matthew’s Bible*.

This appeared in 1537. This is the work of Tyndale’s friend, John Rogers. It was a combined edition of both Tyndale and Coverdale. Actually, Matthew’s Bible is Tyndale’s Bible complete, as far as his translation went, supplemented by Coverdale’s work. It was the first Tyndale revision and forms the basis of all future revisions: the Great Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Bishop’s Bible and the King James Version. It bears the name “Matthew’s Bible,” because Rogers was afraid that if Tyndale’s name were attached to it there might be greater opposition.

3. *The Great Bible*.

Published in 1539, it is actually a revision of Matthew’s Bible, which was a revision of Tyndale’s. The work was done by Coverdale, a very careful reviser. It was called the “Great Bible” because of its large size, 13¼ by 7½ inches. This has been called the firstthus “Authorized” Bible, because King Henry VIII approved of it and issued a proclamation that it be read publicly in every church, and that it be placed in every church throughout the land so that all might have the opportunity to read it. It was chained to the desk of the churches so that none could steal it; thus, it has been called the “Chained Bible.” It seems that Tyndales’ prayer had been answered and the Lord had opened the King of England’s eyes.

4. *The Geneva Bible*.

Published in 1560, this was destined to become the most popular Bible of the century. Called the “Geneva Bible,” because it was printed in Geneva, in small size and legible type with appropriate illustrations and commentaries, it became the popular Bible of the homes; as the Great Bible had been the popular Bible of the churches. It was the first entire Bible to be divided into verses. The New Testament had been printed with the verse divisions by Robert Stevens in 1551. Some attribute the chapter divisions to Cardinal Hugo (1248), others to Stephen Langton, Archibishop of Canterbury, in 1227. The Geneva Bible was the Bible of Shakespeare, and of the Pilgrims who came to America.

5. *The Bishop’s Bible*.

Published in 1568, by authority of Bishop Parker and other bishops who felt that the Geneva Bible undermined their authority, it was never a popular edition, being too cumbersome in size and too stiff, formal and difficult for the common people to appreciate.

6. *The Rheims-Douai Bible*.

As a result of the great activity of Bible translation on the part of the Protestant Church, the Roman Catholics were influenced to produce an English translation of their own. Accordingly, in 1582, an edition of the New Testament was produced at the English college at Rheims, France. In 1609–10 the Old Testament was issued at the same college which had moved to Douay, France. The Rheims-Douai thus became the first Roman Catholic edition of the English Bible. It was translated, not from the original languages, but from the Latin Vulgate.

7. *The King James Version*.

Published in 1611 A.D., it is better known as the Authorized Version. At a conference, known as the Hampton Court Conference, which was comprised of religious leaders from various and diverse groups, called to discuss the question of religious tolerance, a proposal was made to produce a new translation of the Bible. King James received the suggestion with enthusiasm and laid down the rules that no comments, which had divided the churches, should be included. About forty-eight (48) Greek and Hebrew scholars were selected and divided into six working groups: two to meet at Westminster, two at Oxford, and two at Cambridge. Each group was given certain books to translate, and then the work of each was sent to the other two groups; so, the translation is indeed the work of all, rather than any individual. Actually, it was a revision of the Bishop’s Bible, which in turn was a revision of Tyndale’s work. The Authorized Version is actually the fifth revision of the Tyndale translation. Begun in 1607, after two years and nine months, it was sent to the printers and was first presented to the public in 1611, seven years after the convening of the Hampton Court Conference. It has been the most popular and widely accepted version of the Bible for over 370 years.

E. Recent Translations of the English Bible.

1. *English Revised Edition*.

As fine a work as it is, and as popular as the King James Version continued to be, it was recognized that the King James Version had certain weaknesses. The most valuable witnesses to the original autographs, the Vatican, the Sinaitic, the Alexandrian and the Ephraeum Manuscripts were not available to the King James translators. Many archaic expressions are found in this translation and some, though not serious, mistakes were observed.

Accordingly, in February 1870, a motion to consider a revision of the King James was passed by the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury. Men of unimpeachable scholarship were chosen in England, and these were joined by the finest men in America. On May 17, 1881 the New Testament was issued, followed by the Old Testament on May 19, 1885. The whole work is known as the English Revised Edition.

2. *The American Standard Version*.

Published in 1901, it is recognized that an improved textual base, then that available to the translators of the King James, was used, along with an advanced knowledge of the original languages. Many of the archaisms of the King James were cleared up. Yet, it was not without criticism. What it cleared up in the understanding of the Greek, it lost in the beauty of the language. Charles Spurgeon is quoted as saying of it, “Strong in Greek, weak in English.”

3. *The Revised Standard Version*.

In 1929, the Thomas Nelson and Sons Company had given the expiring copyright to the American Standard Version to the International Council of Religious Education, which appointed a committee of scholars to consider the advisability of revising the American Standard. It was agreed to do so, but funds were hard to get; and it was not until September 30, 1952 that the entire Bible was presented. The purpose of the revisors was to take advantage of many new manuscripts and papyri which had come to light since the 1901 Version had been published, yet to retain the beauty of the King James language. It has been widely received, though has not been without its critics, chiefly among conservative scholars.

4. *The New American Standard Bible*.

Published on July 31, 1970, it has received the endorsement of many conservatives. It is based on the American Standard Version of 1901.

5. *The New International Version*.

This completely new translation has been enthusiastically received. The New Testament was published in 1973 and the complete Bible in 1978. The work was done by scholars from the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand; thus, giving it its international flavor. Scholars from more than thirteen denominations participated in the work of translation.

6. *Many others*.

During the past decade or two there has been a flood of new translations, too numerous to mention here. Some have endeavored to be literal renderings of the originals, while others are definitely paraphrases into what is considered to be more modern English usage. Still others are in the making and will, no doubt, be seen in the near future.

Conclusion: Does this flurry of “experts” to give us the exact language of the original autographs indicate that we cannot depend upon our present English Bible to declare the true message God would proclaim to Mankind? Perhaps the following quotation from Sir Frederic Kenyon, director of the British Museum, will answer the question best: “It is reassuring at the end to find that the general result of all these discoveries and all this study is to strengthen the proof of the authenticity of the Scriptures, and our conviction that we have in our hands, in substantial integrity, the veritable Word of God.”