Dedicated to our Seminary Students
who, over the years,
have Proven themselves Faithful
in the Ministry of the Word
The Minister’s Library

An evaluation and listing of various works suitable for the library and the studies of the Gospel Minister

Compiled with Comments
by
W. R. Downing, Director

Pacific Institute for Religious Studies
and
Sovereign Grace Baptist Theological Seminary

ἀρά γε γινώσκεις ἢ ἀναγινώσκεις;
Acts 8:30

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Other books by the author:
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Introductory Lessons in New Testament Greek
The Bible and the Problem of Knowledge
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A Church Membership Manual
The New Testament Church
A Theological Propaedeutic
Selected Shorter Writings
How to Study the Bible
Biblical Hermeneutics
Preface

A book such as this is immediately out of date. New books are always coming from the press—some very good, some average and some to be avoided. But, as our Lord said in another context, “The Old is Better,” and this is often true regarding religious books!

This second edition brings with it many changes. Some works have been omitted; many others have been added. I have also added some annotations which, I trust, will be advantageous to the reader. These are the opinion of one man, but one who has studied, taught in Bible College, Graduate School and Seminary, and labored as a pastor for over fifty-three years.

I am a conservative as to my biblical approach, holding to the Scriptures as the very Word of God inscripturated, inspired and inerrant. Theologically, I am an evangelical Calvinist. Denominationally and ecclesiastically, I am a Baptist by biblical conviction. Biblically, I am a lover of God’s Word. My presuppositions are explained in this book.

Your personal presuppositions will largely determine what you read and how you will build your personal library. I would advise you to always stretch yourself, to strive to educate yourself and make both academic and spiritual progress. Never make these mutually exclusive. If you remain balanced with the academic and spiritual, you will have a living ministry which will reflect your knowledge of and increasing conformity to the Living Oracles of God. Your hearers will be educated and edified, and will grow spiritually. Sinners will be converted. Open the Scriptures and your ministry will produce life by the grace of God.

May this volume prove to be helpful and beneficial. This is my prayer. Let us open the text, preach the Gospel and feed God’s sheep and lambs.

—W. R. Downing
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Introduction

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

This compilation of books and materials for the Minister’s Library will provide a general guide for the purchase and acquiring of suitable books for a lifetime of study and progress in the gospel ministry.

The minister’s library is not only for his sermon preparation and Bible teaching, but also for his own spiritual and academic growth and progress. The goal is for balance between the academic and the spiritual.

New books are constantly being published. Newer, however, is not necessarily better. What our Lord said about aged wine is also often true of books, “The old is better”1

The Necessity for and Importance of One’s Presuppositions

Some things must be settled at the outset. Your presuppositions will determine your approach to the Scriptures and therefore what books you will acquire. Invest in the best. Keep the best. Read the best—and beware of those authors who would seek to undermine your faith!2

Some biblical scholars hold that we must approach the New Testament Scriptures with an “open mind” and without any presuppositions.3 First, we must understand that not all biblical scholars are regenerate, or true believers. Some approach the Scriptures with secular presuppositions which are counter to the self-authenticating nature of Scripture. Old

1 Lk. 5:39.
2 See the section on “Biblical Criticism.”
3 One’s presuppositions are his undisputed assumptions, axioms; first truths which are so ingrained as part of one’s world—and—life view that they are never questioned.
Testament studies have suffered from the influence of the “higher” or rationalistic critics and such theories as the Documentary Hypothesis of the Pentateuch. These sought to undermine the veracity of the biblical documents by positing either a later date or sought to impugn the authorship, holding to various unknown authors or later redactors—an evolutionary view of the God and writings of the Old Testament.

New Testament studies have likewise had to deal with various forms of radical biblical criticism. Some alleged evangelical scholars have embraced such ideas as “salvific inerrancy,” theistic evolution and annihilation. It is also true that some alleged evangelical scholars have modified their views to be acceptable to the scholarly community.

Note: There are various defective and radical approaches to the New Testament: first, the historical school of religious Rationalism, a strange admixture of Rationalism, Pietism and Romanticism, originated with Johann Salomo Semler (1725–1791), who denied Divine inspiration, held that the biblical record was historically conditioned to localized situations, and that our Lord and the Apostles accommodated themselves to the contemporary religious thinking of their day. He thus held that the Scriptures were fallible records, mixed with error, and that historical investigation had no bearing on faith.

Second, Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus (1761–1851), professor at Jena, Würtzburg and Heidelberg, Naturalistic commentator and author of a Life of Jesus (1828), explained away the miracles as natural events. “Of all the rationalistic theories the Naturalistic is the most violent and radical.”

4 Salvific inerrancy is the notion that the Scriptures are inerrant concerning redemptive or salvific issues, but contain historical and scientific errors.

5 From Rationalism, they adopted their critical spirit, from Pietism, a subjectivism that separated objective truth from faith, and from Romanticism, the idea that the Bible was a literary monument to be interpreted in literary categories.

Strauss’s *Life of Jesus* (1835) in the mythical tradition was an answer to Paulus’s work.

Third, Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768) wrote an extensive critique of Christianity from a Deistic standpoint, later published by G. E. Lessing as the *Wolfenbüttel Fragments* (1774–1778). Reimarus thought our Lord to be a mere man, a political agitator who was executed by the Romans for treason.

Fourth, Reacting against the Naturalism of Paulus and others, Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) and Christian Gottlieb Heyne (1729–1812) developed the idea of biblical mythology as a legitimate factor in historical criticism and as a literary category. They sought to separate religious feeling from both myth and history. Heyne was the first to define myth as a literary category, a device commonly and universally used by primitive peoples before the development of rational thought.\(^7\)

Fifth, Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schliermacher (1768–1834), professor at Halle and Berlin, was the father of liberal German theology in the nineteenth century. He combined a critical approach (ignoring inspiration) to textual and historical issues with a religious tone he had inherited from Pietism. According to Kantian Idealism, he sought to make a distinction between what he considered essentials and non–essentials and separated the rational from the irrational, relegating religion to the realm of feeling. He viewed Christianity as the highest form of religious evolution.

Sixth, Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792–1860), professor at Tübingen was one the greatest and most influential critical New Testament scholars of the nineteenth century. His Hegelian philosophy led him to consider early Christianity as a synthesis created from the conflict of opposing forces.

Seventh, Rudolf Sohm (1841–1917), a jurist, who argued that Church History must be pursued theologically. Hermann Usener (1834–1905) was a leading scholar in the field of Comparative Religions and led in the “History of Religions”

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\(^7\) The Radical critics have held alleged “biblical myths” to be important vehicles for the expression of philosophical and religious ideas in an essentially poetic or epic form. Story–telling was used by primitive peoples as philosophy or rational thought would be used by more advanced peoples.
approach to New Testament criticism. Otto Pfleiderer (1839–1908) held that there was a radical difference between our Lord and Paul which resulted in the Hellenization of Christianity. Others of this school included Albert Eichhorn (1856–1926), who applied the Comparative Religions approach to the Old Testament, and Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930), the author of the multi-volume History of Dogma (1886–1889).

Eighth, Hermann Gunkel (1862–1932) pioneered the path in Form Criticism, which sought to examine the genre [Gattung] and “setting in life” [Sitz im Leben] of biblical construction. This theory holds that behind the documents were oral traditions, sagas, legends and myths, which may be discovered under the layers of the text.

Finally, Gerhard von Rad (1901–1971) pioneered the development of Redaction Criticism. He argued, in opposition to Form Criticism, that the development of religious traditions was more important than their origin, and thus the focus moved to the alleged various redactions within the layers of the text, to the theology of the redactors, and to a study of the concept of covenants in the religious history of Israel.

Note: These are noted in order that the reader might be see the divergent, defective and radical views of some scholars and be familiar with the names and ideas of radical critics whose views are expressed or referred to in some biblical commentaries.

Second, such a notion as an “open mind” or being non-presuppositional is necessarily false. The Scriptures themselves are presuppositional and absolutely authoritative in their declaration. The Bible begins with a presuppositional statement (Gen. 1:1); it never seeks to prove the existence of God. Further this very first statement sets forth the self-existence of God, the truth that every fact in this universe is a created fact, a declarative statement concerning the absolute power and sovereignty of God and the Creator–creature distinction—truths which are maintained throughout Scripture (Gen. 1:1).

Man, as the image–bearer of God, is by nature a presuppositionalist. In his primeval or prelapsarian state, he was created to “think God’s thoughts after him,” i.e., to give
the same meaning to everything which God had given by creative and definitive fiat. Every fact in this created universe is a created fact defined by God (Gen. 1:1). In his present fallen, sinful state, man is biased against both general and special revelation, habitually suppresses the truth, worship the god of his own imagination and side-steps the Creator to worship creation, and thus interprets everything according to his own faulty presuppositions (Rom. 1:18–25). The issue is, then, to have the correct or self-consistent presuppositions which are necessary for the cogent study of Scripture.

**The first and primary presupposition is the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures themselves, constituting them, as Divine revelation, inspired and inerrant** (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20–21). Thus, the Scriptures are fully and finally authoritative for both faith and life. A Theistic World–and–Life View is necessarily grounded in a revelational epistemology [i.e., the Scriptures as Divine revelation and the basis for knowledge], i.e., the Scriptures as Divine, self-attesting revelation form the basis of one’s consummate knowledge and view of God, himself and the world about him.

**The second presupposition is the self-attesting or self-authenticating nature of Scripture.** It is fallacious to seek to credential or try to prove the trustworthiness of Scripture by external evidences such as history, science, archeology, cosmology, philosophy, psychology, comparative religions,

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8 Rom. 1:18, “hold” [κατεχόντων] pres. ptc., denotes “habitually suppressing.” Rom. 1:20 summarizes fallen, sinful man’s culpability by stating that he before natural revelation, without an apologetic [ἀναπολογήτους].

9 Rom. 1:21–22 describe man’s intellectual futility [ἐματαξιωθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν] and incapacitated spiritual blindness [ἐσκοτίσθη ἢ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδία]. V. 23–24 describe his attempt to drag God down to his level through idolatry, and V. 25 reveals that he has exchanged the truth of God for the lie [τῷ ψεύδει], i.e., the prevailing principle of falsehood existing among fallen, sinful mankind, side-stepping [παρὰ] the Creator in order to worship creation.
etc. The undeniable and inescapable reality is that whatever one uses to credential or prove the trustworthiness of a given entity must always possess more authority than the entity itself. To state that the Bible is self-attesting or self-authenticating is to presuppose its highest and ultimate authority. We reason from the Scriptures, not to the Scriptures! This is not to be decried as circular reasoning. When dealing with ultimate issues and realities, all human reasoning is presuppositional and therefore broadly circular.

The third presupposition is that the inspired canon of Scripture is comprised of those books historically contained in the thirty-nine books of the Old and twenty-seven books of the New Testament. No other writings among the hundreds of religious works, including the Old Testament and New Testament Apocryphal or Jewish and alleged Christian and Gnostic Pseudepigrapha are inspired, authoritative or within the canon of Divine revelation. The biblical canon of sixty-six books form a coherent whole, a unity of anticipation and realization which is unique as Divine inscripturated revelation.

The fourth presupposition is that there is a necessary intertextual, historical, prophetical and redemptive relationship between the Old and New Testaments. In broad terms, “Scripture interprets Scripture.” All Scripture is to be interpreted according to “the Analogy of Faith” [Analogia Fidei], i.e., the coherent or non-contradictory character of the whole of Scripture as it bears upon any one given point.

Note: The terminology “analogy of faith” was originally based on a misunderstanding of Rom. 12:6, “...according to the proportion of faith” (κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως), i.e., the measure of personal faith—not going beyond what God has given by way of personal gifts of ministry and faith personally or individually received. The term “faith” was taken by the Church Fathers in an objective sense as the doctrinal teaching of Scripture rather than a subjective sense of personal, experimental faith, belief or trust. They spoke of the Analogia or Regula Fidei as pertaining to the general principles of the Christian faith. Thus, the term entered into Christian Theology.
The Old Testament and Old Covenant anticipate and find fulfillment in the New Testament and New or Gospel Covenant (Gen. 3:15; Matt. 5:17–18; 26:56; Lk. 24: 25–27, 44–48; Acts 3:18; 13:26–30). The redemptive promises to the Patriarchs and nation of Israel anticipate the coming of the Messiah, the true “Seed of Abraham,” the Lord Jesus Christ (Gen. 3:14–15; 12:1–3; Gal. 3:16). The Levitical priesthood, offerings and Monarchical institutions of the Old Testament find their fulfillment in our Lord as the ultimate Prophet, Priest and King. All prophecy in the Old Testament points ahead to the first and second comings of the Lord Jesus Christ, the consummation of the age and ultimately the consummation of world history.

The fifth presupposition is that because of the coherent nature of Scripture and the interrelationship between the Old and New Testaments, a consistent Biblical Theology may be gathered from the various books of the Bible, consistent with the Bible’s principle of progressive revelation and its unfolding drama of redemption. Old Testament Biblical Theology and New Testament Biblical Theology will have their necessary distinctives.

These are essential presuppositions. Others might be added concerning the distinctives of the New or Gospel covenant, the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the emphasis upon conversion and personal faith, the realities of Christian experience, the nature of the New Testament Church and the essential eschatological nature of the New Testament and the Kingdom of God.

The Importance of Reading

“Bring the books, but especially the parchments...” Paul

Christianity is preeminently a religion—not only of One Book—the Bible—but of books. What do we know about the Bible, except through books that delve into the original

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10 The materials in this introduction are abbreviated from the author’s Theological Propaedeutic, pp. 523–533.
languages, into the consistent principles of exposition and interpretation? The Scriptures were given in another era, another culture, and in other languages. In order to adequately comprehend the inscripturated Word of God, we must cross such barriers—and we do so through books.

What do we know about the truth and belief of biblical Christianity except through books about doctrine and theology? What do we know about the history of Christianity, its Controversies, Creeds, Confessions, martyrs, heroes and victories, except through books? Books help open to us a consistent understanding of the Scriptures, their doctrinal truth, their practical application to our lives and the history of biblical religion. With reference to 2 Timothy 4:13, a friend and fellow Baptist pastor has stated:

> Even an apostle wants books to read!....If such a leading light in the early church, the apostle to the Gentiles, requires books to read, what about those lesser lights of today, ordinary gospel ministers in our churches? How can they do without them?

While Paul’s remark in v. 13 appears almost trivial and out of place in that Book which records the splendor of our salvation, it must be kept in mind that this too is the word of God, given for our instruction and obedience. Whatever the books and parchments were they were precious to Paul, as well as indispensable to his present circumstances. Paul is lonely, aware of the church’s enemy, considers his own mortality, and sends for books.

Mark the following words from C. H. Spurgeon, who well knew the value of good books:

> Even an apostle must read....Paul is inspired, and yet he wants books! He has been preaching for at least thirty years, and yet he wants books! He had seen the Lord, and yet he wants books! He had had a wider experience than most men,

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11 Throughout the Qu’ran, Mohammed constantly refers to Christians as “the People of the Book.” O that this were always true!

12 Pastor Don Linblad, “The Minister and His Study: The Place of Reading in Pastoral Ministry,” ARBCA Circular Letter, April 5, 2007
and yet he wants *books*! He had been caught up into the third heaven, and had heard things which it was unlawful for a man to utter. yet he wants *books*! He had written the major part of the New Testament, and yet he wants *books*! The apostle says to Timothy and so he says to every preacher, “Give thyself unto reading”.

The man who never reads will never be read; he who never quotes will never be quoted. He who will not use the thoughts of other men’s brains. proves that he has no brains of his own. Brethren, what is true of ministers is true of all our people. You need to read. Renounce as much as you will all light literature, but study as much as possible sound theological works, especially the Puritanic writers, and expositions of the Bible. We are quite persuaded that the best way for you to be spending your leisure, is to be either reading or praying. You may get much instruction from books which afterwards you may use as a true weapon in your Lord and Master’s service. Paul cries. “Bring the Books”—join in the cry.

Paul herein is a picture of industry. He is in prison; he cannot preach: What will he do? As he cannot preach, he will read. So it was with the fishermen of old and their boats: the fishermen were gone out of them. What were they doing? Mending their nets. So if providence has laid you upon a sick bed, and you cannot teach your class—if you cannot be working for God in public, mend your nets by reading. If one occupation is taken from you, take another, and let the books of the apostle read you a lesson of industry.

He says, “especially the parchments.” I think the books were Latin and Greek works, but that the parchments were Oriental; and possibly they were the parchments of Holy Scripture; or as likely, they were his own parchments, on which were written the originals of his letters which stand in our Bible...Now, it must be “especially the parchments” with all our reading; let it be especially the Bible....Read the books, by all manner of means, but especially the parchments. Search human literature, if you will, but especially stand fast by that Book which is infallible, the revelation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.13

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A good library should be looked upon as an indispensable part of church furniture....If a man can purchase but very few books, my first advice to him would be, let him purchase the very best. If he cannot spend much, let him spend well....Don't buy thin soup; purchase the essence of meat....You require accurate, condensed, reliable standard books, and should make sure that you get them....The next rule I shall lay down is, master those books that you have. Read them thoroughly....A student will find that his mental constitution is more affected by one book thoroughly mastered than by twenty books which he merely skimmed....In reading, let your motto be, 'Much, but not many.'

Maurice Roberts, a classical scholar, minister and Editor of *The Banner of Truth* Magazine, wrote:

According to an oft-quoted saying of Francis Bacon, reading makes a full man, writing an exact man and conversation a ready man. Experience shows the observant Christian that he was right. There is no ordinary way for a person to attain to fullness of knowledge in the things of God apart from a diligent application to good books. Not that Bacon's saying applies only to religious subjects. But that is our interest and concern here since we believe that God's summons to us to worship Him 'with all the mind' involves us as believers in the duty of developing and enlarging our knowledge of spiritual subjects all the days of our life. That means we must read books.

....books are the time-honored way in which Christians have bettered themselves and, in some cases, have attained to a remarkably high level of that 'fullness' which Bacon refers to. It is not too much to say that books are to minds what food is to the stomach or air to the lungs.

....it is a lamentable fact that in our generation very few—even of Christians—are reading regularly and profitably. It is an index, very probably, of the small measure of grace which we as modern Christians possess. It is also a scandal for which we have need to be ashamed.

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Observations on Reading

The following reasons for reading may prove helpful: first, *the ultimate purpose of reading is to change the entire person, not merely to educate the mind.* The reading of the Scriptures and sound literature is to educate, edify and ultimately transform the personality. Some need to learn to read. Others need to develop sound study habits. We all need to fill our minds and hearts with the truth intelligently comprehended and progressively applied. Thank God for those spiritual writers of the past who brought doctrine to light practically and merged it into Christian experience!

Second, *everyone needs some help in understanding the meaning of Scripture.* The Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. Further, although fully inspired, infallible and inerrant, it is a progressive revelation from God that is linguistically, historically and culturally conditioned. Every Christian, if possible, and as opportunity permits, should certainly have some understanding of the Greek, and even of the Hebrew. These are necessary for the minister. Any skill in the use of the most basic language tools will prove immensely profitable.16

Every believer must also have some understanding of sound hermeneutical principles and the cultures and geography of the lands of the Bible. At times, the interpretation hinges on a knowledge of animals, plants, food, customs, geography, etc. Remember, the context may be geographical, cultural or psychological as well as contextual.

Third, *everyone needs help to think consistently in alignment with the Scripture.* Language and hermeneutical helps, doctrinal and theological works, and exegetical and expository commentaries—all have their proper and often necessary place in aiding our understanding of the Scriptures.

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16 See Appendix V: Why Study the Original Languages of Scripture?
Fourth, reading other works may help deliver us from a subjectivism that would lead us into error and contradiction. The reading of good commentaries will help form an objective perimeter of interpretation. The reading of doctrinal and theological works will sharpen the thinking and expand the knowledge of doctrinal truth.

Fifth, we need the truth of the Scriptures applied to our lives objectively, i.e., the reading of sermons and practical works. This will give us encouragement and admonition, and prompt us to live consistent and godly lives. God has ordained preaching as the primary means of proclaiming, instilling and applying his truth. Printed preaching is second only to audible preaching—and preachers need to be preached to!

Sixth, we need to educate ourselves in all areas of Christian truth: the Bible as the progressive revelation of God, some knowledge of the sense of the original languages, the content and meaning of the text of Scripture, doctrine and theology, and both Biblical and ecclesiastical history. The more comprehensive our knowledge, the greater our potential for being consistent and useful servants in the Kingdom of God.

Seventh, we will profit much from understanding and evaluating the past, i.e., the reading of historical works. Our understanding will suffer and we may be prone to error unless we possess an historical perspective to our faith. We must often surmount the obstacles of twenty centuries of tradition and error! Most modern errors and heresies were thoroughly discussed, debated and condemned by the third to fifth century AD. Remember that Church History is, in reality, a study of the continued departure from the inspired, New Testament pattern. Further, history often provides the best illustrations of truth as worked out in Christian experience, suffering and courage.

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17 Church history is not self–interpreting. The New Testament, properly understood, is the inspired pattern.
Eighth, we need to grow spiritually. Spiritual growth and intellectual growth are not mutually exclusive; they are necessarily related. It is the human tendency for even the best of students to become “dated” or stunted in their comprehension of the faith. This is true, even of preachers and teachers! It is, in part, the natural process of aging—so we must continue to study.

Ninth, we need to be able to defend what we believe to the best of our ability. This means a reasonable knowledge of both Scripture and doctrine, i.e., a systematic and working knowledge of Biblical truth i.e., apologetics.¹⁸

Tenth, since the advent of printing, Christians have made good use of books to complement the Scriptures. Before the Western invention of printing c. 1436, hand–written books were few and unaffordable, except for the very wealthy. Most religious works were written in Latin and kept in the libraries of religious orders. They were utterly unattainable and unreadable by the common man. Some ancient works did exist among the Waldenses and other Pre–Reformation groups. With the advent of printing came the Northern Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation. The Sixteenth Century Protestant Reformation came forth with Erasmus’ printed Greek New Testament in its hands.¹⁹ The Reformers and the Puritans were all men of books. Pamphlets, tracts and books carried the Sixteenth Century Reformation. Commentaries and doctrinal works have bequeathed to subsequent generations the richness of the Puritans.

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¹⁹ The Scriptures existed in Jerome’s Latin Vulgate c. 406 AD, which was limited to handwritten copies, and only to those versed in Latin. The first vulgar version i.e., written in the language of the people, of the Bible in Western Civilization was the Romaunt Version [translated from the Latin Vulgate], c. 1180, made and distributed by the Waldenses in France and the valleys of the Piedmont. William Tyndale gave us the first English New Testament translated from the Greek.
For the very first time, the common people were able to have religious works in their own language and homes. For some two–three centuries [c.1650–1900], the family or home library consisted mainly of The English Bible, the Shorter Catechism, Pilgrim’s Progress and Foxe’s Book of Martyrs. This covered the major areas in a practical way—biblically, doctrinally, historically and practically. Generation after generation was reared upon truth from a biblical perspective—and these generations changed Western Civilization. Most of the greatest and most practical biblical works have come from the Reformation and Puritan eras.

We are Baptists, not merely because we baptize by immersion upon a credible profession of faith, but because we hold to the Scriptures alone as our rule of both faith [what we believe] and practice [how we live]. Historically, Baptists, although mostly found among the common people, have strived for scriptural and educated ministries—and many of the greatest were self–taught because they were excluded from the institutions of learning by the State Church.

Eleventh, education is largely a self–effort, even with formal training and the best of teachers. The student must personally put forth the effort. Formal schooling only gives one an exposure to the basics and possibilities, the influence of more experienced and learned minds, an outward and imposed discipline, the development of personal study habits, and a system of evaluation i.e., testing, grading and a certificate or diploma.

Formal schooling then provides only a basis for a lifetime of personal discipline, learning and progression. Personal perseverance in reading and studying has ever been the key to becoming a truly spiritual and educated Christian. This is certainly true of the Gospel minister, who must continue to educate and edify himself through his own books and reading.

Twelfth, study or research is comprised of two basic issues: first, knowing what information you need, and second, knowing where to obtain it. The first issue is raised by the nature of study, the latter finds its solution in an adequate library. The retention of
information in the mind and on paper or in an electronic form is essential. The student constantly adds to his sphere of knowledge, and such may be sanctified for the use of Christian service.

*Thirteenth, as preachers and pastors, we need to open the text from which we preach.* Our congregation and hearers need to learn the Scriptures as they sit under preaching—and exegetical and expository preaching will always fill this need and fulfill their spiritual appetite.²⁰

Finally, *the relative impossibility of possessing the exhaustive [complete] or ideal library.* Very few individuals will ever possess or have access to a library that is completely adequate for any and every situation. The goal should be to build a library that is adequate, with each volume being both necessary and worthwhile.

**Building an Adequate Library**

**Quantity and Quality**

An adequate library is not necessarily a large one, but rather one that is concise and well–organized, with few or no useless volumes and few gaps in areas of biblical knowledge. The following suggestions and quotations may serve as a help: *first, the library should be a selection, not a collection.* Many books are simply not a worthy investment. They may be good, but they may lack either depth or comprehensiveness. Borrow, read and return them—do not necessarily buy them.

Ordinarily do not buy a book that you may as well borrow, and which you do not need as a permanent possession. There is vanity in accumulating a large library, but it is often a snare. There are comparatively few books that you will ever examine after you have once carefully read them. Those few you want to keep, and keep at hand.

Encyclopedias, for instance, are permanent accessions to a library, always in use...Seek first–class books not only in point of authorship but in point of accuracy, fullness of

²⁰ See Appendix IV: Opening the Text.
information, and complete classification, so that you may save all the time possible, and avoid all the error possible, when you consult their contents.  

Note: Something should be stated concerning the return of another’s books. It is slothful and uncaring to keep a book beyond a reasonable time. It does no good sitting unused in your library or home and you also deprive the owner or another borrower of its use, or assume that he will not use it himself—an assumption that might either be wrong or a judgment upon your lender as to his own reading. A long–time friend, now in glory, served with a military officer who was a serious reader and kept a personal library. On the flyleaf of each of his volumes was an inscription with his name. Below this were the following lines:

My books seem to fly away in droves
  but only return in smidgins
I wish some Burbankian guy
Would cross my books with homing pigeons!

Second, money is invested—never merely spent on a good book. One book cannot only educate and edify the initial reader, but may outlive several owners and influence three or four generations. Desiderius Erasmus is reputed to have said, “When I get a little money, I buy books, and if there is any left, I buy food and clothes.”

Third, books should be purchased for reading and studying—not merely for collecting. “To buy books would be a good thing if we also could buy the time to read them. As it is, the act of purchasing them is often mistaken for the assimilation and mastering of their content.”  

“Books are to a student what tools are to a mechanic, what furniture is to a housekeeper, what arms are to a soldier. Every student ought to acquire a library of standard works for constant use...”

A library is the student’s working tool and armory. Books are his best friends, always on hand to give instruction...and encouragement...The value of a library depends on its quality

22 Arthur Schopenhauer.
23 Philip Schaff, Theological Propaedeutic, p. 10.
rather than its quantity. A selection is better than a collection...Books, like friends, should be few and well chosen.\textsuperscript{24}

There is little real value in having an immense library. The rule is “not many, but good books.” Often we get enthusiastic to collect great numbers of books, but, seriously now, what is the reason for collecting the biggest library? When a man is said to have the biggest library in a particular section or city, we have in reality said little about the man.

The size of the library does not always indicate the scholarship or intellectual capacity of the man but may reflect only an insatiable thirst in book buying completely detached from the sane use of books, or it may reflect the sort of vanity which seeks to impress with a scholarship that exists only in the ego....We should never aim to have the biggest collection, but the best one, the one most carefully built, most used, and most valuable from the standpoint of efficiency and reliability.\textsuperscript{25}

“The truth is...It is not the reading of many books which is necessary to make a man wise or good; but the well reading of a few, could he be sure to have the best.”\textsuperscript{26}

Building According to a Plan

The purpose of building a suitable working library is to have the sources immediately at hand which contain at least some basic and pertinent information on every major biblical, linguistic, doctrinal and historical subject. From this reservoir of materials, the student is to be both educated and edified. Many ministers and most Christians are by necessity limited to their own books.

A suitable library, therefore, should be built according to a plan that will enable the reader or student to find the essential information associated with any given area of biblical truth or knowledge. Further, a truly Christian library is not only an academic reference source, but necessarily a source for

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid, p. 91.

\textsuperscript{25} Jay Smith, Minister's Library Handbook, Boston: W. A. Wilde Company, 1958, pp. 46–47.

\textsuperscript{26} Richard Baxter, A Christian Directory.
edification and spiritual development. Thus, it should contain various works that can be read, not only for information, but for personal edification and spiritual growth.

To ensure a degree of balance and comprehensiveness, together with an economy of books and space, the following principles are suggested: *first, arrange the areas of knowledge or study into several major sections*, such as: (1) *General Reference Works*—Encyclopedias, Dictionaries, Concordances. (2) *Language Helps*—Word Studies, Lexicons, Grammars, Concordances, specialized language tools. (3) *Biblical Works*—Bible Handbooks, Bible Geography and Archeology, Biblical Introductions and Surveys, (4) *Biblical Commentaries*—Critical, Expository, Doctrinal and Devotional (5) *Doctrinal Works*—Bible doctrine, Biblical, Historical, Systematic and Practical Theologies. (6) *Historical Works*—General Church Histories, Baptist Histories, History of Doctrine. (7) *Philosophical Works*—Dictionaries of Philosophy, the History of Philosophy, various works on Christian Philosophy. (8) *Practical Works*—Printed Sermons, Devotional Works, Records of Revival and Biographies.

One should possess a standard work in every area, as he will often be limited to his own library and this will be his only source for self-education and edification.

*Second, a library is an investment that will outlive you, and will continue to affect, perhaps, many generations. Buy the best. Read the best. Preserve the best.*

*Third, purchase at least one or two standard works in each area* as a basis, then seek to supplement this with more

27 “Critical” does not necessary mean radical biblical criticism, but rather those commentaries which deal with the original languages.

28 For the importance of philosophy, see the section on Philosophical works.

29 This general arrangement is followed in this book, and is the approach which the author has used in his own library. It has served him well for close to fifty–five years.
specialized works in critical areas. This will help ensure a comprehensiveness that is essential.

Fourth, there are certain classics which should be obtained if possible. A library would be poor, indeed, if it lacked Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*, Bishop Hall’s *Contemplations* or Matthew Henry’s *Commentary*.

Fifth, strive for a balance in both buying and reading. It is said that “We are what we eat.” In much the same way, “We are what we read.” An unbalanced library will result in unbalanced reading. Unbalanced reading will result in an unbalanced outlook and ministry. Strong meat should be mixed with sweet dainties, and solid, simple food with rich desserts. Reading good books ought to be a religious and spiritual pleasure!

Sixth, be familiar with all your books. Peruse them when they are purchased, learn to know where to find any given information. Know which of your volumes have topical and Scriptural indices and tables.

Seventh, make notes in the flyleaf of a book. Underscoring the text may prejudice or rob any future reader of the entire text, and will interfere with modern computerized scanning.

**Books about Books**

The Following works may be consulted with some degree of reliance for the acquisition of sound works:


May this short, introductory work help in the pursuit of excellence in biblical, linguistic, theological and historical studies for the glory of God.
Note

The system of evaluating books in the following pages:

Almost every work listed is a worthwhile volume, and can be perused with profit.

Those which are the very best, a “must have” work, are designated with a double asterisk [**]. Those which are outstanding and ought to be purchased and perused, if possible, are designated with a single asterisk [*]. Uneven works, while profitable in some areas, but suspect in others are designated with a question mark [?].

I

General Reference Works

General reference works are a very necessary source of information, and form the foundation of one’s library. Time should be taken when possible to research words, terms, customs, clothing, geography, plants, animals, and political and historical data when studying the Scriptures. Never be afraid to stop reading any book—even the Bible—and consult a dictionary or other help for understanding.

Note: Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. (Acts 8:29–31). Philip’s question and the Ethiopian’s answer are of the greatest importance. Unless we read with understanding, we will not profit from reading the

30 Some commentaries are characterized by careful exegesis, but may contain extreme doctrinal errors. Doctrinal differences due to paedobaptism or contrary views on ecclesiology in commentaries and theological works should be understood by the discerning student. No one man possesses all the truth; each has his own biases and limitations. Some of our best, most useful commentaries have been written by paedobaptists. The Puritans were unexcelled in both doctrinal consistency and practicality.
Scriptures. Scripture reading is not a superstitious or irrational act. Books are available to help us understand, and a person is irrational indeed who does not seek to read with understanding!

One should seek to build up a reservoir of knowledge and information that will serve as a foundation for a comprehensive understanding of the Bible. Often the interpretation of a given passage hinges upon information possessed and presupposed by the people of that long ago society which remains hidden to the present-day casual reader.\(^{31}\)

**Theological Dictionaries and Encyclopedias**


This is a superb dictionary with some definitive articles.


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\(^{31}\) Biblical ignorance is at times passed down from the pulpit. The author recalls hearing a preacher, referring to Acts 16:6–10, state that had not the Holy Spirit forbidden Paul to preach the Word in Asia, the Chinese would probably be missionaries to us, rather than the reverse. “Asia” in Acts 16:6, however, referred to the Roman Province of Asia Minor, the area known in modern times as Turkey, not to the Far East. Paul later evangelized throughout “Asia” (Cf. Acts 19:10, 22, 26). Note that in the Parable of the “Lost Sheep” in Lk. 15:1–7, our Lord was in Perea, east of the Jordan River, the premier sheep-grazing area of the entire region. His parable was eminently suited to both the place and the situation. Also note that after Joseph was taken into captivity and sold into slavery by his brethren, that the Ishmaelites went down to Egypt—and the trade route went right through Hebron. Joseph was no doubt within sight of his father’s encampment as he was led into Egypt. Bible geography is important. How far did Na’aman travel to return to the house of Elisha? About a two-day journey (2 Kgs. 5:14–15). What a mark of grace and thankfulness!

One of the best Dictionaries, although some articles are written by theologians with defective views.

Older, but the articles are very conservative and by astute scholars.


An old set, and in places outdated, but massive and exhaustive. Available on CD.


The old edition, edited by Orr is the best, with the most conservative scholarship. Extremely useful.

II
Language Tools

The argument for a working knowledge of the original languages of Scripture is simple: the Scriptures were written in languages other than our own. No translation or version can ever equal the original language of Scripture. The syntax, grammar, nuances and idioms are forever lost to the reader limited to a version of a translation. Every believer needs to know and experience the full force of the truth that the original readers experienced, as the Scriptures are not only to inform him, but to transform his life and bring him into intelligent obedience to the truth. *Those limited to the English Bible possess only a second-hand knowledge of the Word of God.*

The minister should never be dissuaded by inadequate schooling. Every minute spent in exploring the text in the originals will pay great dividends. Man of our greatest forefathers have been self–educated and have become proficient in both Greek and Hebrew.

Note: A computer Bible program which adequately deals with the original languages will replace many of these language tools.

Latin

Latin was once the language of scholarship. It is important for some older theological terms and, at times for deciphering notes in old biblical and doctrinal works.


Hebrew

**Hebrew Grammars**


*Gesenius* is the most complete manual Grammar of Old Testament Hebrew available. It is a rich mine of information, although the author held to radical views of biblical criticism.


A very basic self–study textbook which will enable the student to get the basics and progress in his studies.


Pratico and Van Velt’s textbook is accompanied by a CD–ROM which contains several helps, a link to Heb. flashcards, and various charts. This is a very helpful tool.


An advanced work for serious students.


The old standard, classic introduction to the study of Hebrew.
Hebrew Lexicons


The most massive and complete set for Hebrew roots and word studies.


The standard Hebrew lexicon.


This standard work parses [analyzes] every Hebrew word.


Perhaps the most complete and useful Hebrew tool for word studies by the English reader.


A helpful volume. Tregelles corrects Gesenius' radical views.


Very helpful for the English reader with some little knowledge of the Hebrew.


The standard shorter or abbreviated Hebrew lexicon.

An exhaustive work for the more advanced student.

Hebrew Concordances


A handwritten masterpiece by Jewish Rabbi and scholar. For advanced students.


A good volume for the English reader.

Miscellaneous Hebrew Helps


The standard critical Hebrew text is the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* [BHS], an exact reproduction of the MT. Until 1936, all printed editions of the MT were based on twelfth century and later mss. edited by Jacob ben Chayim. The third [and current] edition of BHS is a reproduction of the *Codex Leningradensis*, an early medieval ms. (c. 1008 AD) in the Tiberian tradition by Samuel ben Jacob, which represents the Ben Asher tradition. This text is deemed to be superior to the former editions.


A very practical guide to the Hebrew text and its attendant markings and accents for the serious student.


An abbreviated but practical work. Often included with Vine’s *Expository Dictionary of the New Testament* as one volume.

Intended for the English reader. Practical.

**Septuagint**

The Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek c. 246 BC. It is abbreviated as LXX in language works. The LXX was the “Bible” of our Lord’s day when *Koine Greek* was the *lingua franca*.

A massive and exhaustive concordance on the LXX [Septuagint, or Greek version of the Old Testament]. The standard work.

A concise analytical lexicon which parses [analyzes] the words.

The standard version of the LXX.

Greek New Testament

Greek Grammars


The old, standard manual grammar, simple to use, informative and thorough.


The most exhaustive Greek grammar ever written.Readable.


A very readable, beginning grammar. Suitable for self-study.


The newer manual grammar which has replaced Dana & Mantey in some ways

Greek Lexicons


An abbreviated lexicon for easy reference.

The standard Greek lexicon.


The most exhaustive Greek dictionary for word studies and Greek stems. Arranged with a historical development of each term. Available in a one–volume, abbreviated edition.


The exhaustive Greek lexicon for Koinē Greek, giving words both in the New Testament and in secular Greek.


A revision of the earlier work by Colin Brown. Useful and complete. Useable by the English reader with little Greek.


A very handy tool for quick reference.


The old standard work, useful for most studies.

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32 Kittel’s work is also available in an abbreviated, one vol. ed., known informally as “Little Kittel.” Although it lacks many of the critical and more technical notes, it is fairly complete in essence. Unhappily, all Greek characters have been transliterated into English.

The standard work which parses [analyzes] every word of the Greek Testament.

Greek Concordances


This concordance uses the Greek text. Useful to the student with some Greek.


Based upon the Englishman’s Greek Concordance, Smith charts every Greek term. Excellent and eminently useful!


The old, standard work for the English reader. Smith charted and organized this older work. See previous entry.

Miscellaneous Greek Helps


An indispensable tool for the serious student.


A standard sourcebook for Greek studies.

A valuable tool for doing exegesis.


An older, standard work which illustrates the Greek vocabulary from the papyri, giving much light upon the New Testament usage of words.


The newer, standard work on Greek idioms. We would personally prefer Moulton.


Indispensable for the English reader and for the serious student, as well. One of the most useful Greek tools.

Computer Software Bible Programs

There are a variety of Bible software programs available: *Logos, Sword, BibleWorks*, etc. One should be obtained which thoroughly treats the original languages and is simple to use. In the author’s experience, the best Bible program, giving complete access to the English and also to the Greek and Hebrew is *BibleWorks*. The current versions have become more inclusive. BW 6.0 is sufficient for most studies. Parsing and even basic exegesis in the Hebrew or Greek text may be done by moving the cursor along the text in either language. The additional features make this an indispensable tool.\(^{33}\)

\(^{33}\) *Bible Works*, Version 6.0. Released in 2003. Current version is 10.0 Licensed by BibleWorks, P.O. Box 6158, Norfolk, VA 23508 (888–747–8200; wwwbibleworks.com).
III
Biblical Works

Bible Backgrounds

Devotional readings from Scripture.

In the form of daily readings, illustrations taken from manners, customs, geography, etc. Informative.

Bible Atlases

A detailed Bible Atlas is an absolute necessity to gain a correct perspective of distances and locations. Most maps in Bibles are insufficient for detailed study.


Bible Archeology

Biblical archeology often helps in opening a text, revealing information otherwise hidden or omitted in other works.


Bible Customs


Bailey's works are revealing and thought–provoking. By a modern scholar who lived and taught in Bible lands and was proficient in Greek, Hebrew and Arabic.


The best life of Christ. Written by a converted Jew who was a great scholar and well–versed in Jewish traditions and customs.


Thompson was a missionary to Palestine in the 1800s. Well–written, lively and descriptive.


Bible Surveys


Easy–to–read and suitable for beginners. Dispensational, but usually good, thoughtful material.

Very basic, very readable.

A running commentary on the Bible with insights and good summarizations.


A helpful summary of each book, some pertinent notes and an outline.

A good, brief, very basic summarization and outline of each book.

An old, standard work which deserves the highest praise. A compendium of information and an outline of each book.


Bible Handbooks

The older, standard Bible Handbook. Eminently useful and filled with helpful information.


**Bible History**


IV
Isagogics

Isagogics, derived from the Gk *eis*, “into” and *ago*, “lead, bring,” means an introduction. General Isagogics denotes a general biblical introduction; special Isagogics denotes an introduction to a specific book of the Bible or a specific type of biblical literature.

General Isagogics


The standard general introduction. Filled with essential information concerning inspiration, history, canonicity, etc.


An older work, but very thorough.


A older, brief but concise approach. Filled with good information, and a good sourcebook for quotations and definitions.

Special Isagogics

Old Testament introduction


A practical and readable approach.

The modern standard work.


New Testament Introduction


A helpful work. Good summaries. Conservative.


A solid work, with excellent outlines and summaries.

Concise outlines and good surveys.

A standard work. Thorough.

Very complete. Slightly tainted with critical views and in some comments.

An older Introduction. Brief, but informative.

One of the most conservative, Dispensational introductions, with the most extensive outlines of each book.

A Bible survey which teaches how to do a survey as it progresses. Very practical.

*Kostenberger, Andreas J., Kellum, L. Scott and Quarles, Charles L., *The Cradle, the Cross and the Crown: An
Up–to–date and conservative. Good discussion of issues.


A very brief overview of the New Testament.


A concise work with good outlines and concise survey of each book.


A conservative, older standard work.


Biblical Criticism

Biblical Criticism is a necessary science, comprised of both Textual Criticism and Historical Criticism. Textual Criticism [often called lower criticism] seeks to establish the text of Scripture. Historical [often termed “higher” criticism] Criticism seeks through both internal and external evidence to
establish the authorship, circumstances of writing, recipients, the historical context, etc.

Note: Radical Biblical criticism

The foregoing are legitimate sciences. The warning is against radical or “destructive higher criticism,” which approaches the Scriptures with an anti–supernatural bias, denying Divine inspiration and often holding to the idea of either natural or cultural evolution.

The names of the radical critics and their various schools of thought have been previously considered under one’s presuppositions.

Books on Biblical Criticism


An older, conservative, readable work discussing the issues of Biblical Criticism.

Clark, Gordon H., Logical Criticism of Textual Criticism. Jefferson, Maryland: The Trinity Foundation. 1986. 54 pp. 34


A very readable survey of the issues.


34 Note: The Trinity Foundation, which publishes the works of Gordon H. Clark, has recently removed to Unicoi, TN. The mailing address is P. O. Box 68, Unicoi, TN 37692.
Sir F. Kenyon was keeper of the manuscripts in the British Museum—an astute scholar. His works are still worth perusing.


Metzger was the outstanding Greek scholar of the 20th century. This is a companion volume to the Greek Testament, giving a commentary on every variant reading of importance. Invaluable to the Greek student.


An old work by a conservative German theologian and New Testament scholar.


The works by Robertson and Warfield are older, but the principles remain the same. Both were conservative scholars.

A standard work by a conservative Presbyterian scholar and Prof. at Princeton Seminary.
V

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is the science of interpretation. Sacred Hermeneutics is the science of biblical interpretation. The term derives from the ancient Greek, *Hermes*, who was the spokesman for the gods. Hermeneutics is an absolute essential for biblical study! The Scriptures are to be interpreted according to their Divine, self–attesting or self–authenticating nature. The several rules or principles are determining for all subsequent and consistent study.

General Hermeneutics

A basic approach to the study of Hermeneutics.


An old work, conservative and still of value.

A standard work.

A standard work. Gives emphasis to the work of the Holy Spirit in interpretation.

A very practical, pastoral approach.

A standard work.

A readable, introductory work of great value.

An encyclopedic approach to Hermeneutics. Filled with good things.

The History of Interpretation


A biographical sketch of the most important biblical authors of the twentieth century, often with both positive and negative aspects of their personalities and work. Interesting and often encouraging.

Farrar was defective in his view of Scripture. His value lies in his historical research, which is always of the highest order. Invaluable for a study of hermeneutical history.

VI

Bible Commentaries

Biblical commentaries are *helps*. Such volumes are often the products of years or life–times of study in given areas of biblical knowledge. There are critical commentaries which work from the original languages, expository commentaries which deal with the text and all important matters and devotional commentaries whose value lies in the application and illustration of truth.

These can open the text as to its historical and geographical setting, linguistic nuances, psychological atmosphere, theological significance and practical application. Yet, remember that these are servants, not masters.

There is a right way and a wrong way to use a commentary. Actually, there are two wrong ways. The first is to ignore completely the use of commentaries. Some people do not consult commentaries because they believe that, since all Christians are equal as they approach the Scriptures, scholars have no privileged insight into the biblical text. The second error is to become overly dependent on commentaries. “These people have devoted their whole lives to the study of the Bible. How can my opinion measure up to theirs?”

Those holding the first position are wrong because they forget that God gives different gifts to different people in the church. Not all people are equally adept at understanding the Bible and teaching it to others (I Cor. 12:12–31). Those holding the second position err in the opposite direction. They forget that God has given believers the Spirit by which they can discern spiritual things (I Cor. 2:14–16).

The right way to use a commentary is as a help. We should first of all study a passage without reference to any helps. Only after coming to an initial understanding of the passage should we consult commentaries.
Neither should we let commentaries bully us. Many times they will be of great help, but sometimes the reader will be right and they will be wrong.\textsuperscript{35}

Note: If a set of commentaries is designated with either a double asterisk [**] or a single asterisk [*], the individual volumes may or may not be listed under the various biblical books.

Note: Some pastors and preachers have their favorite commentaries, but often without a true, historical perspective. An old commentary may be doctrinally sound, but lack in modern discoveries, new material and insights which will leave the reader unacquainted with much he needs to fully expound the Scriptures.

Commentaries on the Whole Bible


This massive work is uneven. Many authors espouse radical views of Scripture. Any volume should be subjected to close scrutiny and discernment.


Barnes was a “New School” Presbyterian, but his commentaries are very readable and provide and opening to exegesis. A basic commentary suited for pastors.


John Calvin, though one of the first true biblical commentators, still ranks as one of the most perceptive. Well–worth studying.


This work is between a survey and a commentary. Valuable for its insights, illustrations and historical and ministerial observations by “The Baptist Colossus.”


The epitome of conservative Southern Baptist Biblical scholarship. Informative and useful.


A conservative commentary from the 19th century. Very useful, containing sermonic thoughts.


The ICC deals with the text more thoroughly than most exegetical commentaries. The Old Testament is almost entirely liberal and tainted with radical criticism. Some volumes of the New Testament are classic and worthwhile.


This massive set is not a commentary per se, but a gathering of sermonic material, outlines and illustrations. Filled with sermonic material from various sources. Always helpful and eminently practical. Available in a 23 Vol. ed.


A modern Biblical commentary which is usually Dispensational; both expository and practical. A useful commentary.

**________, The Genevan Series of Old and New Testament Commentaries published by the Banner of Truth.**
This series is outstanding for the republication of many of the Puritans and older classical commentaries. The Puritans were often unexcelled as practical Biblical commentators.


John Gill was the Baptist prodigy of the 18th century. Often wordy, but always informative, especially when dealing with ancient customs, Hebrew traditions and doctrinal issues. One always appreciates Gill.36


One of the most useful one-volume conservative Bible commentaries.


Bishop Hall, who lived between the Reformation and the Puritan eras, is very insightful, always helpful and edifying in his observations.


Hawker's commentary is comprised largely of homiletic observations on the text, section–by–section. Practical and sermonic.


Who can do without Matthew Henry? The most popular, ubiquitous Bible Commentary ever published—and rightly so. Both expository and eminently practical. If one had only one Bible commentary, let it be Matthew Henry!

36 Man old Baptist works, including Gill and various histories may be obtained through Baptist Standard–Bearer, 1 Iron Oaks Dr, Paris, AR 72855. https://www.standardbearer.org.

This series is unequal. Some authors are strongly evangelical; others are somewhat liberal or given to doctrinal errors. The format is not user–friendly. Each volume should be chosen with care. Some are very worthwhile.


A brief but judicious commentary.


One of the great conservative commentaries of the 19th century which encompasses detailed exegesis, exposition and practical observations.


An unequal series. Some volumes are outstanding [e.g., Blakie on 1 Samuel]; others are given to radical criticism. Approaches the Scriptures as a series of essays on various lengthy passages or chapters.


C. H. Spurgeon ranked Poole next to Matthew Henry. Brief and insightful.


One of the standard works. Contains a verse–by–verse commentary in addition to many general and more specific sermon outlines and illustrations. As with any composite work, it varies in orthodoxy and value with the given author.
Trapp was one of Spurgeon’s favorite commentators. Brief, pithy, always worth consulting for insights.

Old Testament Commentaries

A fairly conservative series of volumes on the Old Testament. Usually trustworthy. Some volumes are outstanding.

The old, standard Old Testament Commentary. Deals with the Hebrew text in critical places.

The Tyndale commentaries on the Bible are generally conservative and a combination of a survey and exposition. Very readable.

New Testament Commentaries

A critical, exegetical commentary on the Greek text of the New Testament. For advanced students.

As its companion in the Old Testament, these volumes are usually outstanding as expositions of the New Testament.

These volumes usually have the best of conservative scholarship.


The U.S.A. publisher was originally Harper’s. A fairly good, readable commentary.


Hendriksen was a pastor and Prof. of New Testament at Calvin Theological Seminary. Solid, Reformed and readable.


The best of conservative Baptist scholarship in the 19th century. This set contains Broadus’ classic commentary on Matthew.


Lenski was the outstanding Lutheran exegete of the 20th century. His commentary is based on the Greek text, but is readable and contains pertinent comments. Lenski was a strong personality and his preaching enhances the comments.


Modern commentaries on the Greek text. Critical, technical and useful for the student with some knowledge of the Greek.


Meyer’s commentary on the Greek text is critical, yet somewhat conservative in the 19th century age of German
rationalism. Useful for the student with some knowledge of Greek.


A standard work based on the Greek text, with sufficient notes and comments to be valuable for the serious Bible student.


Intended for pastors and preachers with little knowledge of Greek. Always practical, insightful and helpful.


The Tyndale commentaries are both a survey and an expository approach with helpful information. A useful set of commentaries.


Intended for the English reader giving insights into the language of the New Testament with various helpful notes.


Small paperbacks with the essence of the meaning. Sound in interpretation. Sub–titled “A Digest of Reformed Comment.” Very useful, but brief.


Expository, not exegetical, but massive and inclusive in content.

**Bible Commentaries Book–By–Book**

Either as individual volumes or as part of a set of commentaries, some works are outstanding and some have
become classics. After possessing the best commentary possible as a set, individual volumes or sets on various books should fill in what voids may remain. The following commentaries are useful, noteworthy, outstanding or classics.

Old Testament Commentaries

The Pentateuch

**Genesis**


Barnhouse was a brilliant preacher. Always thought-provoking.


Currid's commentaries are straightforward and intended for the English reader with good explanations.


An old, classic commentary.


*Jacobs, Melancthon*, *Notes on Genesis* (1866)

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37 *New International Commentary on the Old Testament.*
38 *New International Commentary on the Old Testament.*
39 *Tyndale Old Testament Commentary.*
The commentaries of Jacobus are critical, deep and thorough. Old, but worthwhile.

Lawson is superb in his lectures on Joseph and Esther. Very practical.

An older, standard, conservative work.


**Exodus**


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40 *Word Biblical Commentary.*
An old, standard work on the Tabernacle with its types and symbols by a Baptist pastor.


  Rushdoony was an independent thinker. He wrote scores of volumes on philosophical, political and theological subjects. His Reconstructionism characterizes his exposition of the Law.


  A thoughtful volume on the Tabernacle and priesthood.


  An old, fairly standard work on the Tabernacle and priesthood, dealing with types and symbols.

**Leviticus**

**Bonar, Andrew, *Leviticus*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, reprint of 1846 ed. 528 pp.**

  Perhaps the classic commentary on Leviticus by a Presbyterian. Spurgeon praised it highly.


**Numbers**


**Deuteronomy**

*Calvin, John, Sermons upon Deuteronomy.


### Historical Literature

**Joshua**

Bush, George, *Notes on Joshua*, New York, 1852


Davis’ commentaries are all well–thought through, often pungent and always well–worth consulting.


**Judges**


Kitto, John, “The Judges” in *Daily Bible Illustrations*.

**Ruth**


The story of Ruth by an old radio teacher, Dutch Reformed but Dispensational.


Outstanding, practical and insightful.


**1 Samuel**


The standard chronology of the Kingdom Era.


**2 Samuel**


Blakie's commentaries are always outstanding and perceptive.


**Lawson, George, *Discourses upon the History of David*, 1833.  
Lawson is always superb.


1 Kings


The old, classic work on Elijah.


2 Kings


See Krummacher on Elijah.

MacDuff, J. R., *The Healing Waters, or The Story of Na’aman*.

1 Chronicles

2 Chronicles

Ezra


Nehemiah


Esther


Wisdom and Poetic Literature

**Job**
The complete work on Job by Joseph Caryle consists of 12 large volumes.


**Psalms**
Solid exposition, critical yet useable.

Barnes, Albert, *Notes on the Psalms*.

Every commentary by Bridges is worthwhile.
An old, Puritan work.

A very readable, practical exposition.


A critical, yet very useable book on the Psalms.

Sermonic material. Lloyd–Jones was an expository preacher and shines in his practical expositions.

*Owen, John,* “A Practical Exposition on the One Hundred and Thirtieth Psalm.” See his *Works*, Vol. VI.
Owen was one of the greatest of the Puritans. A deep thinker, but also a practical preacher.

A classic work on the Psalms.

Plumer is very practical.

Brief studies on the Psalms. Scroggie excelled as a precise and analytical Bible teacher.


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41 *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges.*
The greatest work on the Psalms. A treasure of exposition and Puritan quotations. Spurgeon gave 8 years of his life to this work, which was for him a labor of love during his extended illnesses and downtime in Mentone, France.


**Proverbs**

Essays and sermonic approach. Readable and applicable.

An exposition of the highest order.

The writings of Robert Jones are always meaty and practical.


Lawson is always superb and practical.

The crowning work of Waltke as an expositor.

Sermonic lectures on the Proverbs.

**Ecclesiastes**

The classic commentary on Ecclesiastes. Penetrating and practical.
An old, classic commentary.

Solid, conservative book by a Lutheran scholar.


**Song of Solomon**

Note: most old commentaries spiritualize this book, which seems rather to teach the blessedness of married love than the spiritual union of Christ and his church.


Sibbes, Richard, “Bowels Opened; or a Discovery of the Neere and Deere Love, Union and Communion betwixt Christ and the Church.” See *Works*.

Major Prophets

**Isaiah**


*Durham, James, *Christ Crucified, or the Marrow of the Gospel, holden forth in Seventy–Two Sermons on Isaiah 53*.  
A Puritan classic.

As all of Leupold’s commentaries, a solid exposition.

Young’s greatest commentary, a modern classic.

**Jeremiah**


The *New American Commentary* series is conservative and practical, as well as expository.


**Lamentations**


**Ezekiel**


An old classic. Fairbairn was a thorough writer.

Banner of Truth only publishes the very best in literature.
Daniel
Barnes, Albert, Notes on Daniel. 2 Vols.

Minor Prophets
A good, practical set.
Campbell Morgan was an outstanding Bible lecturer, grasping the essence of a passage or book.
A classic on the Minor Prophets. Part of the Barnes’ Notes set.

Hosea
A Puritan exposition.

**Joel**


**Amos**


**Obadiah**


**Jonah**


A classic sermonic commentary on Jonah.

Micah

Nahum


The works of Palmer Robertson are all of the highest order. Bible study at its best and most perceptive.

Habakkuk


Zephaniah


Haggai

Zechariah


An older classic on this book.


Malachi


New Testament Commentaries

New Testament Critical Studies


Gospels


The standard harmony of the Gospels. This is mostly Scripture arranged in four parallel columns giving a harmony

\(^{42}\) Baldwin’s commentary is a critical, pioneer work, allegedly giving the key to the interpretation of the book.
of the four Gospels with outline headings. A great help in reading the Gospels and gaining a chronological and inclusive perspective.

Extremely practical. Volumes on Luke and John have many additional notes. Ryle’s practical writings are of the highest order.

Outstanding for its plethora of information—analytical, chronological and extremely detailed with many lists, charts and tables.


The Life of Christ

Expositions of selected passages by one of the great commentators of the 19th century.

The most complete Life of Christ, and written by a converted Jew familiar with all of the Jewish traditions and teachings. Filled with information and well-written.

A standard work by a Lutheran scholar.

Farrar is always good for his detailed historical research.

Helpful and perceptive, but Campbell Morgan does not deal with the Garden Agony!

The standard, brief account of our Lord's life.

**Matthew**

Alexander's works are all of the highest order.

The older *An American Commentary on the New Testament* (Baptist, 1886). Broadus is the old, classic Baptist Commentary on Matthew.

An insightful commentary on the training of the Disciples.

Lloyd–Jones was one of the outstanding expository preachers of the 20th century.


One of Spurgeon’s final works.

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43 *New International Bible Commentary.*
Mark


Cranfield is a careful, through, modern exegete.

Luke


While somewhat weak doctrinally, Godet had the ability to proceed from exegesis to preaching—a rare and blessed gift.


Plummer on Luke is an exceptional ICC exegetical commentary.


Van Doren’s commentaries are filled with sermonic suggestions. Always thought-provoking. Spurgeon said his students would be “Van Dolts” if they did not purchase them!

John


Lectures or sermons on our Lord’s High Priestly Prayer.

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44 *Tyndale New Testament Commentary.*

45 To be completed in two volumes.

An old, Puritan work. Thorough.


A classic on John 17.


**Acts**


A practical commentary suitable for teaching and preaching.


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46 Black’s *New Testament Commentary*. 


A very influential commentary. We do not agree with some of his views which have influenced other commentators, e.g., Acts 17, Paul at Athens. This was Paul at his very best, not his worst!


Walker was a missionary to India. Exegetical and practical, and written with a missionary spirit.

The Pauline Epistles


A classic study by an influential 19th century commentator.


The best historical and geographical commentary on the life and ministry of Paul.


An excellent companion volume to Coneybeare and Howson.

An old Puritan work.

**Romans**


Barnhouse was a popular preacher. His written works are sermonic and always full of information and thought-provoking.


A critical commentary which is basic to a good exegesis of this Epistle.


Godet is both exegetical and pastoral.


One of Griffith–Thomas’s better commentaries. Filled with good information and exposition.


One of the classic commentaries on Romans—by a Calvinistic Baptist. This volume was the product of the “Second Genevan Reformation” [revival].


Hodge is always brief and to the point.
A series of expository sermons on Romans by a master of expository preaching.


McBeth was a Baptist minister. This commentary is exegetical and practical. It should be better known.

One of the best commentaries on Romans. Lloyd-Jones and Stott are perceptive on the issues of definitive sanctification in Romans 6; Haldane is not, although he is very good on other issues. Had we only commentary on Romans, it would be Murray!

A more modern, standard commentary.

Outstanding for a brief survey or overview of Romans.

Plumer is always practical and useful.

What the title states—an interpretive outline. Useful.

A standard treatment of Romans with applicatory passages.

Stott gleaned from older and other works and summarized the essence for the reader, often giving the best. Read Stott last for the finishing touch.

1 Corinthians


A little–known commentary by the great Jonathan Edwards.


As always, brief and pointed, and always helpful.

2 Corinthians


**Galatians**


Burton was a fine exegete and his writings are always worthwhile.


Eadie’s commentaries on the Pauline Epistles are all of a high order.


Luther’s classic commentary, his defense of justification by faith.

**Ephesians**


A Puritan work.

F. F. Bruce was a gifted expositor and teacher.


The Works of Thomas Goodwin are of the highest order. Puritanism at its best.


The classic commentary on The Christian’s Warfare. Filled with richness and profuse in sermonic material.


This is a modern exegetical commentary and what an exegetical commentary ought to be. Excellent!


Another series of expository sermons by an excellent preacher.

**Philippians**


The classic commentary on Philippians.


**Colossians**


An old, Puritan exposition.


**1 Thessalonians**


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2 Thessalonians


1 Timothy


Fairbairn's work republished by the Banner of Truth in 2002 as *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*.


Kelley's work is exceptional.


2 Timothy


Titus


An old, Puritan work.
**Philemon**


**Hebrews**


John Brown of Edinburgh was one of the great expositors of the 19th century.


Dickson was a Puritan commentator.


One of the great, massive Puritan works on Hebrews.


This commentary recently printed (2002) by the Particular Baptist Press, Springfield, Mo. James A. Haldane was the brother of Robert Haldane, who wrote the classic commentary on Romans. Both were Baptists. Their biography is listed under “Personal Biographies.”

An exceptional commentary.


This is the most massive commentary on Hebrews by a Puritan author.


Vos was solidly Reformed and an excellent writer.


The General Epistles

**James**


Mayor's commentary is exegetical and expository. Some radical tendencies.
Robertson, A. T., wrote a commentary on James which is excellent, but we do not personally possess.

1 Peter


*Kelley’s works are very profitable.

*Leighton, Robert (1613–1684), *Commentary upon 1 Peter.* Religious Tract Society. 2 Vols.

The classic commentary on 1 Peter.


A old, Puritan work.

2 Peter


A Puritan commentary of repute.


Mayor was given to radical criticism.


1 John


A classic expository commentary by a Methodist.


Hailed by several outstanding present–day pastors and religious leaders. Treats 1 John and assurance of salvation.


Expository and applicatory commentary on fellowship with God and one another.


Pierce was an old Baptist commentator.

2 John


3 John


Jude


An old, Puritan commentary.


Revelation


   The classic Amillennial commentary on Revelation.

   Good sermonic material in these lectures.


VII
Doctrinal Works

We do not know the Bible unless we know it doctrinally, and, conversely, we do not know any aspect of doctrinal truth until we know it biblically. Doctrine or Theology is like the skeletal frame of the body. It does not necessarily stand out, but it gives the necessary support and form without which the body would collapse and die.

In doctrine, we think of various aspects of biblical truth; in theology, we think in terms of a system of truth wherein the doctrines are brought together in a unified and coherent manner.

Doctrinal and Theological works should be carefully consulted and often thoroughly studied so we can be precise and consistent in our knowledge of Divine truth. They should be utilized as both reference works and as study guides. Further, we cannot have consistent Christian experience without a consistent theology!

The victories of Christianity, wherever they have been won, have been won by distinct doctrinal theology; by telling men roundly of Christ’s vicarious death and sacrifice; by teaching them justification by faith and bidding them believe on a crucified Savior; by preaching ruin by sin, redemption by Christ, regeneration by the Spirit.⁴⁹

What mars the simplicity of the childlike faith which Jesus commends is not an admixture of knowledge, but an admixture of self–trust. The childlike simplicity of faith is marred sometimes by ignorance, but never by knowledge; it will never be marred—and never has been marred in the lives of the great theologians—by the blessed knowledge of God and of the Savior Jesus Christ which is contained in the Word of God. Without that knowledge we might be tempted to trust partly in ourselves; but with it we trust wholly to God. The more we know of God, the more unreservedly we trust Him; the greater will be our progress in theology, the simpler and more childlike will be our faith.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ J. Gresham Machen, quoted by W. J. Grier, Loc. cit.
General Theological Works

When considering the subject of theology, most think in terms of Systematic Theology, but this concept is too narrow. Christian Theology possesses five interrelated branches: Exegetical, Biblical, Historical, Systematic and Practical. A very brief and basic sketch would be as follows:

Exegetical Theology deals with the text of Scripture and includes such studies as Biblical Criticism, Canons, Biblical Exegesis, Hermeneutics and Biblical Exposition.

Biblical Theology builds upon the Exegetical and is governed by the principle of progressive revelation, taking each biblical book and fitting it into the scheme of the unfolding drama of redemption.

Historical Theology follows the development of doctrines throughout history from the close of the Scriptural canon to the present—largely a study of Creeds, confessions and controversies, errors and heresies.

Systematic Theology seeks to encompass all of the three preceding branches and form them into a coherent, self-consistent system which adequately and consistently reflects the truth of Scripture.

Practical Theology is the expression of all the foregoing. It expresses itself in Evangelistics [evangelism], Catechetics [teaching and instruction], Homiletics [preaching], Liturgics [worship], Ecclesiastics [church order], Poimenics [Pastoral Theology] and Apologetics [defending the faith].

Theological Encyclopedia

One should study to gain a comprehensive grasp of theology for balance and consistency.


A propaedeutic is an encyclopedic introduction, an attempt to survey the whole range of theological science in and introductory manner.


This was one of Schaff’s final works and the first and only Propaedeutic in the English Language. See “Downing” above.

**The Nature and History of Theology**


Schaff’s work is without parallel. Very useful, doctrinal, historical and educational.


Written with a missionary spirit and a biblical faithfulness.

Exegetical Theology

Exegetical Theology, through Biblical Criticism, Exegesis and Hermeneutics, seeks to derive its substance from the very text of Scripture. Thus, those works on Biblical Languages, Biblical Criticism, Exegesis, Isagogics, Hermeneutics, Critical Commentaries and the various other theological disciplines could also be considered here. Exegetical Theology ought to be corrective of any allegorical tendencies in interpreting Scripture, as it necessarily rests in the *usus loquendi* [Latin for the common usage of language].


Biblical Theology


An older, standard work.


One of the most basic, readable works on Biblical Theology, encompassing both Old and New Testaments.


**Historical Theology**


An excellent, brief treatment of the development of basic Christian doctrines from a historical perspective.


The classic 19th century work on Historical Theology.


A sound treatment with much information.


A series of lectures on the relationship of doctrine to the unfolding of Christianity. Excellent and thought-provoking.

A thorough work, tracing Christianity in a general way.

Absolutely essential for the student of theology.

A readable history, written in an interesting manner. Very informative.

The first Historical Theology written by an American. Shedd is always astute and worthwhile.

**Systematic Theology**

Systematic Theology has several departments: Bibliology, the doctrine of the Scriptures; Theology Proper, the doctrine of God, his triune nature and purpose; Angelology, the doctrine of angels and demons; Hamartiology, the doctrine of Sin; Deontology, the doctrine of the Law; Soteriology, the doctrine of Salvation; Christology, the doctrine of Christ; Ecclesiology, the doctrine of the Church; and Eschatology, the doctrine of Final Things.

**Systematic Theologies**

Systematic Theologies have been written from a variety of viewpoints.

A theology with a practical approach written by a Dutch pastor in the 17th century.

Roman Catholic. Thomas Aquinas may be valuable to the advanced student or scholar. His *Summa Theologica* dominated Romish thinking and theology for eight centuries.


An older Baptist theology used by Evangelical and Fundamental Baptists. Dispensational. Modified Calvinist.


Reformed. Dogmatics is another term for Systematic Theology.


Reformed. Concise. Very good to gain an essential grasp and definition of doctrines.


The first, true Systematic Theology by a Baptist.


Self-taught, Brown became the mentor to a generation of Scottish Presbyterians.


The first true Systematic Theology to derive from the 16th Century Reformation. One must appreciate the writings, comprehensive theology and genius of John Calvin.
Chafer’s work is the standard and definitive Dispensational approach to Systematic Theology. A non-Reformed, Presbyterian approach.

A standard Reformed theology. Dabney was both an astute philosopher and theologian.

The first theology written by a Baptist in America. Readable.

A Prof. at Moody Bible Institute. Very readable. Excellent on Deontology, the doctrine of the Law.

Contemporary Southern Baptist theologian.

Old theological works were termed bodies of Divinity. Old, somewhat wordy, but very thorough. Every Baptist should learn to appreciate and study Gill!


A. A. Hodge, the son of Charles Hodge, has written a concise study. These were originally given as Lectures to his church. Spurgeon used this as his textbook in his Pastor’s College.

The American, old standard Reformed theology.


Owen was the greatest of the Puritans. Both a theologian and a pastor. Of the highest quality.


Contemporary, Reformed and Evangelical. Reymond sought to ground doctrine in exegesis.


Reconstructionist and Reformed. Rushdoony deals with issues others do not, e.g., a theology of time, of work, etc.


A re–working of Strong's theology. Dispensational and premillennial.


The old standard Baptist theology. Strong, however good in ecclesiology and encyclopedic in scope, was a theistic evolutionist. He was also postmillennial.


Thornwell was one of the great southern Presbyterian theologians.
Turretin was a Swiss–Italian and professor at the Genevan Academy.


Bibliography


Warfield held to a high standard of Divine inspiration and scriptural authority.

General Bible and Christian Doctrine


Reformed exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Sermons on theological subjects.

A Reformed approach by an astute, readable contemporary scholar.


A Puritan exposition of the Westminster Shorter Catechism.
A very readable and quotable doctrinal commentary.

Apologetics

Apologetics is an intelligent defense of the faith. It derives from the Gk. *apo*, “off, from,” and *logia*, “something said, and so to speak from a given position and defend it. There are two diverse approaches: evidential [“Christian Evidences”] and presuppositional [presupposing the self–attesting or self–authenticating nature of Scripture. This latter is the approach found in Scripture].

Bahnsen’s works are of the highest order. This volume is a practical approach.


Van Til was the great Reformed Apologist for the 20th century.


Clark was both a philosopher and an apologist.


A readable discussion of epistemology, or the science of truth and truth claims.


Frame is a contemporary, readable Reformed apologist.


An excellent introduction to Biblical Apologetics by a scientist and pastor. Readable and scriptural.


Most apologists are philosophical; Oliphant seeks to ground his apologetics in scriptural exegesis.


A concise, very readable introduction to presuppositional apologetics. Out of print for years, but might be found used.


An evidentialist approach.

**Specialized Doctrinal Works**

**Theology Proper**


The classic, very readable Reformed work on the doctrine of sovereign grace.

The classic Puritan work. Readable and comprehensive.


An excellent Reformed comprehensive treatment of the Trinity.


Intended for the average reader. Essays on the doctrine of God.


The classic work on Divine sovereignty by a gifted Bible expositor.


Warfield was a great theologian and a very clear, readable writer.


An old, Reformed classic.
Christology


The classic work on the doctrine of Christ in the Old Testament.


This is a unique book by a spiritual writer of the 19th century.

The highest recommendation!

Pneumatology


A standard Reformed work by a Scottish Presbyterian.

Southern Baptist.

A classic work by a Scottish Presbyterian.

The writings of Winslow are without peer, and this is no exception.

Demonology

This book deals with modern phenomena as well as biblical data.

Written after the 1904 Welsh Revival with its eventual extremes and subjectivism.

A standard work.

Deontology

Deontology refers to the Law of God and Christian ethics.
The term derives from “ontos,” the Gk. term for “ought” or moral obligation.

General Deontology


A commentary on the Moral Law by a British Baptist.


One of the modern classics on the Ten Commandments and their application to the church and society by the “Father” of modern Reconstructionism. Profound, practical and thought-provoking.


The Decalogue

The Decalogue refers to the Ten Commandments, and is from the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament: *deka* [ten] and *logos* [word]—“The Ten Words.”


The 19th century classic on the Moral Law. Given as Sunday afternoon university lectures by the step-son of Adoniram Judson.

The works of Boston are valuable. This is no exception.

A modern approach to the practicality of the Ten Commandments.
A modern exposition and application of the Moral Law.

Sermons on the Moral Law by a contemporary Reformed preacher.

Calvin is always among the best.


A contemporary exposition by a Dutch theologian.

A Puritan exposition of the Ten Commandments.

A very readable contemporary, practical approach to God’s Law.

Farrar is always astute and worth reading.


A modern, practical approach to the Ten Commandments and their relevancy.

A Puritan commentary on the Law of God.


One of the best readable treatises on the Moral Law ever written—and by a Baptist.

Good, practical preaching on God’s Law by the Pastor of Spurgeon’s Tabernacle.

Murray’s *Principles* is the classic work on biblical ethics. It is thoroughly Scriptural and exegetically sound. It deals with the issues of law and grace and the Moral Law in principle as the basis for Christian ethics.


One volume of the great Watson Puritan Trilogy. Finely worded and practical.

Hamartiology
Hamartiology is the doctrine of sin [from *hamartia*, the general Gk. term for sin]. Preachers and pastors need to thoroughly understand the biblical doctrine of sin!


Owen’s works on sin are unsurpassed. He was a Puritan theologian of the heart.


Anthropology
Anthropology is the biblical doctrine of man. We must remember that the one and only “normal” human being was unfallen Adam as he came from the hand of God. The pastor and preacher should become well–studied in matters of fallen, sinful humanity of the human heart or imagination, including his own heart and imagination!

This work is masterful and practical. One of the great classics.


*Edwards, Jonathan, “A Careful and Strict Inquiry into the Prevailing Notions of the Freedom of the Will,” The

The classic work on the human will as bound by depravity.


General Soteriology

Soteriology is the doctrine of salvation, from the Gk. sōtēria, “salvation, deliverance, restoration to a healthy state.”

A little volume which summarizes the doctrine in a concise, readable manner.

A superb little book, which is indispensable and suitable for believers of all types. Very clearly written. How could we do without it?


**Sovereign Grace**

The doctrine of the grace of God in salvation. Essential for the understanding of those who deal with the souls of men.


A historical–biblical study by an old Baptist writer.


One of the best defenses and expositions of the doctrine of grace ever penned.


A basic, readable work by a contemporary British Baptist.
A classic work which seeks to defend the Doctrines of Grace.

The Atonement or Redemption Wrought by Christ


The author is a contemporary Dispensational Calvinistic theologian.

The best work on the atonement from the perspective of Biblical Theology.

The classic work on the atonement. Owen possesses and exhibits the thorough, scriptural method of the Puritan mind.


The two volumes by Smeaton on the atonement are classics and solid teaching.
Regeneration and Conversion

The preacher and pastor need to be well–schooled in the matters of experiential salvation if they are to be physicians of souls.


Justification

In justification, God declares the believing sinner just or righteous in his sight. Never to be confused with sanctification, justification is yet inseparable from it. It is the very heart of the Gospel.


Sanctification

Sanctification or gospel holiness is inseparable from justification. Much of contemporary evangelical Christianity,
however, separates the two and considers salvation only as a religious decision and not an entrance into a holy life by necessity. Ministers, to be faithful, ought to be well–studied in the truth of biblical sanctification.


Murray’s writings are unexcelled in these truths.


The classic work on holiness or sanctification. Practical and penetrating.


It was this little volume which brought George Whitefieldsavingly to Christ.


Warfield’s final work in two volumes. The second volume published separately and deals with Finney and the Higher Life teachings. Very thorough and necessary reading.

Winslow was one of the great truly spiritual writers of the 19th century. Superb in dealing with matters of the heart.

Assurance and Perseverance


See under commentaries on 1 John.

The New Perspective on Paul and the Federal Vision

These Errors concern matters of justification by faith, and have penetrated the Reformed movement. They teach, among other things, justification by faithfulness, a great departure from traditional Reformed theology. Pastors need to understand the current errors and protect their congregations.


Ecclesiology

Ecclesiology is the doctrine of the church. Almost every one of the following works merit an asterisk for Baptists. Only the very outstanding are noted.


The classic work on baptism—by a former Presbyterian!


A thorough work on the nature, characteristics and perpetuity of the New Testament Church.


A thorough treatise on the term *Baptizo*.


Verduin was a Dutch Reformed author, and his two books are classics.


Eschatology

Eschatology is the doctrine of final things, from the Gk. *eschatos*, “final” or “last.” This area of study includes the fulfillment of prophecy, the second advent of our Lord, the intermediate state, the resurrection, the various millennial views and the final state of man.

Individual Eschatology


The old, classic work on immortality.


A readable book by an editor of the Banner of Truth.


An older, standard work on immortality.

A very readable account written after the death of Scroggie’s first wife.

A conservative work by an outstanding, practical theologian.

**General Eschatology**

Reformed and postmillennial.

Amillennial.

A consideration of several views by different authors: Dispensational Premillennialism, historic Premillennialism, Postmillennialism and Amillennialism.


Amillennial.


Baptist and postmillennial.

Baptist and historic premillennial.


An older, classic Dispensational treatment.


Latter–Day Glory Postmillennial.

Reconstructionist postmillennial.
Baptist Confessions and Church Polity

Baptist Confessions of faith

An older study of Baptist Confessions.

The contemporary commentary on Baptist confessions by a Southern Baptist author. Much historical and doctrinal information.

The older, standard work on Baptist confessions.

The oldest book on Baptist Confessions of Faith.

Baptist Church Polity

For a listing of works on Ecclesiology, note the general works on Systematic Theology and the sub–section on Ecclesiology.

A classic work. Carson, a former Presbyterian, was a great apologist and polemicist for the Baptists.

A modern treatment by a Particular Baptist.


Cults


An excellent treatise on the modern tongues movement with detailed historical information.


A standard work from the Reformed perspective.


An encyclopedic approach to the various cults.


A detailed and very informative work by two former Mormons.


An older, standard textbook on the major cults.

**Practical theology**

Pastoral Theology

and the Christian Ministry

The pulpit ministry is the center and core of a preacher’s calling. Mark the following comments:

If a minister is not convinced of the Divine truth of the word he preaches, his preaching loses all authority, influence, and power. If he is not able to bring a message from God, who then gives him the right to put himself on a pulpit above them? Who would dare, who would be able to do this, unless he has a word of God to proclaim? –Herman Bavinck

“And He sent them to preach...” Lk. 9:2. The importance of preaching, as a means of grace, might easily be gathered from this passage... it is but one instance, among many, of the high value which the Bible everywhere sets upon preaching. It is, in fact, God’s chosen instrument for
doing good to souls. By it sinners are converted, inquirers led on, and saints built up. A preaching ministry is absolutely essential to the health and prosperity of a visible church.

The pulpit is the place where the chief victories of the gospel have always been won, and no church has ever done much for the advancement of true religion in which the pulpit has been neglected. Would we know whether a minister is truly apostolical man? If he is, he will give the best of his attention to his sermons. He will labor and pray to make his preaching effective, and he will tell his congregation that he looks to preaching for the chief results on souls.

—J. C. Ryle

We may invigorate our faith and renew our courage by reflecting that divine power has always attended the preaching of doctrine, when done in the true spirit of preaching. Great revivals have accompanied the heroic preaching of the doctrines of grace, predestination, election, and that whole lofty mountain range of doctrines upon which Jehovah sits enthroned, sovereign in grace as in all things else. God honors the preaching that honors him.

There is entirely too much milk-sop preaching nowadays trying to cajole sinners to enter upon a truce with their Maker, quit sinning and join the church. The situation does not call for a truce, but for a surrender. Let us bring out the heavy artillery of heaven, and thunder away at this stuck-up age as Whitefield, Edwards, Spurgeon, and Paul did and there will be many slain in the Lord raised up to walk in newness of life.

—J. B. Gambrell


A modern approach to the pastoral ministry.

This huge set contains Baxter’s most famous work, *The Reformed Pastor*.


As all of Blaikie’s works, practical and very helpful.


Bridges has written the classic work—astute, comprehensive and convicting. Filled with excellent insights and quotations. Who can read Bridges and not be convicted of his shortcomings? He lived his ministry!


An urgent plea for holiness and fruitfulness in the Gospel ministry


An encouraging, lively volume well—worth its perusal!


Very comprehensive and edifying. Murphy pushes men to their fullest.


A necessary volume for our day. Stirring articles and instructions from notable authors of the past.


A standard Reformed work.


Spring was ardent in his pastoral and educational ministry.


Lectures given to his graduates concerning a balanced ministry. Typical Spurgeon and masterful.


A great companion volume to Both Bridges and Lloyd–Jones. Spurgeon at his best lecturing to young preachers.


One of Stalker’s best writings.


Homiletics

The term “Homiletics” derives from the Gk. *homiletikos*, the principles of rhetoric, and so the English “homily.” The subject of preaching is three–fold: the history of preaching, the preparation and delivery of sermons and published sermons.
The History of Preaching


The Preparation and Delivery of Sermons


Alexander was a notable preacher, who often preached without written notes.


An older, classic work.


The classic book on Homiletics. Get the old edition or a reprint. The later editions by his son-in-law, Witherspoon, are a departure from the original in emphasis and method.


Lenski was a powerful Lutheran preacher. This work was used as a textbook for homiletics in a great Baptist theological seminary—something must be said about this Lutheran!


Very readable and encouraging as well as convicting.


A modern plea by several men of note for a return to expository preaching.


An old, early Puritan work.


A standard work by a Lutheran professor.


One of the Reformed classics.

Liturgics derives from the Gk. *latreuo*, “to worship or serve,” and *leitourgia*, “religious service,” hence, “liturgy.” Theologically, this denotes the manner or worship, which would include our music, public prayers, and the singing of hymns, as well as the preaching. The key terminology is “the regulative principle of worship,” i.e., that our worship must derive in spirit and principle from the Scriptures.

A call back to reverent worship and an exploration of contemporary worship.

A biblical, Puritan study of worship and its seriousness.


A plea for true, biblical worship which reflects the nature and character of God.

An examination of modern, contemporary worship in the light of Scripture.


Evangelistics
The term derives from the Gk. *euaggelion*, “good news” or “Gospel.” Anglicized, it is “evangel.” This department includes the message and methods of evangelism, personal soul-winning and evangelistic preaching.

Evangelism

An examination of the contemporary “decisionism” of Fundamentalist and evangelical Christianity.

A Puritan approach to evangelism. Not for the faint-hearted!
A Reformed classic on seeking the lost.

As with all of Boston’s works, a solid approach.


A comparison of the modern "Gospel" with the Bible.

There is a great difference between inviting sinners to Christ and the modern invitational system. This short treatise explores the subject historically and doctrinally.

The classic Puritan approach to personal salvation, based upon two questions and their answers: First what it is to have a saving interest in Christ, second, how to find a saving interest in Christ if one does not. John Owen said that Guthrie was a sound Divine and praised this work.

Well–written and readable.


Missions


Barnes, Lemuel Call, *Two Thousand Years of Missions before Carey.* Chicago: Student Missionary Campaign Library, 1902. 504 pp.


This is a well–worked out volume on a biblical study of missions.


Catechetics

“Catechism” derives from the Gk., and is a compound of the preposition *kata,* “down, throughout, thoroughly” and the verb *ēchēo,* “to sound,” the source of our English word, “echo.” There seems to be in this etymology the idea of a responsive answer. Catechizing has the connotation of thorough or repeated oral instruction, and is only one of several related terms for instruction or teaching found in Scripture. The term itself occurs eight times in the New Testament (twice as “informed” in Acts 21:21, 24, referring to word–of–mouth information): Luke 1:4; Acts 18:25; Rom. 2:18; 1 Cor. 14:19 and Gal. 6:6.
It may surprise some evangelicals and most Baptists to learn that Baptists used catechisms up to the 19th century more than any other group. From the earliest times, catechisms have been the vehicle most used and blessed for inculcating truth from generation to generation. The following works are catechisms, expositions of catechisms, or commentaries on the various catechisms. Mark the words of C. H. Spurgeon:

“In matters of doctrine you will find orthodox congregations frequently changed to heterodoxy in the course of thirty or forty years, and that is because, too often, there has been no catechizing of the children in the essential doctrines of the Gospel.

For my part, I am more and more persuaded that the study of a good scriptural catechism is of infinite value to our children....Even if the youngsters do not understand all the questions and answers....yet, abiding in their memories, it will be of infinite service when the time of understanding comes, to have known these very excellent, wise and judicious definitions of the things of God...It will be a blessing to them—the greatest of all blessing...a blessing in life and death, in time and eternity, the best of blessings God Himself can give....

I am persuaded that the use of a good catechism in all our families will be a great safeguard against the increasing errors of the times, and therefore I have compiled this little manual...for the use of my own church and congregation. Those who use it in their families or classes must labour to explain the sense to the little ones; but the words should be carefully learned by heart, for they will be understood better as the child advances in years.”


A Baptist catechism with short comments.

A commentary on the Westminster Shorter Catechism as a system of doctrinal instruction.


A modern Baptist catechism with pertinent questions and answers.


A basic manual of Bible doctrine in the form of a catechism.


A Puritan commentary on the Catechism by a fervent author and preacher.


   A Puritan explanation and commentary on the Shorter Catechism.

   A Reformed commentary on the Westminster Larger Catechism.

   A Commentary on the Shorter Catechism by one of the most notable and quotable of the Puritans.

   A volume of historical incidents, conversations and useful anecdotes to illustrate the Shorter Catechism by the father–in–law of George Müller, the great man of prayer.


An excellent, contemporary commentary intended for young people.

VIII
Historical Works

The minister needs a proper historical perspective to the faith and also to his faith—and such is sadly lacking in our modern, technological, future-oriented age.

There are several reasons for the study of church history, and these determine the type of books to be obtained and read: first, We need a truly biblical philosophy of history that possesses the correct biblical concept of God, time and the significance of predestination, creation and providence. Biblically, time flows from the future to the present and from the present into the past. History does not occur by chance, luck or an evolutionary process, but by the purpose and plan of God of creation who is our Heavenly Father. Upon this hangs every prophecy and every promise.

Note: There is but one philosophy of history for the Christian, and that is a philosophy derived from the Scriptures. The Bible is the very Word of the self-revealing Triune God inscripturated. It forms the ultimate basis for both a consistent Christian world-and-life view and a Biblical philosophy of history.

One must be Scriptural concerning the doctrine of God. God is absolute. The created universe is relative to him. History is the out-working of the Divine purpose in time. The universe, man, time and history must be understood in terms of the transcendent, sovereign, self-disclosing, Triune God. This means that what God created, He governs, and governs with a purpose toward a culminative end (Eph. 1:10ff; 1 Cor. 15:24–28).

Man was created in the image and likeness of God and as such bears a definite relationship and responsibility to God (Gen. 1:26–28). He is to live in submission and obedience to Divine revelation. He is to give the same meaning to everything that God has given to it, rather than attempt to superimpose his own meaning on God’s created universe.

One must hold Scripturally to the doctrine of Divine predestination. The past is not to be found in a primeval void, nor the future in a nebulous, undefined, foreboding abyss, but in the context of the eternal, transcendent, sovereign, triune
God, whose purpose will infallibly be fulfilled in the context of His power, wisdom and moral character. God has from eternity predetermined everything that occurs in time and history (Eph. 1:11; Acts 15:18), including the rise and fall of succeeding civilizations and all the affairs and circumstances of men (Job. 12:23; Dan. 2:21; Acts 17:26; Rom. 9:6–23). Divine predestination is the key to a proper understanding of history.

History is not cyclical as some ancient and modern thinkers suggest. The flow of time is from the future into the present, and from the present into the past. History is the progressive realization or unfolding in time of the Divine, eternal purpose. Such a concept will necessarily make the study of Church History edifying.

Second, he needs to know the larger context of world history to properly comprehend Church History. “The Church is in the world,” and so has not and does not function in a vacuum. A standard work or two on world history provides a necessary context for Church History.

Third, he needs a general or comprehensive idea of the flow and important events of Church History. Toward this end, the student should compile his own chronology in a large notebook or on a computer and add to it as historical data is assimilated. This will enable the student to situate any given event or personality into the larger context of history.

Fourth, he needs to know the historical context of the development of any given doctrine. This is the area of Historical Theology or the History of Doctrine. Such knowledge should act as a preventative to much error and heresy. Ignorance may leave us open to doctrinal error already discussed and condemned in the past. We also need to profit from the controversies, councils, creeds, confessions and characters of the past. Many of our modern theological statements were formulated in the early

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51 Dr. Peter Connolly, a professor of theology in another generation, used to say that the devil ran out of heresy by the third century. It is a fact that most modern heresies are but ancient ones in different dress.
centuries of Christianity as the result of controversy for the sake of truth.

Fifth, he needs to see in history a witness to the Scriptures and the faithfulness of God in the lives and experiences of men and women. The reading of church history should be edifying.

Sixth, as Baptists, we must be conversant in our own history, with its conviction for biblical truth, martyrs and distinctives—which has largely been written in fire and blood! The weak and compromising spirit among modern Baptists derives largely from an ignorance of Baptist history—a history that pre-dates the Protestant Reformation.

Finally the minister needs the edification of reading the past lives and the experiences of great men and women. The reading of good biographies is an excellent introduction to the study of church history. A reading of such volumes as Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*, Thielman J. Van Braught’s *The Martyrs’ Mirror*, Jock Purves’ *Fair Sunshine*, John G. Paton’s *Autobiography* or Wylie’s *History of Protestantism* can transform the life, greatly edify, and put one’s personal experience into a much better perspective.

**General History**

General world histories or national histories provide the larger context for the study of Church History.


Durant is readable. His works contain a plethora of information.


A sourcebook in the form of a table for easy reference. Not a religious book, but valuable for information.


**Dictionaries of Church History**


Perhaps the best and most informative dictionary of Church History.


**General Church History**

Note: General Church Histories in one volume are usually abbreviated and so usually tend to be ecumenical, lacking discernment in necessary areas. They are valuable for general issues and outlines, but more discerning works are necessary for important issues.


One of the best overviews of church history. Find the old edition, not the revised edition.


A chronology of church history integrated with world events and containing bibliographies of the various eras.


An introductory volume, as the title implies, but rich in content.

The full title is: *The Two Babylons, or Papal Worship Proved to be The Worship of Nimrod and His Wife*.

A general church history written by a Baptist.


Neander's work is massive and comprehensive in content. An older work, but worth the price.


An abbreviated work, but no words are wasted. It may be found used.


A general church history by a Lutheran author.


The greatest of the church histories and one of the most complete. Who could do without Schaff?


A good one–volume history by a Congregationalist.


Helpful charts and summaries.


Wylie was a Presbyterian and newspaper editor, a gifted writer. This work is rich and filled with information and breathes the air of its history. Great reading.
Early Church History


Already listed under commentaries. The best sourcebook for the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul.


A short history of the early Christianity to the Council of Nicaea.


Previously referred to under commentaries. Farrar was an astute historian and researcher.


All of Farrar’s works are worthwhile.


A comprehensive, valuable sourcebook for background materials on the Greco–Roman world, its cultures and religions, etc.


A standard work on early church history by a Romish author.

   A old, classic work which may be useful for information.

   The classic work on early church history.


   As previously mentioned, Ramsey was the retired head of Scotland Yard and a conservative Christian who gave his retirement to the study of the Scriptures and early church history. All of his works are classics.


Historians working through the first century rely heavily on Josephus, who lived and wrote toward end of the first century.

Medieval Church History


This massive work would usually be found only in seminary or university libraries.


The era of the Romish Inquisition is both interesting and important for the serious student.


The history of the Crusades is more pertinent now because of the emergence and rise of modern Islam.


The old, classic work on the Popes of Rome.

Reformation History

Such works make interesting and edifying reading.


The premier work on the Reformation by a godly and dedicated historian.

A historical and doctrinal evaluation of the two systems and their leading figures.


A very expensive set.

An excellent volume on the Puritan in public, in the pulpit, in the pew and in private. Only the Puritans sought to work out a biblical Christian experience with all its trials and issues.


A good, solid historical and doctrinal study of Calvinism


Miller, a premier American historian, sadly could not truly understand or appreciate the Puritans. Good for basic information only.


Neal deals mainly with those of the Westminster Assembly of Divines.


A very perceptive study on the influence of John Calvin on our western civilization. Much which is good may be traced to his influence!


A positive book about the Anabaptists by a Dutch Reformed scholar.


Modern Church History

Beale was a prof. at Bob Jones University.


The first real assessment of American Fundamentalism by one of its followers.


Another great work which traces the influence of John Calvin on religion, government and societies.


Many standard church histories do not deal with the past two to three centuries, including the modern missions movement. Latourette does.


American Church History


Pre–Reformation Evangelical History

Pre–Reformation Evangelical Groups that have held to some of the same distinctives as modern Baptists. The ancient Waldenses existed from the third century onwards. There were hundreds of thousands of evangelical Christians, apart from the Church of Rome during the Dark Ages. These were maligned, persecuted and crusades were raised against them. Each of these deserves an asterisk.


Morland was sent by Cromwell to the Waldenses to study their state. Cromwell threatened war in Europe if the Waldenses were molested.


Baptist History

The Minister’s Library is primarily for our Baptist students and Brethren, although we welcome all who love our Lord and hold to his grace in salvation. Almost every Baptist work listed is worthwhile. Only the few very outstanding will be noted.


An old treatise which demonstrates that only the Baptists have been truly and thorough reformers.


Adlam shows that the first Baptist church in America was in Newport, Rhode Island and the pastor was Dr. John Clarke, not the church pastored by Roger Williams.


A standard and well–written older Baptist history.


Backus fought for the Baptists and for religious liberty. The Baptists were instrumental in obtaining the Bill of Rights in the U. S. Constitution and freedom of religion.


Crosby is one of the earliest Baptist histories.


The final work of Cross who wrote this while dying, seeking to defend the perpetuity of Baptists against the modern detractors.


A massive work filled with biographical and historical information on the Baptists.

Baptists have always been at the forefront of the champions of liberty and have been among the most fervent patriots.

The standard textbook on Baptist history. Well–written and balanced. Highly recommended.

A popular account of Baptist history with many anecdotes about Baptists and their leaders. Interesting and edifying reading.

A standard Baptist historical work of the 19th century.


The sourcebook for Landmarkism among the Baptists.
A history of the Landmark Baptists on the West coast, their work and influence.

A church history written by Primitive Baptists.


Jarrell's volume is the classic on Baptist perpetuity. Scholarly, yet readable, balanced and perceptive.


McCoy was a Baptist preacher who became the great missionary to the American Indians, championed their cause and became their advocate in Washington.


The definitive work pertaining to the Whitsitt Controversy which erupted at Louisville Seminary over Baptist perpetuity and ultimately lead to Dr. Whitsitt’s resignation.


A definitive work concerning the history of Baptists in Virginia, with accounts of the second “Great Awakening.”


The author seeks to rectify Landmarkism from its more modern adherents and their extremes.

Biographical sketches of Baptist preachers in Kentucky.


The Anabaptist Church in the Hop Garden had a continuous history in Coate, some miles from Oxford from the time of Wycliff to the early 1935. A Baptist church existing long before the 16th Century Reformation.


A very interesting, convicting and revealing work, with short articles for each day of the year. Stories of Baptist leaders, preachers, missionaries and their adventures, persecutions and evangelistic efforts. These volumes make great reading. Written by two Fundamental Baptists.


A modern, standard text which denies the existence of early Baptists before the Reformation.


Whitely, William Thomas, *A Baptist Bibliography: Being a Register of the Chief Materials for Baptist History Whether in Manuscript or in Print Preserved in Great


History of Revival

The study of the history of revivals ought to be a mainstay in the study of church history. Sadly, this is not the case. This aspect of church history has been largely ignored. Yet it is through heaven-sent revivals and spiritual awakenings that God has extended His kingdom on earth and breathed new life into His churches.

Reading about revival and the men God has raised up and the mighty acts of God in history may well bring us—and ought to bring us—to pray for revival once again!

Books on Revival


Howell Harris was the great Welsh preacher, who suffered much, but was mightily used of God in the 18th century revival.


A record of the great revival which occurred in the Southern armies during the War between the States.

A personal account of the Korean revival among Presbyterian missionaries and native pastors in 1908. A revealing, riveting record.


This revival occurred during the Great Evangelical Revival of the 18th century in Scotland.


This is included so the reader can see the great difference between true, heaven–sent revival and the “revivalism” of Charles Finney, which has sadly changed the idea of revival in American history.


A historical account of revivals throughout history to the 18th century.


William Haslam was an Anglican priest, a high churchman and opposed to conversion and a foe of personal, spiritual religion. Upon his conversion in 1851, there broke out a revival in the county of Cornwall. A very plainly–written and lively account of this man’s pre–conversion days, his conversion and the revival which followed. This revival
preceded and was separate from the 1859 Evangelical Revival.

A book which sets the record straight concerning the ministry of C. H. Spurgeon, who witnessed revival continuously for 30 years.

A pastor’s account. Many books were written in the mid–19th century to refute the influence of Charles Finney and the turn to “revivalism.”

A record of revivals among the southern Armies in the War between the States.


The two books by Tom Lennie are revealing concerning revivals in Scotland over the centuries. First-rate reading!

A singular work—a biblical theology of revival—tracing revival and its principles throughout Scripture and into history. The author demonstrates that God has always worked through a praying remnant.


A fine, historical book which distinguishes between true, heaven–sent revival and “revivalism.”


Dr. Orr was the premier author on the subject of revival in the 20th century. The great “Prayer Revival” which occurred in 1857 after the Wall Street crash was awesome and spread across the entire nation.


A first–hand account of the Revival on the Isle of Lewis. Duncan Campbell took part in this amazing work of God.


A sourcebook for revival literature.


One of the classic works on revival. Written in 1832 at the height of the second “Great Awakening.”


A study of Asahel Nettleton and others in contrast to Charles Finney and the “New School” during the second “Great Awakening.”


A book about the great revival under the preaching of Edwards, Whitefield and the Tennets and others in the 18th century.


A survey and description of the second “Great Awakening” in America [c. 1793–1840].

An extremely important work which thoroughly investigates the doctrinal errors of Finney and Asa Mahan and their Oberlin Perfectionism.


Biographies and Revival


The story of the conversion of the Cage Hill Gang, including Peter Connolly.


One of the two definitive works on the life and ministry of George Whitefield.


The latest and most detailed life of George Whitefield—a must read for anyone who longs for God’s blessing!


Burns took the pulpit of Robert Murray M’Cheyne when the latter went to Palestine. Revival came and spread across Scotland.


Jock Troup and Peter Connolly were co–evangelists during the Fisher Folk revival in Northern England and Scotland in 1921—


Brownlow North was a notorious, wealthy profligate whom God saved at age 44 and he became the great evangelist of the 1859 revival in Britain.


Murray reveals Spurgeon’s Calvinism, which modern authors have either hidden, neglected or deleted from his writings.


The biography of John G. Paton is perhaps the greatest missionary biography ever written—second to the Apostle Paul. It reads stranger than fiction as Paton labored among the South Sea cannibals. Exciting and edifying reading!

The life histories of several of the great preachers of the Great Evangelical Revival in Britain who were converted after they had entered the ministry and became fiery evangelists and were mightily used of God

The conversion, life and ministry of a Baptist preacher in the Shetland Islands who exercised an unusual ministry.

Edifying and encouraging reading for any and every pastor! Meet Spurgeon for yourself in these pages.


Book Sections on Revival

It is interesting and disturbing that through the early 19th century volumes on the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit always contained a large section on the subject of revival, but not now.


Very well–written and perceptive of Edwards’ theology of revival!


Semple details the many revivals of the second “Great Awakening” in Virginia and the means the Baptists used in promoting them by prayer.


Articles on Revival


Sermons and Revival


IX

Philosophical Works

Why study philosophy?

Why study philosophy? The Apostle Paul, as a Jewish Rabbi before his conversion, had to be well–studied in the pagan philosophies of his day. He was the one Apostle who was ordained by God to stand before the philosophical council at Athens (Acts 17:18, 22–34).

The gospel minister also has valid reasons: first, he is at once beset by the influence of philosophy on theology. He is confronted with a host of philosophers, and the formative influence their teachings and writings have had upon theology. He also finds that theology and philosophy have kindred interests and vocabularies.

Second, he further learns that he must have some background in philosophy to adequately comprehend the historical development of theology—and that much in theology has derived from philosophy.

Third, man was created in the image and likeness of God as a rational, self–determining being who, living in God’s created and ordered universe, must learn to think rationally and consistently. Philosophy provides the equipment for rational, logical or non–contradictory and consistent thought. Philosophy is a bad master, but it may be a good servant!

Fourth, the modern tendency to truncate Christianity rather than rightly view it as a comprehensive world–and–life view, is a result of a misplaced emphasis on only some selective aspects of Christianity. Christian Theism philosophically becomes an inclusive, biblical world–and–life view which both permeates and balances one’s faith.

Fifth, the study of various philosophical systems is valuable to ensure that the student’s own faith and Christian philosophy are not infected with the intrusion of ideas foreign to the nature of biblical Christianity.
Finally, the study of various philosophical systems enables
the student to assess their presuppositions and confront them
from their own presuppositions in his defense of the faith.

Christian Philosophical Works

*Brown, Colin, *Christianity and Western Thought*. Downer’s

_______, *Philosophy and the Christian Faith*. Downer’s

Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company,


*_______, An Introduction to Christian Philosophy*. Jefferson,

_______, *The Philosophy of Science and Belief in God*.

*_______, Religion, Reason and Revelation*. Jefferson,

*_______, Thales to Dewey*. Jefferson, Maryland: The Trinity

*_______, Three Types of Religious Philosophy*. Nutley, NJ:

*Copleston, Frederick, S.J., A History of Philosophy*. The

For the serious student. The author was a Jesuit, but this set
is loaded with information.

Dabney, Robert L., *Discussions: Philosophical and Secular*.

Dabney was both a philosopher and theologian—and chief
of staff for General Stonewall Jackson. In his later life he
was blind but still taught philosophy. His thinking was very
perceptive, as can be noted in the following work.


Of all the modern Reformed philosophers, Dr. Schaeffer sought to bring his philosophy down to the practical level of the college student and common person. Readable and understandable, but should be read along with Reymond, Clark and Rushdoony.


**Philosophical Theology**


C. Stephen Evans is the Editor of the series *Contours in Christian Philosophy* (currently in seven paperback volumes, published by InterVarsity Press), an attempt to (1) present philosophical thought from a decidedly Christian perspective, and (2) bring philosophical thought down to the level of the Christian reader. Other authors in this series are William Hasker, Paul Helm, Arthur F. Holmes, Thomas V. Morris, Michael L. Peterson, Del Ratzsch and David L. Wolfe, all listed in this general section.


Christian Ethics
An excellent volume and written from a Reformed standpoint.

Epistemology
Epistemology derives from the Gk. *epistemai*, a technical term for certain knowledge. The term occurs 15 times in the New Testament. It is the science of truth and truth claims, and so is of importance to the Christian who must challenge the epistemological presuppositions of the unconverted.


A classic work, readable, informative and educational.


Rushdoony contrasts the word of man, “flux,” with the infallible Word of God.


**Logic**

It is important that our thinking and reasoning be self–consistent and coherent, i.e., non–contradictory.


**A World–and–Life View**

As each and every “fact” is necessarily interpreted by one’s presuppositions, it is absolutely imperative that the student be firmly grounded in the presuppositionalism of Christian Theism.


A very general, basic, readable work on epistemology by a Reformed thinker.


A practical, readable work which takes the reader step-by-step.

Kuyper was a great thinker and theologian. He was a university professor, edited two daily national newspapers and was the Prime Minister of the Netherlands—and was a notable theologian. In his lectures, he presented Calvinism as a consistent world-view.

A large volume intended for high school students. Very readable and very informative.

X
Practical Works

The minister must be balanced in his reading and studies. Preaching is not lecturing, but truth passionately proclaimed through a personality taken up with Divine truth, a Divine unction and the urgency and practicality of the gospel. The linguistic, doctrinal and historical must be seasoned and balanced with the practical. A full head must be accompanied by a full heart!

Books on such subjects as building Sunday Schools or increasing church attendance, various programs or innovative approaches to worship, church administration, etc., are omitted. These may be purchased at any Christian bookstore. Most, however, are pragmatic and based on unscriptural principles and tactics.

Devotional Books

The minister must see to his own heart and Christian experience. Spiritual neglect may prove fatal to the Gospel ministry. There is a plethora of devotional material available. The following have proven themselves to be encouraging, convicting and geared to personal sanctification:

This is a collection of Puritan


Martyrology

Foxe’s classic work is a condensed version of the larger *Acts and Monuments of the Martyrs* in several volumes.


The old, classical treatment of the Scottish Covenanters, many of whom gave their lives for religious freedom from the English Anglican State Church.


A readable account of some of the great “Scots Worthies” who were martyred by the English because they asserted “the crown rights of Jesus Christ over His Kirk,” and not the King of England as head of the Church.


Another classic volume on the Scottish Covenanters.


The classic work on Christian martyrdom and a sourcebook for Fox. Read with tears of our forefathers who died for the faith from the earliest centuries to the time of the Reformation and beyond. The stories are awesome.

**Biographies**

There are innumerable biographies. Only a sampling of several outstanding personal, ministerial and missionary biographies is listed below. Some are listed under the Biographies on Revival. Only a few can be noted.


The life of Adoniram Judson reads stranger than fiction. The first pioneer American missionary to Burma.


The life of Henry Martyn was both glorious and tragic. Read the life of a man wholly given up to God.


Farel was a fearless evangelist who was called “Fiery Farel” in history at the time of the Reformation. He had a determinative influence on John Calvin.


The life of the most famous African missionary and explorer.


The personal diary of Andrew Bonar has been called “the greatest treatise on private prayer we possess.”


Robert Murray M’Cheyne prayed, “O God! Let me be as holy as a saved sinner can be!” His short life is a testimony to the answer to that prayer.


A definitive biography written by William Carey’s great–grandson.


The classic work on David Brainerd, who died in Edwards’ home. This diary is very insightful concerning religious experience and prayer.


Selina, Countess of Huntington, was greatly influential in helping Whitefield gain support for his ministry and orphanage, and in gaining a hearing before the nobility of England.


John Brown was self-taught and charged with demon possession because he learned Greek without a tutor or a textbook. He became one of the great theologians and mentors of the Scottish Session Church. Very encouraging reading.


A biography of J. P. Boyce, the founder and first Prof. of Theology at the Southern Baptist Seminary.


The life of the slave trader who himself became a slave, was rescued, converted and became both a preacher, a hymn writer, and helped put an end to the slave traffic in the British Empire.
A great and encouraging book concerning the man of prayer. This should be in every Christian's library.


These two volumes give a detailed description of the life, ministry and beliefs of the founder of the China Inland Mission.

Five short biographies. Readable and perceptive of these men, their lives and influence.


Both Gen. Robert E. Lee and Gen. Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson were fervent Christians and great men.


Hugh Latimer was a Romish priest who was converted in the confessional listening to Thomas Bilney’s confession of being Reformed. He became the great leader of the Protestant Reformation in England.


Christian Experience


Alexander was converted during the second “Great Awakening,” and was the founder and first prof. of theology at Princeton Seminary.


A very readable and informative, contemporary treatment.


The practical writings of Ryle are always edifying and positive.


Pastoral and practical.


A classic work by an outstanding minister and author.


Prayer


Bonar's Diary has previously been mentioned.

A general, practical and simple treatise on prayer.


Stories taken from the diary and others sources of Mr. Müller’s answers to prayer.


One of the volumes of Watson’s famous trilogy.


### Printed Sermons and Practical Works

The sermons of C. H. Spurgeon and the Puritans are of the highest order, and are listed below:


Payson was a practical pastoral and spiritual writer at the end of the first Great Awakening.


“The most eloquent preacher the American continent has produced.” D. M. Lloyd–Jones.
  Edwards was one of the greatest minds America has ever produced. His writings are well–worth perusing.

  The writings, letters and sermons of a great and fervent Puritan.

  A classic volume. Letters from a Scottish Preacher who was exiled for the truth and communicated truth and exhortations through his correspondence.

  One of the great Puritan sets of practical theology and sermons and scriptural expositions.

  Sibbes was called “The Heavenly Sibbes” for his writings.

  A practical Puritan author.

  One of the massive Puritan writings by one of the greatest of the Puritans.

  Boston is well worth reading on any of the subjects he considers.

  Newton, the author of Amazing Grace,” and a converted ex–slaver and Anglican preacher, corresponded with many and
his letters are often theological treatises which reveal a very astute and perceptive mind and grasp of Scripture.


The cream of Puritan preaching. People would assemble early in the morning at Cripplegate and the Puritans would preach.


A treasure trove of the best in preaching. Spurgeon possessed an unction which lives even in his writings.


Sermon Outlines and Illustrations

Almost all of these works have previously been commented on under Commentaries. They are included here for their worth as sermonic material.


Practical sermon notes, outlines and illustrations.


Straightforward expository notes and essays.

Appendix I
Daily Determinations

Years ago the author wrote these Ten Daily Determinations after going through a series of debilitating trials, personal loss and health issues. He offers them to his Brethren in the Gospel ministry for their consideration.

1. The Triune, self-disclosing God of Scripture, loves you with an everlasting love and has predestined all things. He is in the process of conforming you into the image of his Son. Thus, all things are working together for good, however they may appear in your experience—so nothing is ever really out of control. Do not be prone to impatience, complaint or frustration.

2. Read and meditate upon the Word of God daily for your own sake. It is the only objective truth and direction God has given.

3. God answers prayer. Be determined to pray daily, and to sanctify everything by this means. Take everything to God in prayer and not to others as complaint or frustration.

4. You are to love God supremely and be conscious of his attributes; especially his immanence, power, purpose and moral attributes. Seek to gain a true God-consciousness for the day. Be aware of the manifestations of indwelling sin and remaining corruption, and strive to be truly godly and morally pure in thought and action.

5. God has called you to the Gospel ministry. You are a servant, not a master. Scripturally, sanctify everything and subordinate it to this calling.

6. God has called you to be a pastor. Learn to love your people and do not resent them for their inability to see the issues, or their often thoughtless intrusion upon your time and studies. Remember, when you fail, you fail as a Christian, not as a pastor.
7. You are commanded by God to love your enemies and do good to all men; and as a servant of the Lord, to be gentle to all men. Do not dwell on the wrong your enemies have done or the hurt they have caused you, or become bitter or vindictive in your thoughts, attitude, words or actions.

8. Remember the reality of God’s purpose and Spirit, his ministry and his enabling grace as the dynamic in your life.

9. In a world cursed and condemned by the awful reality of sin, it is normal for things to go wrong—and some days for everything to go wrong. Remember that God is absolutely sovereign over all things—and when things do go wrong, God has a good and greater purpose in it.

10. This life is all you have in which to serve God. It is short. Make the best possible use of all the time God has given you. Also remember that he has commanded six days for labor and one for rest. Both are necessary to be obedient and consistent.
Appendix II
Keep to the Work of God

Many years ago when undergoing a time of both misunderstanding and opposition an older minister sent this to the author for his encouragement. It is anonymous, but it has been passed along to many others with beneficial results:

Keep about your work that God has given you. Do not flinch because the lion roars: do not stop to stone the devil’s dogs: do not fool away your time chasing the devil’s rabbits. Do your work. Let liars lie, let corporations resolve, let the devil do his worst: but see to it that nothing hinders you from fulfilling the work that God has given you.

He has not commanded you to get rich. He has never bidden you defend your character. He has not set you at work to contradict falsehood about yourself which Satan and his servants may start to peddle. If you do those things, you will do nothing else: you will be at work for yourself and not for the Lord.

Keep at your work. Let your aim be steady. You may be assaulted, wronged, insulted, slandered, wounded and rejected: you may be abused by foes, forsaken by friends, and despised and rejected of men. But see to it with steadfast determination, with unflagging zeal, that you pursue the great purpose of your life and object of your being until at last you can say, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do."

—Anonymous
Appendix III
Faithfulness and Failure in the Ministry

“Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One’…”

Acts 7:52

“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.”

1 Timothy 1:12

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”

2 Timothy 4:7

There is something which every true, God–called minister fears within himself. It is not personal harm or danger. Moses pled with the Lord to send someone else to Egypt to stand before Pharaoh. He pled his unworthiness (Ex. 3:11) his own ignorance (Ex. 3:13–15), the unbelief of Israel (Ex. 4:1) and his speech defect or lack of eloquence (Ex. 4:10). The one thing—which was, perhaps, the most valid objection—was that he was a wanted man. It is noteworthy that Moses never pled his own safety. It was after his obedience and on his way into Egypt that the Lord revealed to him that those who sought his life were already dead (Ex. 4:19).

It is hopefully not the loss of reputation or income. What, then, is it? It is failure. It is failure to be and do what God has called the preacher to be and do. There are four considerations: first, many if not most of the men God called in the Bible were failures in and to their own generation. This was certainly true of the prophets whom God sent to Israel and Judah for a millennium. They were mostly rejected and even persecuted and murdered by God’s own professed people. Sadly, the true God–called preacher can expect little better from some of

52 A literal translation, taking into consideration the emph. position of the words and the dramatic use of the perf. tense: “The good fight I have fought to the very last; my course I have fully and finally finished without slacking; the faith I have kept without faltering.”
God’s professed people today. Even the very Son of God was murdered by His own professed people!

Second, the preacher is not a failure if people do not follow his preaching, guidance and counsel—if he is faithful to the Word of God. They may refuse his message, rebut his counsel and slander his person, but if he is faithful to the Scriptures, he is not a failure, regardless of such refusals and rebuttals.

Third, the ministry must never be considered or viewed in terms of worldly success, but always in terms of faithfulness to the Word of God. Ministerial gifts may vary. Youth has its detriments and pitfalls, and old age its weakness and loss of vigor—but faithfulness to the Word of God is a beautiful characteristic in God’s eyes and knows no age limit!

Finally, if and when the preacher fails, he essentially fails as a Christian, not as a preacher. Real failure begins in the heart, as does every sin, and is only manifest when the Spirit of God leaves a man’s ministry and he fails and falls through his own sinfulness and failure to hold tenaciously to his Divine calling and its biblical priorities.

The words of John Bunyan, in his immortal *Pilgrim’s Progress*, as he describes the true man of God, are both true and profound:

*Christian saw the picture of a very grave person hang upon the wall: and this was the fashion of it: it had its eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books was in its hand, the law of Truth was written upon its lips, the world was behind its back: it stood as if it pleaded with men, and a crown of gold did hang over its head.*

May we see and pray over our weaknesses and seek to be, as Robert Murray M’Cheyene expressed it to God in prayer, “O God! Make me as holy as a saved sinner can be!” May we
experience the unction of His Spirit, a deep and abiding sense of His love and the smile of His countenance!
Appendix IV
Opening the Text: Verbal, Plenary Inspiration
a Necessary Implication

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

2 Tim. 3:16–17

The Bible is the inspired Word of God. Divine inspiration is both verbal [extending to the very choice of words, grammatical constructions and syntactical relationships in the original languages] and plenary [full or extending to every part]. This is the uniform witness of all orthodox Christianity. It is the essential presupposition of true Christianity from which all else derives. Apart from the authority of Scripture in its exactness, one is left with tradition, subjective experience or imagination, none of which are infallible or authoritative.

A necessary implication of verbal, plenary inspiration is that the preacher must open the text. This must be the inspired source through which he feeds his flock and evangelizes the unconverted. Preaching ought to indulge itself to a given degree when necessary in both exegesis and hermeneutics to open and explain the text and its meaning.

Yet this is rarely the case. Sadly, in most pulpits one might merely hold to inspired concepts, as one hears, not careful scriptural exposition, explanation and hermeneutical clarification, but mere general references and proof–texts thrown into the sermon—and often without substantial comment. The emphasis is on an outline, illustrations or the emotions rather than opening the inspired Word of God and expounding it as the basis for the message. The preacher is a prophet—God’s spokesman—one who declares the Word of God. Thus, he must seek to make this Word clear and understandable.
Homiletically, there are essentially two types of sermons: textual and topical, i.e. one either opens and expounds a given passage or finds a text to introduce a given subject. Either way, the text should be opened, i.e., exegeted, expounded and clarified or made plain. The sermon should flow from the text. Every text mentioned from the pulpit should be commented upon in some way so it suitably fits into the scheme of the message and the people may be fed and taught.

Further, a careful distinction ought to be made between interpretation and application. The failure to do so is one of the gravest faults of the pulpit ministry. The Christian ministry is an instructional ministry—didactic, evangelistic, polemic and apologetic. The minister’s task is not only to declare the gospel, but to educate the congregation. Sitting under a sound, well-rounded ministry in the ordinary church services should be a biblical and doctrinal education. If not, then there is necessarily a given amount of failure in the very nature of that ministry. Sitting under a godly, expository ministry for several years ought to approach the character of a seminary education.

What is the testimony of Scripture regarding opening or expounding the text? Moses was not only the first author of Scripture, he was also the first expository preacher. His orations in Deuteronomy were largely an exposition of the Moral Law. Was not this the personal occupation of the “blessed man” in Psa. 1:2? Consider David and his pondering the meaning and force of the Law (Psa. 119:9, 11, 18, 27). Take careful note of the studies and searching of Daniel in the prophecies of Jeremiah (Dan. 9:2).

Was this not the ancient method adopted by the scribes under Ezra during the Era of Restoration (Neh. 8:1–8)? They “caused the people to understand the law….they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.” The returning remnant from the Babylonian Captivity spoke Aramaic, an ancient Chaldean dialect. The Scriptures were written in Hebrew. The Scribes had to open or expound the text and give the sense so
the people could understand the Word of God exactly. They evidently engaged in both exegesis, or what the text said, and hermeneutics, or what the text meant.

The exact meaning of Scripture is of the utmost importance. Our very salvation, doctrinal convictions, Christian experience and hope of eternity rest upon it! This is the essence of the time-worn truth that “the Bible is our sole rule of both faith and practice.” Thus, it behooves us to know it thoroughly.

This was the very approach our Lord took with the Lawyer (Lk. 10:25–26). “What is written in the Law? How readest thou?” This necessarily implies both a careful exegesis and also an interpretation of the text. The entire passage, which contains the “Parable of the Good Samaritan,” encompasses the whole of expository preaching, from the “What is written in the Law? How readest thou? To the “Go and do thou likewise!”

Did not our Lord do the same with his disciples (Matt. 13:52; Lk. 24:25–27, 32, 44–47)? He completely opened the Scriptures to their understanding, and his “text” was the entire Old Testament!

Note: Matt. 13:52 implies both an instructional ministry and a progression in that ministry. Lk. 24:27 [διερμήνευσεν], unfold the meaning, expound. v. 32 [διήνοιξεν ἡμῖν τὰς γραφὰς] to unfold the sense completely. v. 45 [τότε διήνοιξεν αὐτῶν τὸν νοῦν τοῦ συνείναι τὰς γραφὰς] to open the thought-process completely to comprehend the meaning of the Scriptures.

What a great, enlightening sermon that must have been—and no one complained about its depth or length!

Was not the Apostle concerned with an exact exegesis of the text (e.g., Gen. 12:1–3; 22:18; Rom. 1:17; 3:9–18; 4:3,7–9, 13, 16–18; Gal. 3:16)? He took the Abrahamic Covenant in its essence (Gen. 22:18), even to the use of the singular reading in the Hebrew and showed that it referred, not to the “seed of Abraham” in the plural, i.e., the Israelitish people, but in the singular; it referred to the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:16). Did not the Apostle urge Timothy in the strongest language to do a
careful exegesis and exposition of the very text of Scripture in 2 Timothy 2:15?

This was also the inspired, customary model of the Apostle Paul (Acts 17:2–3). This is a graphic illustration of inspired preaching. It ought to be studied closely. This was Paul’s customary method of reaching out to the Jews in the synagogue ministry. The Jews knew their Scriptures, yet were blind to the saving truth contained therein. This the Apostle carefully laid out before his critical audience through a careful exegesis and interpretation of the text. What an example to modern preachers who must stand and declare the Word of God to unbelievers and often to those who have been mistaught and need exact instruction and correction!

Some objection might be made against this pervasive principle by appealing to such passages as Acts 17:22–34 and Paul’s address to the Areopagus at Athens. In the greater context of v. 16–34 this address, the first recorded confrontation between Christianity and Greek philosophy, Paul quoted not one passage of Scripture. The answer is that he had been preaching “Jesus and the resurrection,” i.e., the gospel, for several weeks in the synagogue and on a daily basis in the agora.53

This address, a cumulative and summary statement in the form of a Christian Theistic World–and–Life View, was meant to put “Jesus and the resurrection” in their proper historical and redemptive context. Every statement he made was thoroughly grounded in Scriptural truth, although such was not explicitly stated. This was not Paul “seeking to play the philosopher” and

53 Cf. Acts 17:18. “Jesus” is masculine [τὸν Ἰησοῦν] and “resurrection” is feminine [τὴν ἀνάστασιν]. These philosophers thought Paul was preaching a male “god” and a female “goddess,” “Anastasia.” Their polytheistic presuppositions completely obscured the truth of the Gospel. Paul thus set forth the truth in his address before the Aeropagus.
failing, but Paul at his best, exhibiting all of the God–given gifts and graces before the philosophical Council at Athens!

Others may object by stating that exegetical and expository preaching would be “over their people’s heads.” The fault lies with the preacher who does not systematically instruct his people in the Word of God. The people will grow in grace, knowledge and spiritual appetite if the preacher himself grows and progresses in his studies, and his studies then develop and enrich his ministry. Rich expository preaching develops the spiritual appetite of God’s people. Remaining limited to spiritual “milk” is a picture of spiritual degeneration, not one of spiritual advancement (Heb. 5:10–14).

The preacher who opens the text will be constantly educated in the Scriptures himself and in corresponding spiritual growth and knowledge. Such a preaching ministry will have at its disposal an infinite store of truth and an inexhaustible room for the growth of the hearers if the text of Scripture is always opened. One should be constantly edified and educated under the ministry.

Conversely, ministers who do not habitually open the text deprive themselves and their hearers of spiritual understanding and growth. One may sit under such a deprived ministry for years and learn very little. May we strive to open the text and seek to make the meaning plain for our hearers. Did not our Lord command, not only to “feed my lambs,” but also to “feed my sheep”? 
Appendix V
Why Study The Original Languages of Scripture?

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15

This appendix has been added to provide a stimulus for the study of the original languages. There is simply no substitute for a working knowledge of Greek and Hebrew. The perusing of this appendix may provoke some to engage in such a study.

The Prejudice of Modern Religion

Most Evangelical and Fundamentalist Christians see no reason for taking the time, making the effort, or disciplining themselves to study the Scriptures in their Original Languages. Such study, we are often told, is too time–consuming. Our time and efforts could be better spent in some evangelistic, ecclesiastical or church–related social activity. After all, we are to be interested in souls and people. Most simply believe that serious language or Bible study is unnecessary.

Many strongly hold that the King James Version is completely adequate for any Christian, evangelist, preacher or pastor. Others think that with all the modern translations and versions in the English language, the study of Greek or Hebrew would simply be “re–inventing the wheel.” Still others think that it is wasting time that ought to be spent “soul–winning,” reducing the calling and task of the believer to personal evangelism.

Some among the traditionally Reformed groups also deprecate the necessity for a working knowledge of Greek and Hebrew. These believe that, as we possess the great Creeds and Confessions, which are based on scriptural exegesis and sound theology, we do not need to carefully examine the Scriptures through an exegesis of the Original Languages.

Such thinking—or rather, non–thinking—has helped to produce the relatively weak, ignorant, inconsistent and worldly
state of present Christianity. Evangelicalism, which prides itself in being identified with the Bible, is relatively ignorant of the very Bible which is supposed to characterize its very existence and distinctives.

Modern Fundamentalism, which prides itself in “Believing the whole Bible and not a Bible full of holes,” suffers, at times, from an astounding ignorance of the truth of Scripture and a failure to consistently apply it. Reformed tradition has a tendency at certain points to resort to the Creeds and Confessions rather than directly to the Scriptures, and thus suffers by erecting a barrier between itself and the Holy Word of God.

It needs to be stated at the outset that we do not deprecate the English Bible. It is rather the inadequacies of the English language—or any secondary language—that is our concern. No version of a translation—however close it seeks to equate the original—will suffice. It is simply impossible—and in this impossibility lies the critical area which makes a study of the original languages a perpetual necessity.

The Original Languages and Divine Inspiration

It is common for beginning or relatively uneducated Bible students to believe that a study of the original languages of Scriptures is unnecessary. The truth is, that the nuances and intricacies of the original languages can never be transferred through a translation or version, and to the extent that such elements of the language, grammar and syntax are not transferred or in some way obscured, they are lost to the student limited to his English Bible. Doctrine depends on Divine revelation, and Divine revelation depends on language, and language depends on grammar and syntax, and grammar and syntax are considered only by careful exegesis in the original language. The grammar and syntax of a secondary language is not inspired!

There is a direct relationship among verbal, plenary inspiration, a study of the original language, biblical exegesis and interpretation. Divine inspiration presupposes the inspiration of the very grammar, syntax, nuances and idioms of the original
language. To discount biblical exegesis in the original language is to necessarily, though, perhaps inadvertently, deprecate Divine inspiration itself.

The Necessity of and Basis for an Accurate Study of The Bible

Reasons for a Study of the Original Languages

Why should Christians, study the Scriptures in the original languages? We suggest the following reasons: first, God evidently had his reasons for giving and inscripturating his Divine revelation in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. These reasons have not changed with time. To deprecate the study of these languages as an essential part of biblical studies is to corrupt the reality and force of Divine inspiration, disregard the most essential elements of Divine revelation, neglect the very language and text in which God has revealed himself, and fail to maintain a proper basis for interpretation and application.

Second, every human being, converted or unconverted, is a sinner, and as such suffers to a given degree from the noetic effects of sin. Access to and some knowledge of the original languages help to offset one’s natural misunderstanding of the inscripturated Word of God.

Third, spiritual illumination—the possession of every true believer (1 Cor. 2:9–16; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27)—is not infallible, i.e., is not equivalent to inspiration. Neither is such spiritual illumination static. It may regress through refusal to believe certain aspects of truth or apply such to the life (Heb. 5:11–

54 “Noetic” derives from the noun νοῦς “mind” [the seat of reflective consciousness, perception, understanding, judging or determining], and the corresponding verb νοέω “to think, understand, perceive, judge, intelligently determine.” The noetic effects of sin refer to the effects of the Fall [apostasy] upon the mind or intellectual ability of man as a sinner. Cf. Mk. 12:24; Rom. 1:18–20; 8:7–8, 26; 1 Cor. 2:14; 8:2; Eph. 4:17–19; Heb. 5:11–14.
Great and godly Christians have been greatly mistaken because of their ignorance, presuppositions, bias, traditional teaching, or limitation to the English Bible.

Fourth, the Bible is our exclusive and inclusive textbook for both faith and life (2 Tim. 3:16–17). As most Confessions of Faith state or strongly infer, the Scriptures are our sole rule of both faith and practice. They are our one objective standard and touchstone for doctrinal truth and for practical application. Everything else—our presuppositions, experience, tradition, speculation, emotions—is ultimately subjective and relative.

Fifth, according to the Scriptures, we are to give the utmost diligence to be approved or well-pleasing to God as skilled craftsmen who are able to correctly and skillfully handle [exposit, interpret and expound] the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

Sixth, our primary obligation in the study, interpretation and exposition of the Scriptures is God-ward. Consistent hermeneutics, or the interpretation of the Word of God, is seriously crippled, if not outright impossible, to any given degree without and apart from the original languages.

There is absolutely no substitute for a knowledge of the original languages. No translation or version can equal the original languages of Scripture.

There are three major reasons: first, a translation or version is necessarily in the grammar and idiom of the secondary language, and thus loses the inspired grammatical and syntactical constructions, nuances and emphases of the original language—and both doctrinal and practical truth often hinge on such. One must realize and remember that the grammar and syntax of text of the original languages are

55 Note γεγόνατε...γεγόνατε... "ye have become and continue to be dull of hearing...and have become and continue to be such..." Both verbs (v. 11 and 12) are perf., and evidently emph. a regression to a lesser state of spiritual perception.
Divinely inspired\(^56\) (Matt. 5:17–18; 2 Tim. 3:16–17;\(^57\) 2 Pet. 1:21)—that of any secondary language is not. Unless a translation or version is framed on the often inexplicable and ever foreign constructions and idioms of the original, it is necessarily to a given degree a paraphrase at best. Even the so-called “word–for–word translation” found in a Greek or Hebrew interlinear miserably fails to convey the grammar, syntax, nuances and idioms of the original. The English language by comparison is relatively bankrupt of expression as compared to either the Greek or the Hebrew. Thus, one may give an exegesis of the text in the original language, but only an exposition of the text in a translation or version.\(^58\)

Second, our English Bible is not a translation, but a version of a translation, and so adheres much more to the secondary language with its peculiarities and limitations than to the original. This accounts for the continued publications of various “versions” of the Bible in the English language. Were any one of these versions the full, final word, others would not be necessary.

Third, translation necessarily involves a given amount of interpretation and accommodation, and these are unavoidably

\(^{56}\) The orthodox doctrine of Divine inspiration is technically concerned only with the “autograph manuscripts,” or the original copies of Scripture. Thus the Scriptures in the original languages, as they have been providentially [Divinely] preserved, are in the form [language, grammar, syntax] given by God.

\(^{57}\) “All scripture is given by inspiration of God…” πᾶσα γραφὴ θεοπνευστοτ… Lit: “every [particle, aspect, nuance] of Scripture is God–breathed…” This necessarily includes every aspect of grammar and syntax.

\(^{58}\) Exegesis means to bring out of the text the meaning, nuances, idioms of the original language. An exposition is akin to an analysis of the text either grammatically or doctrinally. An exegesis in a secondary language tends to misunderstanding and error, as it ignorantly or knowingly assumes the inspiration of the grammar and syntax of the secondary language.
colored by some degree of subjective misunderstanding, and also cultural, historical and doctrinal presuppositions.

Even great and godly men have erred greatly in their attempts to understand the Scriptures, largely because they did not have access to the Scriptures in the original languages. This is evident in the writings of the Church Fathers and other early Christian writers who were largely limited to the Old Latin translation and the later and more influential Latin Vulgate Version. An absence of the knowledge of the original languages ultimately became a void filled with speculation, superstition, tradition, allegorization—and thus a corrupt theology, church, worship, religion and society. Such error is sadly evident today in many of the devotional works and commentaries for readers limited to the English language.

The Church of Rome grievously erred for over a millennium in giving a unique, divinely–inspired status to the Latin Vulgate—a version of a translation. Many modern Fundamentalists and Evangelicals are little different—a mentality which we may refer to as “the infallibility of ignorance.” The idea that the exclusive use of the King James Version—a version of a translation—is sufficient, is relatively recent among evangelical Christians.

This attitude, based largely on emotions and prejudice—not rational, historical or linguistic arguments, or an orthodox view of Divine inspiration—arose in the late 1800s and early 1900s as an anti–intellectual reaction to Rationalistic Biblical Criticism and “Modernism.” This was accompanied by a disdain for the ancient, so–called “dead” languages and the rise of modern humanistic or secularized, “progressive” education which emphasized experience over educational discipline and rote learning.

59 An example of misinterpretation: the Latin Vulgate by Jerome (c. 406) interpreted “repentance” by “penance.”
60 The Church of Rome has held the Latin Vulgate (c. 406)—a version of a translation—to be Divinely and fully inspired for centuries.
Further, the “Bible School” movement was designed to replace theological seminaries with their required study of the original languages. Because corruption had entered through Rationalistic Biblical Criticism, it was believed that men could be adequately prepared for the gospel ministry and kept from the influence of error through the study of the English Bible alone. All biblical scholarship became suspect. Before this era, a study of the original languages was considered vital to the ministry, and any lack in this area was thought to be a serious hindrance.

Men called to the gospel ministry, above all others, need to be well-versed in the Scriptures—and there is no substitute for the ability to work through the text in the very languages given by God. The minister who is bereft of such skill is seriously crippled in his Divine calling, yea, such is inexcusable in this day and age when an abundance of tools and opportunities are available for such study.\(^\text{61}\)

Hermeneutics and Theology are sacred sciences: they are organized areas of study which rest upon certain principles and strive for certain conclusions. As sacred sciences, they must, as any science, rest upon original sources for their authority, data and materials. For Christianity, for Christian Theology, for the Christian ministry, for the individual believer, the ultimate source is the inscripturated Word of God, and to delve into the Word of God fully and accurately, one needs a knowledge of the original languages.

Not only has the text of the English Bible at times furthered misunderstanding, but many professing Christians fail even to come to terms with the truth clearly taught in the

\(^\text{61}\) Computer language programs put the Greek and Hebrew within the reach of the average pastor with little preparation. It is possible with some programs, such as BibleWorks, to exegete the text in either Greek or Hebrew with a minimal amount of preparation in either language. Cf. Bibleworks. by Hermeneutika (www.bibleworks.com).
Scriptures, in whatever language it is taught. Eisegesis\textsuperscript{62} is a viral infection of the religious mind. Such is the natural opposition of man to biblical truth that even the clear, consistent teaching of Scripture is often denied, circumvented or modified, and humanistic assumptions are read into the Scriptures. This is certainly true of such glorious truths as the sovereignty of God, Divine election, predestination, the covenant nature of the atonement and kindred truths. A study of the original languages emphasizes the relation between the text and its doctrine, and so enforces truth as no translation or version can.

Not only heretical teachers and cults, but many others—including well-meaning evangelical Christians—often err in basing their theological assumptions, doctrinal teaching and practical application on the text of the English Bible. No doctrine or practice can be made to stand upon the grammar or syntax of a secondary language alone, i.e., upon a translation or a version of a translation, without departing from the Word of God to a given extent and at times falling into error and even outright heresy. Divine inspiration only pertains to the text [grammar and syntax] of the original. Yet many base their beliefs on the grammar of the English Bible.

\textit{Note: The English Bible is the Word of God as long as it coincides with the meaning of the original languages. The grammar or ambiguities of the English language may cause one to misunderstand the meaning. Further, using the rules of English grammar to explain the original languages has lead to grievous error and heresy.}

Examples of Inadequate Translation

Translations and versions in any secondary language are necessarily filled with inadequate translations or interpretations of the original. This derives from several sources, including such

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{62} \textit{Eisegesis} means to read into the text something that is not there. It is the opposite of exegesis, which means to extract the meaning from the original.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
things as the necessity of keeping the wording as brief as possible to avoid becoming a general paraphrase of the original; using various additional words of explanation, which are often necessary to transfer the full connotation; word–order, and other devices of expression lacking in the secondary language. The following are taken by way of very general example:

1. The Hebrew concept of time, as expressed in its two “tenses”—perfect and imperfect—is that of either completed or incomplete action. Cf. Psa. 1:1, from the Hebrew, reads, “Oh (Interjection) the [complete] blessedness of the man who has never walked (perf.) in the counsel of the ungodly, nor in the way of sinners (emph. pos.) has ever stood (perf.), nor in the assembly of the scornful (emph. pos.) has ever sat!”(perf.) The use of the perfect tense (completed action) and the emphatic position of words give this statement much greater force.

2. The Greek has the idea of a punctiliar [an event] or linear [a process] action, or a combination of both. Often such concepts are not or cannot adequately be transferred to a secondary language, e.g., Jn. 2:19–21. The Jews’ retort to our Lord’s claim that he would raise this temple [of his body] in three days was that “forty and six years was this temple in the building!” Exactly what was emphasized in their retort?

63 The aorist or punctiliar tense, views something without reference to its progress or time, i.e., usually, as an event or as an action considered as a while.

64 τεσσεράκοντα καὶ ἕξεατον οἰκοδομήθη ὁ ναὸς οὗτος. The words “forty and six years was in building” are emphatic by position, before the subject, “this temple.” One would expect the imperf. tense to be used, stressing the length of time as process, or, perhaps a periphrastic const. to emphasize duration, but the ptc. is aor. pass., which signifies punctiliar action, an event, or views the whole time of forty–six years as a single block of time. The Jews’ retort was to take the whole long duration of the temple’s construction and push it in our Lord’s face as one huge, ponderous fact or lump of time.
3. The Hebrew language has seven verbal “stems,” Qal and Niph’al or simple active and passive (or reflexive), Pi’el and Pu’al, intensive active and passive, Hiph’il and Hoph’al, causative active and passive, and Hithpael, the intensive reflexive.

The nuances and force of these various verbal distinctions are often necessarily omitted in translation. E.g., Ex. 32:19, “…and Moses’ anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.” The word “brake” is Pi’el [active intensive], and is literally, “utterly dashed them to pieces!” The full force of Moses’ intense action as expressed in the Hebrew is lacking in the English language and therefore in the bare translation of the facts.

Another example may be taken from 2 Sam. 11:4, “And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.” The sense is probably that “she cleansed herself” (Hithpa’el, intens. reflex. ptc.) after their illicit sexual act, which had made them ceremonially unclean until evening (Lev. 15:16–18). They kept the “letter of the Law,” but blatantly committed adultery!

4. At times, participles are translated as verbs and verbs as participles, shifting the force of a given statement in the secondary language, e.g., Matt. 28:19 and the command of the “Great Commission” to “Go…”—a “command”

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65 ו’שָּׁבֵר (way’shaber). Pi’el imperf. with Waw consec.

66 2 Sam. 11:4, וַיִּמְרָא מִשְׁמַע הָאָדָם מִשְׁמַעְתָּה. This probably referred to the law of the “seed of copulation” [male sperm] and not to menstrual uncleanness, from which she had previously bathed when David first saw her.
which is simply not there.\textsuperscript{67} Quite often through brevity of language compound words are inadequately translated, e.g., Rom. 1:18, “holding [habitually suppressing] the truth in unrighteousness.”\textsuperscript{68}

5. The Greek of the New Testament has four past tenses—aorist, imperfect, perfect and pluperfect—each distinctly used in conveying Divine truth, e.g., Jn. 8:7. The Jews who brought the woman taken in adultery kept taunting our Lord repeatedly with, “But you—what do you say?! “But you—what do you say?!,” etc.\textsuperscript{69} E.g., Jn. 19:30, “It is finished!”\textsuperscript{70} The publican in the parable of Lk. 18:9–14 continually smote his breast, repeating the words, “God

\textsuperscript{67} See Exegesis of Matt. 28:18-20. The same is true of Mk. 16:15, \textit{poreuethentes [aor. pass. ptc.] eis ton kosmon apanta kurexete [aor, imp. vb.] to eukaggelion pasi ti kti}se. Lit: “Having gone into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature!” The force is on the verb “preach.” That Christians are to “go” is presupposed by the ptc.

\textsuperscript{68} \textit{ti\nu al\theta\epsilon\iota\nu en \acute{a}dikia katech\omicron\nu\omicron, “the truth in unrighteousness [emphatically] habitually suppressing.” katech\omicron\nu\omicron is a pres. ptc., from \textit{\epsilon\iota\chi\omega}, to hold and \textit{kata}, down, and so “to constantly hold down or suppress.”

\textsuperscript{69} Jn. 8:5 “But what sayest thou?” \textit{sv ou\th n ti \lambda\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\iota\varsigma; Note the emph. pers. pron. “you.” Jn. 8:7, “they continued asking him.” \textit{\ep\epsilon\mu\epsilon\nu\nu\epsilon\iota\omega\tau\omicron\nu\tau\epsilon\si\varsigma\iota\nu\omicron, (a periphrastic const. comprised of an imperf. vb. and a pres. ptc.), i.e., “they persisted in [repeatedly ] asking him.” Further note that if she were taken in the very act, then the man also, according to Mosaic law, would have been brought. Perhaps they themselves were guilty of this very sin (as the context implies), as this was clearly a set–up intended to publicly embarrass our Lord.

\textsuperscript{70} Jn. 19:30, \textit{tet\epsilon\Elsestai. perf., stressing in the fullest sense the fulfillment of the promises, types and shadow, and the completion of our Lord’s redemptive work, which would then stand forever. The perfect tense denotes something that is done in an event and then continues on in a finished state. The culminative perfect denotes that which comes to culmination and then exists in a completed state. Both are applicable here. How could anyone think that this was a cry of defeat and not of victory?
be merciful to me the sinner!” In Gal. 3:24, the verb is in the perfect tense, and ought to be translated, “…the law ‘has become and continues to be’ our pedagogue unto Christ…” In Acts 17:23, Paul makes reference to “an ancient altar with its ‘faded inscription,’” which had stood as a witness to their sense of the Divine nature.

6. The Greek also uses periphrastic expressions to emphasize various actions. These are usually a verb and a participle combined for giving a certain emphasis. Cf. Matt. 16:19, and the use of the periphrastic fut. perf., “…whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall have been already bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall have already been loosed in heaven.” Such characteristic linguistic nuances are all but missing in the English language, or omitted through brevity, and therefore often missing in an English translation or version of the Scriptures. Such misunderstanding gave Peter papal power in the teaching of the Romish Church.

7. The original languages have an abundance of synonyms which are often brought into the English Bible without their necessary distinctions, lessening the force and clarity of the text in the secondary language. For example, the Hebrew has several words for “man,” each emphasizing some aspect of humanity in its strength, weakness,
mortality, relationship with others, etc. The Greek New Testament has two different terms for “love,” seven for “servant,” six for “power,” three for “knowledge” and at least two for “form.” These all have both doctrinal and practical nuances and often hermeneutical implications which are somewhat nebulous without recourse to the original language.

8. An example of the failure to mark distinctions between synonyms is the statement of Paul in the English version of Gal. 1:6–7, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.” Some have lessened Paul’s very stringent warning, saying that “It really wasn’t ‘another’ gospel,” taking the words “which is not another” as a diminishing comment. The very opposite is true, as not only noted by the context, which imprecates damnation upon those who preach “another gospel,” but in the very terms used, i.e., “…another gospel [of an altogether different kind], which is not [at all] another [gospel of the same kind]…!”

9. The Hebrew and Greek languages have various devices for expressing emphasis. The Hebrew, for instance, reserves a special place for the emphatic imperative, e.g., Gen. 39:7, “…his master’s wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, ‘Lie with me!’” The verb “lie” (a euphemism for sexual intercourse) is in the emphatic imperative. Both the Hebrew text and the Septuagint show the full emphasis, as they do Joseph’s inherent moral recoil and emphatic response.


The LXX reads: ...κοιμήθητι μετ’, ἐμοῦ. κοιμήθητι is aor. imp. ἐμοῖ (emph. pron.) “Sleep with me!” Both the Heb. and Gk. are in the imp.—the Heb. in the emph. imp., and

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76 Gal. 1:6–7, ...εἰς ἑτερον εὐαγγέλιον, δ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο...
the Gk. in the aor. imp., both connoting a determined and urgent entreaty.

**Gen. 39:9**, “...how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” Heb: נא הִתָּמָּאֵיתָ לְאָלָּחְרוֹן וַיָּשֶׁרָא אִשְׁתֵּאֵת הָרְאִיתָ הָרְאִיתָ... “...how then can I do [the] evil [the] great [the] this and sin against God?!” LXX, πῶς ποιήσω τὸ ρῆμα τὸ πονηρὸν τοῦτο [this thing, this evil—this!] καὶ ἀμαρτήσωμαι ἐναντίον [contrary, opposed to] τοῦ θεοῦ.

10. The Hebrew infinitive absolute is usually reserved for intensifying the verb or making it emphatic. The participle in Hebrew is reserved for continuity of action without intermission, making it more continuous than the imperfect. The Hebrew makes great use of independent [emphatic pers. prons.] E.g., Gen. 3:7, Eve became fixated with the fruit as a means of obtaining wisdom. The Hebrew attaches an independent [emph.] pronoun to the noun “something to be desired [greatly coveted]…”

10. The Greek possesses two imperatives, present and aorist. The English does not differentiate and so the English Bible almost always fails to give the full connotation.

The pres. imp. commands “keep on doing something” (Matt. 7:7, Αἰτεῖτε...ζητεῖτε...κρούετε... “Keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking...”) that has already been reality. The aorist imperative commands the

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77 E.g., Ex. 20:8, the Fourth Commandment: The first command, “Remember,” is an inf. absol.; the second, “to keep it holy,” is a Pi’el inf. const. This is grammatically the strongest Commandment of the Decalogue! The Fifth Commandment, to honor one’s parents, the other positive command, is in the Pi’el imp., and the eight negative Commandments are all framed in the imperf. with the neg. ל, giving the force of a perpetual prohibition.

78 Gen. 3:6, מַרְדֹּקָא הָרְאִיתָ עֲרָבָא, The emph. pers. pron מַרְדֹּקָא joined by Maqqephe to the word for emph., implying that Eve was completely absorbed with the fruit as a means to wisdom. עֲרָבָא a common pron. in Books of Moses. Fem. form occ. only 11 times.
commencement of an action with a sense of urgency and determination. 2 Tim. 2:15, “Study,” σπούδασον, aor. imp. i.e., give the utmost diligence!

Consider the present imperative of prohibition, which commands the cessation of an action in progress, and is to be translated, “Stop…!” E.g., Eph. 4:30, “Stop grieving the Spirit of God…!” Col. 3:9, “Stop lying to one another…!” E.g., Matt. 7:7, “Keep on asking…keep on seeking…keep on knocking…”79 E.g., Matt. 28:19, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations…” The command to “Go” is non-existent, being a participle and not a verb of command. The very nature of Christianity implies a missionary imperative. The command is rather “with a sense of urgency and with all determination, make disciples!”80

E.g., of the aorist imperative in 2 Tim. 4:2, 5. There are eight aor. imps., each denoting an urgent, determinate action. The only pres. imp. in this list is “watch thou in all things…” The same holds true for the present and aorist prohibitions. The present imperative of prohibition means to stop an action already in progress, e.g., Phil. 4:6, “Be careful for nothing…” This denotes “Stop being anxious about even one thing!”—and even this translation fails to take into account the emphasis of word-order.81

The aorist subjunctive of prohibition means “do not even begin to,” e.g., Matt. 3:9, “And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father…” The force

79 Matt. 7:7, Αἰτεῖτε καὶ δοθήσεται ὑμῖν, ζητεῖτε καὶ εὑρήσετε, κρούετε καὶ ἀνοιξεῖται ὑμῖν.
80 πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε, “Having gone, make disciples…!” This is not an imperative ptc. Some think it is a circumstantial ptc. which would be coincident with the main vb (?).
81 μηδὲν μεριμνάτε… Lit: “About even one thing, stop being anxious!”
of John the Baptist’s argument is, “Do not even let it enter your mind!” Do not even begin to think to say!”

11. The Hebrew often uses repetition for emphasis, e.g., Isa. 26:3, where “perfect peace” is the interpretation of the repetitive word for “peace.”

12. In Hebrew, the infinite absolute, derives from the same root as the finite verb, and occurring before it, serves to intensify the verbal idea, Gen. 2:17, which is literally “dying thou shalt die!” Cf. also Gen. 3:4, Satan’s vehement denial of the Divine, perpetual prohibition, “you shall absolutely not die!” This was the exact negative counterpart to God’s original positive statement, “in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

13. There are various forms of emphatic particles and other constructions in both Hebrew and Greek, which are often not translated, and thus their force is lost to the reader of a secondary language. E.g., the emph. part. נא, which occurs twice as “beseech” in Jonah 1:14, “And they said,

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82 καὶ μὴ δόξητε λέγειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς πατέρα ἐχομεν τὸν Ἀβραὰμ. Lit: “And do not even begin to think to say within yourselves, A Father [emphatically] we have in Abraham!”

83 שְׁלֹחֵם, or lit: “peace, peace.”

84 E.g., Gen. 2:17, “…in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” מות, “dying thou shalt die!” מות, the inf. absol. of the same root as the vb., and occurring immediately before מות is used for emph.

85 Gen. 3:4, לְאָמָה תַּמָּה, the inf. absol. is used as in God’s positive statement, but made even more emph. by the use of the neg. לא before the inf.

86 Cf. Psa. 1:2, 4, both of which contain a “but if” or exceptive const. (וַיַּהֲלָם דַּעְדוּ דַּעְדוּ). v. 2, “But if he has any delight at all, it is in the law of the LORD…” v. 4, “But if the wicked are like anything at all, they are like the chaff which the wind driveth away!” Cf. also the many μὲν…δὲ consts. in Greek, “one the one hand, but on the other…”
We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man’s life!”

14. English is not an inflected language, and therefore is limited in and by its word–order. In an inflected language (such as Hebrew and Greek), word–order is usually reserved for emphasis.

Note: An inflected language is formed on root words or word stems to which are added a pattern of endings [suffixes] or preformatives [prefixes] to denote various grammatical elements. Thus, words may occur in different order for emphasis without affecting the essential meaning.

In Hebrew, a Semitic language, the verb (in a verbal sentence) usually occurs first. If a word or phrase is placed before the verb, it is emphatic. E.g., Job. 1:21, “…The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.” In each statement, the name of Jehovah [Yahweh], or the “LORD” is placed first for emphasis. This is then a profound statement of Job’s faith.

E.g., Gen. 3:10, Note the emphatic position of the direct object, “voice”: “And he said, Thy voice I heard in the garden…” E.g., Gen. 3:10–11. Note the present sense of Adam’s sinful consciousness of being naked before God, emphasized by the word–order and emphatic personal pron., “…because naked I am!” And God’s question, “Who told you that ‘naked you are?!’”

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87 Jonah 1:14, יָדֵחְתָּבָהּ נָא לָמָּה בָּנָּפֶשׁ הַאֲדָמָהּ הָעֲוָה, lit: “Jehovah hath given, Jehovah hath taken, Jehovah's name be blessed!”

88 יְהֹוָה יִתְנָשֵׁר לְהָאָדָם לָמָּה יָרֹא יָרֹא מְנַעַל, lit: “Jehovah hath given, Jehovah hath taken, Jehovah's name be blessed!”

89 Gen. 3:10, לְיִתְנָשֵׁר אַתָּתֵל שְׁמְעָה בְּמַעַל, lit: “Voice” a def. dir. obj, placed before the verb for emphasis.
15. The Greek also uses word–order for emphasis. The usual word–order, however, is Subject–verb–Object. E.g., Jn. 3:16, which places emphasis on the verb, “For so loved God the world…”

16. Another example from the Greek is found in Jn. 8:33–37:

We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. 36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

That there was an exchange of words between our Lord and the Jews which must have been emotional is without doubt. The word–order and emphasis of v. 33 and 37 reveals it clearly in the original language and Greek text, “‘Seed of Abraham’ are we!” To which our Lord retorted, “I know that ‘Seed of Abraham’ are ye!”

E.g., 2 Tim. 4:7, Paul’s epitaph: “The good fight I have fought [unfaltering right up to the very end], the course I have finished [unfaltering right up to the very end], the faith I have kept [unfaltering right up to the very end]!”

A final example may be taken from 2 Cor. 9:7, “…for God loveth a cheerful giver.” Even this seemingly simple statement and truth cannot be adequately expressed in English! The word–order makes almost every part of this

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90 Jn. 3:16, οὐτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον…

91 σπέρμα Ἀβραὰμ ἐσμεν…Οἶδα ὅτι σπέρμα Ἀβραὰμ ἐστε. The whole passage is highly charged with emotion which the English language largely fails to communicate.

92 2 Tim. 4:7. τὸν καλὸν ἰχθύνα ἠγάπησεν, τὸν ὅρομον τετέλεκα, τὴν πίστιν τετήρηκα. In each clause, the dir. obj. is place first for emph. Each vb. is perf., connoting a culminative action which leads up to a given point.
statement emphatic, with the adjective modifying the
direct object placed first, the direct object next, and then
the verb placed before the subject.  

17. Repeatedly, some slight nuance is necessarily left out of
translation because of the inadequacy of the English
language and idiom, and therefore the English version of
the Bible. This means that various shades of expression
are totally lacking for the English reader.

For example, the personalities of Martha and Mary, the
sisters of Lazarus, are contrasted in one being too busy
with serving to listen, and the other sitting at our Lord’s
feet intently listening (Lk. 10:38–42). Mary evidently had
a more sensitive nature than Martha, who was more
practical and active. This same distinction is preserved in
the Greek text when the English reads the same in the
statement from both sisters after the death of their beloved
brother, Lazarus, “Lord if thou hadst been here, my
brother had not died” (Jn. 11:21, 32). Although identical
in the English, they are different in the original, revealing
the grief of both but the heightened degree of
sensitiveness and loss of Mary.  

18. Phraseology and clauses, such as contained in the various
conditional sentences are vital to the understanding, and

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94 Martha said, κύριε, εἰ ἦς ὡδὲ οὐκ ἂν ἀπέθανεν ὁ ἀδελφὸς μου. “Lord if you had been here had not died my brother!” The verb “had not
died” is in the emph. pos. Mary said, κύριε, εἰ ἦς ὡδὲ οὐκ ἂν μου ἀπέθανεν ὁ ἀδελφός. “Lord, if you had been here, my would not have
died [the] brother.” The word–order is awkward in English. Martha put
the words “had not died” emphatically forward; Mary not only does the
same, but puts the possessive “my” even before the emphatic position
of the verb, revealing much more than Martha her personal sense of
loss.
often fail in translation. Note the subtlety of Satan in the wilderness temptation, “Since you are the Son of God, command these stones to bread to become!” (Matt. 4:4). The temptation was not to prove to Satan that Jesus was the Son of God, that was already assumed. The temptation was to act independently, to fulfill a legitimate appetite or need, as our Lord had the power and prerogative to do so. This was, in principle, the same temptation that caused the fall of the First Adam—to act independently of God and his Word (Gen. 3:1–7).

19. Both Hebrew and Greek have two negatives, which are used in specific constructions. The English has but one. In the New Testament, these negatives imply either a positive or negative answer in rhetorical questions, and when used together [double negative], are emphatic.

E.g., Heb. 13:5, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” ὴν μὴ σε ἀνωθεν ὀδὸν μὴ σε ἐγκαταλέπω. There are five negs. here in the occurrences of both ὴν and μὴ and the term οὐδ’, and also an emph. word-order, and so, lit:

95 There are four types of conditional sentences in Greek, each one containing an “if” clause [protasis] and a conclusion [apodosis]. The first assumes something to be true, the second, something to be false, the third is contingent [probable future action], and the fourth, less probable action. Each of these has a definite grammatical const.

96 Matt. 4:3, εἰ νῦν εἰ τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰπε ἵνα σὺ κρίνῃς ὑμῖν ἢ τις ἄρτοι γένωνται. A first class cond. sent. assumes the condition to be true, and so ought to be translated “since you are…”

97 When used in commands, the Heb. negs. are נ with the imperf. to denote an absolute, abiding or perpetual command (see eight of the Ten Commandments), and לָ to denote a command with immediate, but not necessarily abiding implications.

98 Nicodemus actually said, “A man cannot be born the second time old [emph.] being…he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb can he and be born? Of course not! πῶς δύναται ἁθρώπος γεννηθῆναι γέρων ὄν; μὴ δύναται εἰς τὴν κοιλίαν τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ δεύτερον εἰσελθεῖν καὶ γεννηθῆναι; The neg. μὴ implies a “No” answer.

20. Such seemingly simple things, as use of the definite article in both Hebrew and Greek, may be filled with nuances which are highly significant, yet untranslatable. The presence of the definite article in Greek stresses identity; its absence stresses quality or character, thus the English may insert the definite article when the Greek would omit it. E.g., Rom. 1:17, “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed…” This is anarthrous [absence of the definite article] in the Greek text, stressing the quality or character of Divine righteousness. It is inexplicable that some modern translations and versions insert the indefinite article “a,” completely obscuring the thought. By omitting the definite article, the stress is given to the truth that the focal–point of the gospel is on that very righteousness which God demands.99

The anarthrous use of the definite article with the emphatic word–order is significant in Jn. 4:24, there the correct translation would be “God is spirit,” referring to the nature or essence of God. Lit: “Spirit God is [as to his essence or nature]!”100

21. One or more words may occur between the definite article and its antecedent, marking them out in a descriptive manner which is untranslatable, but greatly significant.

99 δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, καθὼς γέγραπται: ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται. Note further that the word “righteousness” is emphatic by position, the verb is in the perfect tense, denoting “stands revealed,” ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, means” by faith from start to finish,” and in the quotation from the Old Testament, ἐκ πίστεως is emphatic by position.

100 Jn. 4:24, πνεῦμα ὁ θεός… Our Lord emphasized the essence of God and then drew a good and necessary consequence that true worship derives from and corresponds to the essence of God, i.e., it must also be in spirit and in truth.
E.g., Jude 3, “…the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

E.g., Rom. 10:3, 6, “…God’s righteousness….the righteousness which is of faith…” Here the terms are held between the definite article and the noun [its antecedent] in a close syntactical unit which is more definite and forceful than the English can convey.

22. The Greek has some idioms or figures of speech which bear close scrutiny. One is Chiasmus [cross], in which the first and third phrases correspond and the second and fourth, e.g., 1 Pet. 3:7, which construes knowledge and weaker vessel, and giving honor with being heirs together: “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, as unto the weaker vessel, and giving honour unto the wife, as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”

23. There are a host of nuances denoted by participles, the use of case, number and gender, word-order, phraseology, conditional sentences, etc., which can never be reproduced in translation. These have been termed “untranslatable riches,” and are such—a wealth of linguistic meaning which must remain with the original

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101 τῇ ἀπαξ παραδοθείσῃ τοῖς ἁγίοις πίστει. The def art. τῇ is construed with πίστει. The words gathered between are emphatically descriptive of this kind of faith. It is the faith [doctrinal content] unique to Christianity, which was one time (ἀπαξ, once—for—all) delivered to Christians. In English we would hyphenate all into one word as a single grammatical unit or term, i.e., “the—‘once—for—all—delivered—unto—the—saints’—faith.”


103 1 Pet. 3:7 Οἱ ἀνδρείς ὑμῶν, συνοικούντες κατὰ γυναίκας ὡς ἀδελφοῦς σκεύει τῷ γυναικεῖῳ, ἀπονέμοντες τιμὴν ὡς καὶ συγκλητικόμοις χάριτος ζωῆς εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐγκόπτεσθαι τὰς προσευχὰς ὑμῶν.
languages. Some may be rather insignificant, but many are very significant, and failing to understand such may have great hermeneutical and doctrinal consequences.

24. Take, for example, “number,” i.e., singular or plural. These may well change the significance and thus the interpretation of a given statement: such seemingly minor issues as number [singular or plural] often have great significance, e.g., Lk. 14:16–24, and the Parable of the Great Supper. The context has the Lord of the supper speaking to his servant to go out and compel people to come to the feast, then he states in v. 24, “For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.” But the word “you” is plural. It is no longer the Lord who made the Great Supper speaking to his servant, but our Lord applying his parable to those who were sitting and listening at that moment.

E.g., Lk. 22:31, “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not…” The first “you” is plural; the second is singular. Satan desire to have all the disciples to sift them as wheat, but he has to single our Simon Peter, and our Lord specifically prays for him.

Examples of Mistranslation and Misinterpretation
Based on the Latin Language

The early centuries of Christianity witnessed the transition from Greek to Latin as the language of Christianity and of Christian writings and theology (c. 200— ). Many of the Church Fathers were deficient in their knowledge of Greek and relied solely on the Latin Versions [Old Latin Version, Latin Vulgate]. Only a very few of the Church Fathers and other early Christian

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104 Lk. 14:24, λέγω γὰρ ἰμῖν...
105 Lk. 22:31–32, Σίμων Σίμων, ἰδοὺ ὁ σατανᾶς ἐξητήσατο ἰμᾶς (pl.)...Satan has desired to have all of you... ἐγὼ δὲ ἔδειχθην περὶ σοῦ (sing.), but I have prayed concerning you...
writers had any knowledge of Hebrew at all. This meant the ascendancy of a secondary language, Latin, in the place of the original Hebrew and Greek, and also the universal use of a version of a translation for faith and practice. From this transition to the Latin came a variety of misunderstandings and mistranslations. Two will suffice for examples:

1. The biblical word and doctrine of “adoption,” which occurs five times in our English Bible. The theological meaning of this term has been based on the Latin, adoptio, not the Greek. The doctrine of adoption, we are told, is that declarative act of God as our spiritual Father, simultaneous with justification, whereby he brings into his family and constitutes us as his children or sons. Thus, the ordo salutis [order of salvation] is Effectual Calling, Regeneration, Conversion, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification and Glorification.

The Greco–Roman significance of adoption, however, dealt with legal status, and included not only those brought into the family, but also true, natural sons as well. The Greek is literally “placing as a son,” i.e., recognizing one as the legal heir to an estate and to the full rights and responsibilities of citizenship. This alone adequately explains Rom. 8:23, where our adoption is the future glorification of the body and final restoration of creation.

2. The biblical and theological idea of justification. The Hebrew terms mean “to pronounce just or right.”

The Heb. root יָשָׁנָה is used in the Hiph’il (causative) יָשָׁנְנֵי in the sense of declaring or pronouncing a person

106 Rom. 8:15 (ὕιοθεσίας), 8:23 (ὕιοθεσίαν), 9:4 (ἡ ὕιοθεσία), Gal. 4:5 (τὴν ὕιοθεσίαν) and Eph. 1:5 (ὕιοθεσίαν).

107 At the time of his majority, a young man was presented to the city dignitaries and was dressed in his toga virilis, or manly garment. He was then given full citizenship rights and assumed full responsibility as the heir to the estate. This finds its parallel in our future glorification.
just or righteous, e.g., Dt. 25:1; Prov. 17:15. The LXX follows suit with δικαίωσωσίν in Dt. 25:1 and δος δικαίουν κρίνει τὸν ἁδικὸν ἁδικὸν δὲ τὸν δικαίουν ἁκάθαρτος in Prov. 17:15.

The Greek terms can both mean either “to make righteous” or “to declare righteous.”

Note: The New Testament terms are: δικαίω, “justify,” used forensically 30 times, e.g., Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:24, 28; 4:2, 5; 5:1, 9. δικαιος, “just” or “righteous,” used forensically some 43 times, e.g., Matt. 9:13; Rom. 1:17; 3:10; 8:30; Jas. 5:16. δικαιωσύνη, “righteousness,” used forensically over 40 times, e.g., Rom. 1:17; 4:3, 5–6, 9, 11, 13; 10:3–4, 10; 1 Cor. 1:30. δικαιώσεις, “justification,” occ. twice, Rom. 4:25; 5:18. δικαίω is used both in the LXX and in the New Testament. Leon Morris notes that Gk. “verbs ending in –οω and referring to moral qualities have a declarative sense; they do not mean ‘to make—’.” He then gives a series of examples.¹⁰⁸

The Latin terms are justificare and justificatio, and may mean either “to pronounce just or righteous” or “to make just or righteous.” This ambiguity has resulted in the false teaching that justification is an infused righteousness [justitia infusa] rather than an imputed righteousness [justitia imputata].

This error began with the Latin Church Fathers, who missed the forensic nature of the biblical texts and usage, and this became the Romish doctrine which has combined and confused justification with sanctification. Because of this ambiguity, the meaning of justification must derive from the use of the biblical terms themselves, and not simply their etymology.

Note: Failure in this area has entered into such recent controversies as the “New Perspective on Paul” and the “Federal Vision” Theology which has turned to and infused righteousness and justification by both faith and

faithfulness, i.e., a mixture of grace and works. This is a radical break with Evangelical and Reformed Christianity and a turn toward Rome.

Exegesis, hermeneutics and theology are inseparably linked—and all begins with the reading of the text—its words, grammar and syntax.

Examples of Mistranslation and Misinterpretation

Based on the English Language

The following examples are taken from varying degrees of misunderstanding or mistranslation of the Greek. The Old Testament Hebrew and the Septuagint [Greek Old Testament] are not referred to, although they form a distinct body of study in mistranslation and misinterpretation. Some are examples of grave doctrinal departures, others are less important, and some are simply illustrative of grammatical issues. The common element is that they rely on either the English language in general or the English grammar in particular.

1. The Roman Catholics hold the Latin Vulgate of Jerome (406 AD)—the version of a translation of the Old Latin, which was itself a translation—to be inspired, as though it were the original language. The Mormons [“Latter–Day Saints”] publicly promote the King James Version of the Bible—and hold it—a version of a translation—to be inspired as the final authority. They have no concept of the nature or importance of the original languages of Scripture. Some Fundamentalists hold the King James Version of the Bible to be Divinely inspired as though it were the original

\[\text{We take but one example from the Heb. of Ruth 3:15, “and she went into the city,” the English Bible referring to Ruth. The text reads יָבֹא אֵלָיו, 3 pers. masc. sing. referring to Boaz, i.e., “He went into the city.” The LXX is nebulous (καὶ εἰσήλθεν εἰς τὴν πόλιν), perhaps taking “her” as the nearer possible antecedent? Boaz was in love and acted immediately, arriving before the elders had assembled at the city gate to sit in judgment on any transaction (Cf. Ruth 4:1–2ff).}\]
language—a view which is utterly irrational—and thus see no need of or for a study of the original languages.

Note: The view known as “King James Only–ism” is characteristic of some within Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism. Many hold that the KJV was based on the Textus Receptus, and so is the only “pure” Bible. This view is both unhistorical and irrational, and based on ignorance. The Greek text of Erasmus (1516), a Roman Catholic,¹¹⁰ was an eclectic text comprised of various manuscripts gathered together uncritically to form almost enough to complete the New Testament. Erasmus himself translated the final verses of Revelation from Latin into Greek to complete the work. This eclectic text became the Stephanus Text of 1550, and was the text which served as a basis for the King James Version of 1611. This text was later edited again with emendations from Beza’s Greek text and in 1633 was described in its publication as “the text received by all,” hence the idea of Textus Receptus.

The facts of history plainly reveal three issues: first, the so-called Textus Receptus is itself an eclectic text. It was the “critical text” of its day, i.e., the best which then contemporary scholarship could produce from the best available sources. It was not a single, mysterious, perpetual text which had been kept “pure” for many centuries.

Second, when the Waldenses made their version in vernacular, the Romount Version in 1180, it was translated from the Latin Vulgate. They evidently did not possess the Greek mss. Which has supposedly been kept pure for centuries.

Third, the so-called Textus Receptus, as an entity, did not exist until 1633, over twenty years after the King James Version was in print. To assert that the KJV was based on the Textus Receptus betrays an ignorance of historical facts and sequence. To say that there is a preserved text is one thing; to say that the text has been preserved is quite another.

¹¹⁰ That Desiderius Erasmus was a Romanist is only mentioned because of some who believe that the KJV is “pure,” and all other versions have been tainted or corrupted by Romish writers and influences.
Whatever one’s belief in such matters, he must take into account the facts of history as well as the preservation of God’s Word. Even liberal critics such as Wescott and Hort have admitted that the true text does exist, has been preserved in the existing mss., and has been collated by the process of textual criticism. The text of the Greek New Testament, even by alleged liberal scholars, is about 99.99 percent restored.\footnote{See the following for the purity of the Greek text of the NT: B. B. Warfield, \textit{Textual Criticism of the New Testament}, pp. 12–14; H. S. Miller, \textit{General Biblical Introduction}, p. 280; Geisler and Nix, \textit{A General Introduction to the Bible}, p. 365–6.}

Whatever one’s views are on textual “families,” the Byzantine or Majority Text, or the eclectic, Critical Text, it should be well-thought through and ought to take into account textual, historical the theological issues. Often all the truth is not necessarily in one view or another. Pride, prejudice and irrationality make their way even into scholarly circles.

2. The Russelites [“Jehovah’s Witnesses”] mistranslate the final clause of John 1:1 as, “...and the word was a god,” denying the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.\footnote{The wording of the three independent clauses in John 1:1 are in reality, arguments for His eternity, equality and Deity. The final clause reads, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ. The absence of the definite article before ὁ λόγος, called the “anarthrous use,” in the Greek idiom stresses quality or character. The words are emphatic by position. The clause ought to be translated, “and the word as to his essence was [existed as] [emphatically] God.”} The rules of Greek grammar are misunderstood and thus misapplied, and the English rules of grammar are followed, inserting the indefinite article “a” and thus obscuring the opposite meaning of the Greek idiom [anarthrous use of the def. art.], which actually emphasizes the Deity of our Lord.

3. The Campbellites [“Church of Christ” Church] teach that water baptism is essential to salvation from Acts 2:38, “...repent and be baptized...” The two verbs are taken as equal or compound verbs according to the rules of English
grammar, giving the argument that “repentance plus baptism equals salvation.” But the verbs are not equal in the Greek.  

4. The Pentecostal or Charismatic idea that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is expressed by speaking in “unknown tongues,” i.e., ecstatic utterances, is based on a word added by the English translators and so italicized. The idea is that of foreign languages, not an ecstatic non-linguistic, non-intelligent flow of syllables. It is not only dangerous, but irrational to base one’s doctrine on italicized words added by translators!

5. Italicized words are those added to the English text for clarification. However, sometimes added words, not in the Greek text, have been added in the English through a faulty interpretation—and *not* italicized, implying that they do occur in the original language. E.g., Hebrews 2:9, “…should taste death for every man.” The word “man” does *not* occur in the Greek—in any text or manuscript. The words “every one” [ὑπὲρ παντός] must be interpreted by the context, and necessarily refer to the “many sons” of

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113 The Eng. [KJV] of Acts 2:38 grammatically makes “Repent” and “be baptized” compound verbs and thus equal—the classic argument of the Campbellites, but the Greek reads (Μετανοήσατε, καὶ βαπτισθῆτω ἕκαστος ὑμῶν). “Repent” is aor. imp. act. pl. “be baptized” is aor. pass imp. sing. i.e., “All of you with a sense of urgency and all determination, Repent!...and [then] let each one of you be baptized.” The former receives the emphasis and the latter is much less a command.

114 “Pentecostalism” is itself a misnomer, as Pentecost witnessed Spirit-filled men speaking distinctly in other, previously unlearned languages, which the hearers clearly understood. The Corinthian tongues were dubious in nature, and may have been ecstatic utterances. They were, of course, the least of the gifts in that era of temporary spiritual revelation. Those who do not make the necessary distinction between the tongues of Pentecost and Corinth greatly err.

115 Hebrew 2:9, υπὲρ παντός γεύσηται θανάτου. Lit: on behalf of every one [sing.] he might taste [experience] death.
v. 10, “they who are sanctified” and the “brethren” of v. 11, “my brethren” of v. 12, “the children which God hath given me” of v. 12. Yet this has become a proof-text for arguing the universality of the atonement, an argument largely based on a non-existent word.

6. An example of misunderstood gender in Ruth 3:15. After Ruth and Boaz meet on the threshing floor, and she is laden down with grain, the KJV reads, “and she went into the city,” referring to Ruth. The verb, however, is masculine [Greek: ἐλήματον], referring to Boaz. He was in love, and acted immediately as the context reveals (4:1ff).

7. Temporal participles are subservient to the main verb. The English may translate a verb as a participle and a participle as a verb, thus shifting the whole force of a given statement, or fail to properly carry the relationship between a participle and a verb.

8. At times, possibly because of a euphemism [phrasing something in a more pleasing or acceptable way, and
avoiding harsh or offensive terms], some words may not be translated into English. Cf. Rom. 9:10, which reads in the KJV, “And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac…” The word “one” in English seems to refer to Isaac. The full, correct translation, however, would be “...by one sexual act [or emission of sperm]…” The emphasis is on the minuteness of Divine predestination that in one emission of sperm. From Isaac, two nations and destinies were determined through the conception of the twins.

9. Does the Bible command that women wear “modest apparel” in 1 Tim. 2:9? Traditionally, this has been the great proof–text for such teaching. The command is rather for suitable apparel and modest behavior, i.e., the term “modest” is to be construed with “behavior” and not with clothing as the English Bible assumes. Modesty begins with one’s behavior, not with one’s dress. This strengthens rather than weakens the mandate.

10. Most Christian churches have women Sunday School or Bible teachers, never questioning the scriptural teaching of 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 or 1 Timothy 2: 8–15. Yet the Scriptures are very clear that men are to assume the leadership and women are to remain silent and be in submission. Some would interpret 1 Tim. 2:12 to mean simply that women should not teach men, but the Greek does not support this argument, forbidding to women a teaching position altogether in the context of the church. 

Note: “But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.” Note that the comma after “teach” is an attempt to equate the Greek,

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118 Rom. 9:10, ἕν ἕνος κοίτην. Lit: out of one sexual act [emission of sperm].

119 1 Tim. 2:9, “…ὤσαύτως [καὶ] γυναίκας ἐν καταστολῇ κοσμίῳ μετὰ αἴδοὺς καὶ σωφροσύνης…” “suitable or proper clothing,” καταστολῇ κοσμίῳ, i.e., orderly. “with modesty and sound judgment [decency],” μετὰ αἴδοὺς καὶ σωφροσύνης refers to one’s behavior.
which teaches that: (1) the woman is not to be in a teaching position within the sphere of the church, (2) she is not to usurp authority over the man, and (3) She is to remain in silence.

Note: διδάσκειν δὲ γυναίκι οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω οὐδὲ αὐθεντεῖν ἀνδρός, ἀλλ’ εἶναι ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ. This ought to be literally translated: “But to teach [emph.], a woman [emph.] I do not allow [permit], nor to usurp authority over a man [be in a position of leadership or authority in the church], but [quite the opposite] to be in silence [quietness].”

Modern thinking, however, has replaced biblical teaching to such an extent that truth is ridiculed at the very thought that women should not teach in the sphere of the church. The compromise idea that a “Sunday School” is not part of a church and its ministry is utterly absurd. If “Sunday School” is not an essential part of the church’s ministry, then what church would be scriptural? The answer must be, the church that does not have a “Sunday School.” Such reasoning leads to absurdities. Whatever one’s view, it must be aligned to the Scriptures, and not simply based on tradition, religious politics or accommodation.

11. Another example of English punctuation obscuring the meaning of the text occurs in Eph. 4:11, where apostles, pastors, teachers, etc., are given by Christ “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry…” The comma after “saints” ought to be omitted. Saints are to be equipped through the preaching and teaching ministry for the service of Christ.¹²⁰

12. The translation or interpretation of certain words as “perfect” rather than “mature,” “complete,” “completely developed,” or “finished,” has led some to espouse a “Christian” or “‘sinless’ perfectionism.” Such teaching began with John Wesley as a rather relative “Christian

¹²⁰ Eph. 4:12, πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἑργὸν διακονίας... “for the equipping [outfitting] of the saints for [unto] the work of ministering or service.”
perfectionism” which was a complete dedication of love to Christ and later developed into the Oberlin or sinless perfectionism of Asa Mahan and Charles Finney, and then furthered in a modified form by A. B. Simpson.\textsuperscript{121} Some elements of modern evangelicalism retain a non-Pentecostal modified form of perfectionism as “The Higher Life” Movement and the “Keswick Movement.”

Note: The statements which may be construed to buttress the doctrine of perfectionism are listed after the following Greek terms or their cognates. All which refer to human beings in a spiritual sense ought to be translated as follows:

(1) \textit{τελειώω, τελείωσις, τελειότης, τέλειος, ἐπιτελέω} connote “coming to an end, and thus completion, being finished, mature, adult,” e.g., Matt. 5:48; 19:21; Jn. 17:23; 1 Cor. 2:6; 2 Cor. 12:9; Gal. 3:3; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 3:12, 15; Col. 1:28; 4:12; Heb. 5:9; 10:1; 11:40; 12:23; Jas. 1:4; 2:22; 3:2; 1 Jn. 4:17–18;

(2) \textit{ἀρτιος, καταρτισμός, κατάρτισις} connote “to be fully–limbed, symmetrically developed, completed, outfitted,” e.g., Lk. 6:40; 2 Cor. 13:11; 2 Tim. 3:17; Heb. 13:21; 1 Pet. 5:10; (3) \textit{πληρῶ} means “to fill up” and so “to complete,” Rev. 3:2.

13. The words of our Lord to Mary Magdalene in John 20:17, “Touch me not…” have been alleged to mean that because he, as our Great High Priest, had not yet ascended to offer the sacrifice, she must not pollute him by any physical contact, are without sufficient foundation. This argument has been used to counter the seeming contradiction of Matthew 28:9, where the two Marys are described as having “held him by the feet and worshipped him.” Actually, the present imperative of prohibition ought to be

translated, “Stop clinging to me” rather than “touch me not.”\textsuperscript{122}

14. It is commonly thought and taught that the pronoun “it” in Romans 6:12 refers to “sin,” which is the subject of the sentence. “It,” however, refers to “body,” not because it is the nearer antecedent, but because it agrees grammatically in gender with “body.”

Note: Μὴ οὖν βασιλεύεται ἡ ἁμάρτια ἐν τῷ θνητῷ ὑμῶν σῶματι εἰς τὸ ὑπακούειν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτοῦ. “It” [αὐτοῦ] is neut. sing., as is “body” [σῶματι]. “Sin” [ἡ ἁμάρτια] is fem. sing. The body is no longer the boss of the truly converted individual.

15. What does the word “which” refer to in Hebrews 12:14? Does it refer, as in English, to both “peace…and holiness” as compound direct objects, or to one or the other?\textsuperscript{123} Is a kind of pacifism included as a requirement “to see the Lord”? The Greek grammar is decisive.

16. Eph. 6:19, “…that I may open my mouth boldly…” is often used as a request for boldness in opening one’s mouth to proclaim the gospel. The word “boldly,” however, is not to be construed with opening one’s mouth, but rather with the following, “to make known the mystery of the gospel.” This may not be vitally important, but it is an example as to the influence of the English text and punctuation upon one’s theology and thus upon one’s thought and prayers.

\begin{verbatim}
122 μὴ μου ἀπτου, pres. imp. of prohib. “Stop clinging to me!” It was not out of fear of contamination as the Great High Priest sanctified to offer sacrifice, but as the Great High Priest who was not to be detained.

123 Εἰρήνην διεώκετε μετὰ πάντων καὶ τὸν ἁγιασμόν, οὐ χωρὶς οὐδὲς δίστατο τὸν κύριον… The word “which” [οù] is masc. sing., referring to “sanctification” [τὸν ἁγιασμόν], not “peace” [Εἰρήνην] which is fem. Holiness is the one great requirement for heaven.
\end{verbatim}
boldness or unreservedness of speech to make known] 
tó μυστήριον τοῦ εὐαγγελίου...

17. The word “whosoever” in John 3:16 is non-existent—
despite its being a focal—point for modern evangelism,
which seeks to be as all—embracive as possible. The
wording is actually intensely personal and emphasizes an
intensely personal and persevering faith. The Greek is
emphatically definite where the English is somewhat
indefinite by evangelistic implication.

Note: John 3:16 is an epexegetical or explanatory
statement appended to the preceding, v. 14–15. Our Lord
approaches Nicodemus on the presuppositional level,
destroying his religious presuppositions—physical
descent from Abraham, circumcision and law—
righteousness. Our Lord, taking the Old Testament
reference to Moses and the serpent of brass (Numb.
21:4–9), prophesies of his own sacrificial death and
emphasizes that one has eternal life through faith
alone—an intensely personal, persevering faith.

Note the parallel between v. 15 and 16 and the reading,
[ίνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτόν “in order that [a final
clause] every single one without exception constantly or
characterized as exercising faith [the singular relative
participle ὁ πιστεύων ωτὴ πᾶς into him…” “To believe
in[to]” [πιστεύων εἰς] was a technical expression of that
culture and era that clearly denoted utter, unreserved
commitment to someone of thing.

18. It is widely taught that believers need to “die to sin” in their
experience. This is not only common to such traditions as
the “Higher Life” movement, the Keswick [non—
Pentecostal] holiness movement, and to many in the
Evangelical tradition, it is also taught in some of the old
Reformed and Baptist Catechisms:

The Westminster Shorter Catechism, followed by those of
Keach and Spurgeon, reads:

Q. 35. What is sanctification?
Ans. Sanctification is the work of God’s free grace,
whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the
image of God, and are enabled more and more to die
unto sin and live unto righteousness.
Such teaching is based on passages such as Romans 6:1–10; Galatians 5:24 and Ephesians 4:22–24, making dying to sin, or becoming “dead to sin” an experience to be sought by those who desire to become preeminently spiritual. This, however, is a teaching based on an inaccurate and inadequate translation of the Greek. Note the following: first, the words referring to “being dead” to sin in Rom. 6:1–10 are all in the aorist tense, denoting a past event, a punctiliar action, and ought to be translated “died,” not “dead.”

Note: Cf. Rom. 6:2, μὴ γένοιτο. May it never be! οἵτινες ἀπεθάνομεν τῇ ἀμαρτίᾳ, such ones as we are (qualitative pers. pron.) who died to sin, πῶς ἔτι ζήσομεν ἐν αὐτῇ; How shall we live any longer in it?! Cf. aor. ἀπεθάνομεν “died.” (Every occ. of “dead” is aor., and should be so translated from v. 2–10). Every believer “died” to sin, but is not “dead” to sin. What is the difference? The language refers to a past act, not to a present state. It is neither a present state of experience nor an experience to be sought. It is rather the reality of our union with Christ. Believers “died” to the reigning power of sin. Cf. Rom. 3:9, πάντας υφ’ ἀμαρτίαν εἶναι (“all under sin[’s dominion] are [as a state of existence]).

The believer’s union with Christ has changed his relationship to sin. Second, this past event (denoted by the aorist tense) was our union with Christ in his death and resurrection–life at regeneration, which means for the believer that the reigning power of sin has been broken, and he now lives in the context of the resurrection–life and power of the Holy Spirit, necessitating a converted life (Romans chapter six, the entire passage).

Note: What exactly is the believer’s relation to sin if he “died to sin” and yet still sins? The necessary distinction must be made between living in sin (under its dominating or reigning power) and committing acts of sin. The believer no longer lives under the reigning power of sin, but he still commits acts of sin (Cf. Rom. 6:15, ἀμαρτήσωμεν and 1 Jn. 2:1 ἵνα μὴ ἀμάρτητε. καὶ ἐὰν τις ἀμάρτῃ... Both are aor., and so ref. to acts of sin).
Modern Fundamental and Evangelical Christianity, with their doctrine of the "carnal Christian" heresy, unwittingly deny the necessary and practical implications of the believer’s union with Christ.

Third, Romans 6:11 uses a different term, “corpse,” a noun, not a verb. Believers are to reckon themselves to be “corpses” with respect to sin, i.e., having already “died” by virtue of their union with Christ. We are to reckon ourselves to be, as it were “corpses” [totally, wholly unresponsive] to the solicitations of sin, which was once our ruling master but has now been dethroned. Note the remarks in the preceding paragraph, and also the context of the entire chapter.

Fourth, the passages in Eph. 4:22–24 and Col. 3:9–10 are parallel, both containing the use of the aorist infinitive of result, i.e., believers have already put off the old man and put on the new by virtue of their union with Christ. Thus, both statements (Col. 3:9–10 being translated correctly in the English version) refer to a past event and present fact, not to an exhortation to be realized in one’s experience. Thus, a body of erroneous and widely-accepted

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124 Rom. 6:11, ἵματι σοι ἐν ζημίας ἐγένετε... οὐκ ἐστιν ἡμᾶς ἐν ζημίας ἐγένετε... ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. This statement, the first practical admonition or application in the Roman Epistle, declares that believers are to be totally unresponsive to their old master because they have been brought into union with Christ, which means a new sphere of life and activity. Sin, though no longer our ruling master, yet seeks to recruit, as it were, our members to wage a “guerilla warfare” against the reign of grace.

125 Eph. 4:22–24, ἀποκατάστασις... καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τοῦ οὖν νέου... See John Murray, Principles of Conduct, pp. 202–221 for a thorough discussion of the use of the aor. inf. of result and also of the experiential aspects of the believer’s union with Christ.
teaching has arisen because it is based solely on the English text and grammar.

19. It is traditional to speak and sing about the “fiery trials” of our faith (1 Pet. 4:12). Part of the scriptural basis for this traditional saying is found in 1 Peter 1:7, and the words, “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” What does the pronoun “it” refer to? “faith” or “gold?” It refers to “gold,” not “faith” — although some trials are called “fiery” by Peter.

20. An example of eisegesis—reading a foreign meaning into the text—is found in the idea of the “backslidden Christian.” It is commonly accepted by Christians of almost every doctrinal persuasion that a believer can “backslide,” i.e., slide or gradually slip back into former sinful ways or habits. The major proof-text for such a doctrine is Proverbs 14:14, “The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways…”

The whole idea pictured by “backsliding” is erroneous. The term and its cognates occur seventeen times in Scripture, all in three books of the Old Testament: Proverbs (once), Jeremiah (twelve times) and Hosea (three times). With the possible exception of the statement in Proverbs, every instance refers to the rebellion and apostasy of Israel. The English term is an interpretation of four Hebrew terms and a variety of Greek terms in the LXX:

(1) The most common term [10 times] הָבָשָׁתָן, “to turn back, apostatize” (Jer. 2:19 [LXX, ἡ ἀποστασία σου]; 3:6, 8, 11, 12; 5:6; 8:5; 14:7; Hos. 11:7; 14:4). (2) The next
most common term [5 times] ἀπόστασις, “back–turning, apostasy” (Jer. 3:14, 22 [LXX: ἐπιστρέφετε πτολ ἐπιστρέφοντες]; 8:5; 31:22; 49:4). (3) הָרָעָה, Qal. ptc., “characterized as rebellious or stubborn” (Hos. 4:16). (4) גָּדוֹל, Qal. ptc., “a characteristic turning back, being recreant, proving faithless, apostate (Prov. 14:14).

The comprehensive picture is one of turning back, open rebellion, a refractory shoulder which throws off the yoke, and apostasy. The idea of sliding or skipping backwards, or the common preaching simile of a cow sliding back into a mud hole while trying to get out is based on a thought conjured from the English language. It is diametrically opposed to the idea of the Hebrew.

While a Christian may be taken in sin, a mere professing believer may eventually apostatize, but it is highly questionable to import an Old Testament doctrine into the New Testament by a process of eisegesis. If “backsliding” is equated with apostasy, there is a marked correspondence (Heb. 3:12, where the term “departing” is ἀποστῆναι, i.e., apostasy).

21. The Greek has its share of idiomatic expressions. One is the objective genitive, i.e., “when the noun in the genitive receives the action, being related as the object to the verbal idea contained in the noun modified.”


127 Dana–Mantey, Loc. cit., p. 78.

E.g., “the preaching of Jesus Christ” [τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ] (Rom. 16:25). It is not our Lord who is preaching, but rather the one being preached about. Mk. 11:22, “Have faith in God” [ἐχετε πίστιν θεοῦ], i.e., it is not God’s faith, but our faith in God, i.e., God is the object of our faith. E.g., Rom. 10:2, “have a zeal of God” [ζηλοῦ θεοῦ], not God’s zeal, but the traditional religious zeal of the Jews. Cf. Rom. 3:3, “make the faith of God of none effect” [τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταργήσει], it is faith in God, not God’s faith, which is made of none effect.

The importance of this idiomatic use is seen in such passages as: Rom. 3:22; Gal. 2:16, 20; 3:22; Eph. 3:12; Phil. 3:9. In each of these passages, the KJV reads, “…the faith of Christ.” The correct translation of the objective genitive is “faith in Christ.” From a misunderstanding [ignorance] of the obj. gen., has derived the irrational idea that one is saved “by Christ’s faith.” Aside from being a denial of a recognized idiom, such would have a profound effect on the Deity of our Lord (a “lesser deity”?). If Mk. 11:22, an objective genitive, is translated, “Have faith in God,” rather than “Have God’s faith,” then why not these other passages referring to Christ? It would also work great confusion concerning our justification by faith and other major doctrines.

Testimonies from the past concerning the importance of studying the original languages

*Striving for a practical working knowledge or even a basic acquaintance with the Greek New Testament and some knowledge of the Hebrew may indeed be the single most*

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Notes: (1) Italics or bold print have not been used, except as they might be used by the authors themselves, as the entire quotations should be read and contemplated. (2) In some cases, the exact location of the quoted material is unknown.
important and significant effort of your Christian life and experience. It will open to you the very Word of God, and not merely a version of a translation. It will enable you to meet with the triune God in his Word without a translator or an interpreter. It will enable you to experience the very conviction, fervency, emotion, and force of the truth that the very first readers experienced. It will determine your whole approach to the study of the Scriptures. It will give consistency, depth, maturity and discernment to your perspective of doctrine, theology and Christian experience. It will largely determine what books you will purchase, and what you will read. It will necessarily change your life in the context of its truth. It will make you a stronger, and a more intelligent and consistent Christian because the vital force of the truth you study will necessarily transform your life through the Spirit and grace of God.

Martin Luther

Martin Luther (1483–1546) was the German leader of the Protestant Reformation, who, by the study of the Scriptures in their original languages, found the grace of God and the freedom from sin that only comes by that grace. On this ground, he became convinced that reading Greek and Hebrew was one of the greatest privileges and responsibilities of the Reformation preacher, so as to preserve a pure gospel.

Whoso is armed with the Text, the same is a right Pastor, and my best advice and counsel is, that we draw water out of the true Fountain; that is, diligently to read in the Bible. He is a learned Divine that is well-grounded in the Text; for one text and sentence out of the Bible is of far more esteem and value than many writings and glosses, which neither are strong, sound, nor armour of proof.

Few arguments for the importance of biblical languages are clearer than Luther’s 1524 treatise, “To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools.” The following is an excerpt from this work.

And let us be sure of this we will not long preserve the gospel without the languages. The languages are the sheath in which this sword of the Spirit is contained; they are the
casket in which this jewel is enshrined; they are the vessel in which this wine is held; they are the larder in which this food is stored; and, as the gospel itself points out, they are the baskets in which are kept these loaves and fishes and fragments. If through our neglect we let the languages go (which God forbid!), we shall...lose the gospel...

Experience too has proved this and still gives evidence of it. For as soon as the languages declined to the vanishing point, after the apostolic age, the gospel and faith and Christianity itself declined more and more...On the other hand, now that the languages have been revived, they are bringing with them so bright a light and accomplishing such great things that the whole world stands amazed and has to acknowledge that we have the gospel just as pure and undefiled as the apostles had it, that it has been wholly restored to its original purity, far beyond what it was in the days of St. Jerome and St. Augustine...

Yes, you say, but many of the fathers were saved and even became teachers without the languages. That is true. But how do you account for the fact that they so often erred in the Scriptures?...Even St. Augustine himself is obliged to confess...that a Christian teacher who is to expound the Scriptures must know Greek and Hebrew in addition to Latin. Otherwise, it is impossible to avoid constant stumbling; indeed, there are plenty of problems to work out even when one is well versed in the languages.

There is a vast difference therefore between a simple preacher of the faith and a person who expounds Scripture, or, as St. Paul puts it, a prophet. A simple preacher (it is true) has so many clear passages and texts available through translations that he can know and teach Christ, lead a holy life, and preach to others. But when it comes to interpreting Scripture, and working with it on your own, and disputing with those who cite it incorrectly, he is unequal to the task; that cannot be done without languages.

Now there must always be such prophets in the Christian church who can dig into Scripture, expound it, and carry on disputations. A saintly life and right doctrine are not enough. Hence languages are absolutely and altogether necessary in the Christian church, as are the prophets or interpreters; although it is not necessary that every Christian or every preacher be such a prophet, as St. Paul points out in I Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4...
Since it becomes Christians then to make good use of the Holy Scriptures as their one and only book and it is a sin and a shame not to know our own book or to understand the speech and words of our God, it is a still greater sin and loss that we do not study languages, especially in these days when God is offering and giving us men and books and every facility and inducement to this study, and desires his Bible to be an open book.

0 how happy the dear fathers would have been if they had had our opportunity to study the languages and come thus prepared to the Holy Scriptures! What great toil and effort it cost them to gather up a few crumbs, while we with half the labor—yes, almost without any labor at all—can acquire the whole loaf! 0 how their effort puts our indolence to shame! Yes, how sternly God will judge our lethargy and ingratitude!

Here belongs also what St. Paul calls for in 1 Corinthians 14, namely, that in the Christian church all teachings must be judged. For this a knowledge of the language is needful above all else. The preacher or teacher can expound the Bible from beginning to end as he pleases, accurately or inaccurately, if there is no one there to judge whether he is doing it right or wrong. But in order to judge, one must have a knowledge of the languages; it cannot be done in any other way.

Therefore, although faith and the gospel may indeed be proclaimed by simple preachers without a knowledge of languages, such preaching is flat and tame; people finally become weary and bored with it, and it falls to the ground. But where the preacher is versed in the languages, there is a freshness and vigor in his preaching, Scripture is treated in its entirety, and faith finds itself constantly renewed by a continual variety of words and illustrations. Hence, Psalm 129 likens such scriptural studies to a hunt, saying to the deer God opens the dense forests; and Psalm 1 likens them to a tree with a plentiful supply of water, whose leaves are always green.\textsuperscript{129}

Ulrich Zwingli

Ulrich Zwingli, an older contemporary of Luther, and the leader of the Swiss Reformation, was said to have memorized the entire Greek New Testament. It was his strong conviction that the Scriptures form the sole authority of the Christian’s life, and thus emphasized their study in the original languages. In his day, Latin was the official academic, ecclesiastical and diplomatic language, thus he emphasized Latin among the languages to be mastered. His comments are, however, still pertinent for this day. The following is from his treatise, *On the Education of Youth*.

Once a young man is instructed in the solid virtue which is formed by faith, it follows that he will regulate himself and richly adorn himself from within: for only he whose whole life is ordered will find it easy to give help and counsel to others.

But a man cannot rightly order his own soul unless he exercises himself day and night in the Word of God. He can do that most readily if he is well versed in such languages as Hebrew and Greek, for a right understanding of the Old Testament is difficult without one, and a right understanding of the New Testament is equally difficult without the other.

But we are instructing those who have already learned the rudiments, and everywhere Latin has the priority. In these circumstances I do not think that Latin should be altogether neglected. For an understanding of the Holy Scripture it is of less value than Hebrew and Greek, but for other purposes it is just as useful. And it often happens that we have to do the business of Christ amongst those who speak Latin. No Christian should use these languages simply for his own profit or pleasure: for languages are gifts of the Holy Ghost.

After Latin, we should apply ourselves to Greek. We should do this for the sake of the New Testament, as I have said already. And if I may say so, to the best of my knowledge the Greeks have always handled the doctrine of Christ better than the Latins. For that reason, we should always direct our young men to that source. But in respect of Greek as well as Latin we should take care to garrison our souls with innocence and faith, for in these tongues are many things which we learn only to our hurt: wantonness, ambition, violence, cunning, vain philosophy and the like. But the soul…can safely steer past all these…
I put Hebrew last because Latin is in general use and Greek follows conveniently. Otherwise, I would willingly have given Hebrew precedence, for in many places even amongst the Greeks those who are ignorant of Hebrew forms of speech have great difficulty in attempting to draw out the true sense of Scripture...

If a man would penetrate to the heavenly wisdom, with which no earthly wisdom ought rightly to be considered, let alone compared, it is with such arms that he must be equipped. And even then he must still approach with a humble and thirsting spirit.\textsuperscript{130}

Herman Witsius

Herman Witsius, a seventeenth century Dutch scholar and theologian wrote:

Let him apply himself diligently to the acquisition of different languages, and especially to those which God has distinguished by making them the channels of conveyance for His heavenly oracles, that he may understand God when He speaks, as it were, in His own language, that he who acts as the interpreter of God and hears the word at His mouth, may not require an interpreter for himself.\textsuperscript{131}

John Owen

John Owen was one of the greatest of the Puritan writers and preachers. He was also Vice Chancellor of Christ’s College, Oxford, during the Cromwellian Era.

There is in the originals of the Scripture a peculiar emphasis of words and expressions, and in them an especial energy, to intimate and insinuate the sense of the Holy Ghost unto the minds of men, which cannot be traduced into other languages by translations, so as to obtain the same power and efficacy.\textsuperscript{132}

...a great help for the investigation of truth is the diligent study of the Holy Scriptures in those languages in which they


\textsuperscript{131} Herman Witsius, \textit{The Economy of the Divine Covenants between God and Man}.

\textsuperscript{132} John Owen, \textit{Works IV}, p. 270.
were written by the Holy Spirit. Not only is this the only well from which we can draw the original force and meaning of the words and phrases of Divine utterance, but also those languages (especially the Hebrew) possess a weight of their own—a vividness which brings to the understanding fine shades of meaning with a power which cannot survive the passage into another tongue.\textsuperscript{133}

C. H. Spurgeon

C. H. Spurgeon was one of the greatest and most widely used preachers ever called and gifted by God. His attainments were largely through self–effort, yet he personally studied the Scriptures in the original languages.

A man to comment well should be able to read the Bible in the original. Every minister should aim at a tolerable proficiency both in the Hebrew and the Greek. These two languages will give him a library at a small expense, an inexhaustible thesaurus, a mine of spiritual wealth. Really, the effort of acquiring a language is not so prodigious that brethren of moderate abilities should so frequently shrink from the attempt. A minister ought to attain enough of these tongues to be at least able to make out a passage by the aid of a lexicon, so as to be sure he is not misrepresenting the Spirit of God in his discoursings, but is, as nearly as he can judge, giving forth what the Lord intended to reveal by the language employed. Such knowledge would prevent his founding doctrines upon expressions in our version when nothing at all analogous is to be found in the inspired original.\textsuperscript{134}

J. M. Reu

John Michael Reu was a professor of Homiletics at Capital Seminary, and noted the great importance of the original languages as a basis for preaching.

If the preacher, owing to defective preparation, has no Hebrew, he may find a...stopgap...As for the preacher

\textsuperscript{133} John Owen, \textit{Biblical Theology}, p. 701.
incapable of using the Greek New Testament, he will have
difficulty to prove his right to exist.\footnote{J. M. Reu, \textit{Homiletics}, p. 340.}

Thomas Murphy

Thomas Murphy, a nineteenth century pastor and author of a
volume on Pastoral Theology, devotes a chapter to “The Pastor in
the Study,” and in this chapter, a section on “The Study of
Hebrew and Greek.” His comments are worthwhile:

It is to be feared that most pastors, as soon as they leave
the theological school and enter upon the hard work of the
ministry, drop the study of the original languages. At the very
time when they are ready to enjoy the reading of the sacred
word in the tongues in which it was first written, and to profit
by it, and to go on improving in the exercise, they lay it aside,
in very many cases to be taken up no more. By so doing, they
lose, in a great measure, the advantages of an important
study of the previous years. The commencement of one’s
ministry is the time, and the only time, for averting this danger.
The knowledge already acquired should be carefully kept up.
It should be increased until the sacred languages could be
read with ease and pleasure. Some plan for persevering in
this study should be adopted at the beginning.

It need not take much time. Want of time arising from the
pressure of other duties is generally the great obstacle. But
there need not be many hours spent in it. One hour a week
devoted to the Hebrew and one to the Greek will serve to keep
up that knowledge of them already attained, and even to make
a little progress….The knowledge which is at first fresh is
easily retained, and then, if ever so little is added to it from
week to week, it will gradually grow into a grand attainment in
years. The systematic study may be very much aided by the
careful examination in the original of each text with its context
which is taken up for sermon or lecture. Some ministers keep
up their knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek fairly in this way.

The slowness of the progress, and the imperfect
knowledge of these languages already attained, very often at
first discourage from attempting further effort. It is so tedious
to search out the interpretation of a passage, there is so little
satisfaction in the operation, and there is such a mountain to
be overcome before the task will be much easier, that it is
frequently given up in despair. But is it not much if, even with difficulty, a passage can be traced back into the very language in which it was written by men inspired of God? And if present difficulties should be ever so great and present improvement ever so slow, yet what will not steady progress at length achieve? What will not an hour a week, of even the slowest advance, amount to in ten years? The rule should be to keep up what has been already attained, and aim after some improvement, no matter how little.

The advantages...of being acquainted with the original languages of the Scriptures are very great.

1. It is not an exaggeration to say that the Bible can be better understood through the aid of this knowledge than it can possibly be without it....

2. We get nearer to the mind of the Spirit in this way. Every version must necessarily be a remove from it....

3. Out of all the possible languages of the world these were the ones which were providentially chosen for conveying the will of God to man....

4. It must be an unspeakable pleasure to get at the very terms which were written by inspired pens, the very sounds that were uttered by Jehovah, and heard from his lips by his highly-favored servants....

5. To be skilled in these languages gives one an independence in interpreting the Scriptures and an authority in expounding them which cannot be too highly valued....

6. Some of the best modern commentaries on the Scriptures cannot be used to full advantage without a knowledge of these languages....

How much it is regretted by multitudes of older pastors that in the beginning of their ministry they did not undertake and rigidly pursue this study! ....They feel the great want at every turn in their studies, and mourn that they had not understood it an earlier day and provided against it.  

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B. B. Warfield

Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield was a professor at Princeton Seminary, continuing the legacy of Archibald Alexander and Charles Hodge.

Extremes meet. Pietist and Rationalist have ever hunted in couples and dragged down their quarry together. They may differ as to why they deem theology mere lumber, and would not have the prospective minister waste his time in acquiring it. The one loves God so much, and the other loves him so little, that he does not care to know him. But they agree that it is not worthwhile to learn to know him.

The simple English Bible seems to the one sufficient equipment for the minister, because in the fervor of his religious enthusiasm, it seems to him enough for the renovating of the world, just to lisp its precious words to man. It seems to the other all the theological equipment a minister needs, because in his view the less theology the better. He considers him ill employed in poring over Hebrew and Greek pages, endeavoring to extract their real meaning—for what does it matter what their real meaning is?...If the minister is simply an advance agent of modern culture, a kind of University–Extension lecturer, whose whole function it is to “elevate the masses” and “improve the social organism”—why, of course art and literature should take the place of Greek and Hebrew, and “sociology” the place of Theology in our seminary curriculum.

If the whole function of the minister is “inspirational” rather than “instructional,” and his work is finished when the religious nature of man is roused to action, and the religious emotions are set surging, with only a very vague notion of the objects to which the awakened religious affections should turn, or the ends to which the religious activities, once set in motion, should be directed—why, then, no doubt we may dispense with all serious study of Scripture...

But, if the minister is the mouth–piece of the Most High, charged with a message to deliver, to expound and enforce; standing in the name of God before men, to make known to them who and what this God is, and what his purposes of grace are, and what is his will for his people—then the whole aspect of things is changed....No second–hand knowledge of the revelation of God for the salvation of a ruined world can suffice the needs of a ministry whose function it is to convey
this revelation to men, commend it to their acceptance and apply it in detail to their needs...\textsuperscript{137}

Kenneth Wuest

Kenneth Wuest was professor of Greek at Moody Bible Institute and the author of several volumes on Greek studies. He noted that

The simple application of the rules of Greek grammar and syntax will often lead to the discovery of some tremendous truth which would be passed by unnoticed in the use of the English translation...\textsuperscript{138}

Questions that are answered in hours of wading through commentaries, can often be answered in five minutes by recourse to a Greek lexicon.\textsuperscript{139}

A. T. Robertson

A. T. Robertson was professor of New Testament Greek at Louisville Seminary and author of several massive, practical works on New Testament Greek.

There is nothing like the Greek New Testament to rejuvenate the world, which came out of the Dark Ages with the Greek Testament in its hand. Erasmus wrote in the preface to his Greek Testament about his own thrill of delight: “These holy pages will summon up the living image of His mind. They will give you Christ Himself, talking, healing, dying, rising, the whole Christ in a word; they will give Him to you in an intimacy so close that He would be less visible to you if He stood before your eyes.”

The lexicon may point the way to life...Grammar is a means of grace...

...the Greek Testament....There is no sphere of study where one is repaid more quickly for all the toil expended....the real New Testament is the Greek New Testament. The English is simply a translation of the New Testament, not the actual New Testament....there is much


\textsuperscript{138} Kenneth Wuest, \textit{The Practical Use of the Greek New Testament}, p. 39

\textsuperscript{139} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 96.
that cannot be translated. It is not possible to reproduce the
delicate turns of thought, the nuances of language, in
translation. The freshness of the strawberry cannot be
preserved in any extract. 

It is possible for one to teach himself the elements of
Greek so as to get a great deal of benefit from the study of the
Greek New Testament. One does not have to be a gifted
linguist to follow a course of study like this. It requires only a
half hour a day and the determination to stick to it steadily,
and one will win out and be glad of it all his life.

The trouble with all translations is that one’s mind does not
pause long enough over a passage to get the full benefit of the
truth contained in it. The Greek compels one to pause over
each word long enough for it to fertilize the mind with its rich
and fructifying energy. The very words of the English become
so familiar that they slip through the mind too easily. One
needs to know his English Bible just that way, much of it by
heart, so that it will come readily to hand for comfort and for
service. But the minute study called for by the Greek opens up
unexpected treasures that surprise and delight the soul.  

Bernard Ramm

The interpreter who interprets Scripture in his modern
language is always working with a linguistic veil between
himself and the original texts. And he never knows how thin or
thick this veil is.

Concluding Note

There is no greater or more vital study for the Christian than
the inscripturated Word of God. To know God’s Word as
thoroughly and intimately as possible, to know and love its
doctrinal propositions, and to consistently apply it to one’s life by
the grace of God—this is the core and substance of Christianity.
Our love to and service for the Lord Jesus Christ, our faithfulness
in every sphere of life, our joy in trial, our strength in temptation,

\begin{itemize}
  \item A. T. Robertson, Preface to A Grammar of the Greek New
  Testament in the Light of Historical Research and The Minister and His
  \item Bernard Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation, p. 107.
\end{itemize}
and our glorious anticipation of future glory in the very presence of God, all hang upon our relationship to God’s Word.

A careful study of the Scriptures, seeking to develop some knowledge of and skill in the original languages, ought to become an integral part of the Christian’s practical experience. This is vital for the man who seeks to stand before his hearers and declare this Word with Divine authority and unction!