

The Bible

by Harold E. Warnke

I. How do we get our Bible? (9, 11, 12, 13)¹

A. In the beginning there was no inspired Word.

For at least the first 2,500 years of world history there was no inspired written Word. There may have been some religious documents, but none that were in the same class with the later inspired books.

That does not mean that God left Himself without any witness during these many centuries. The creation of the universe and of our world tells everyone much about God's grace, power, mercy, and wisdom, as Ps. 19:1 says: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handywork." St. Paul wrote about that same revelation of God in creation: "What may be known about God is plain to them (the heathen who are without the written Word), because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made" (Rom. 1:19, 20, NIV).

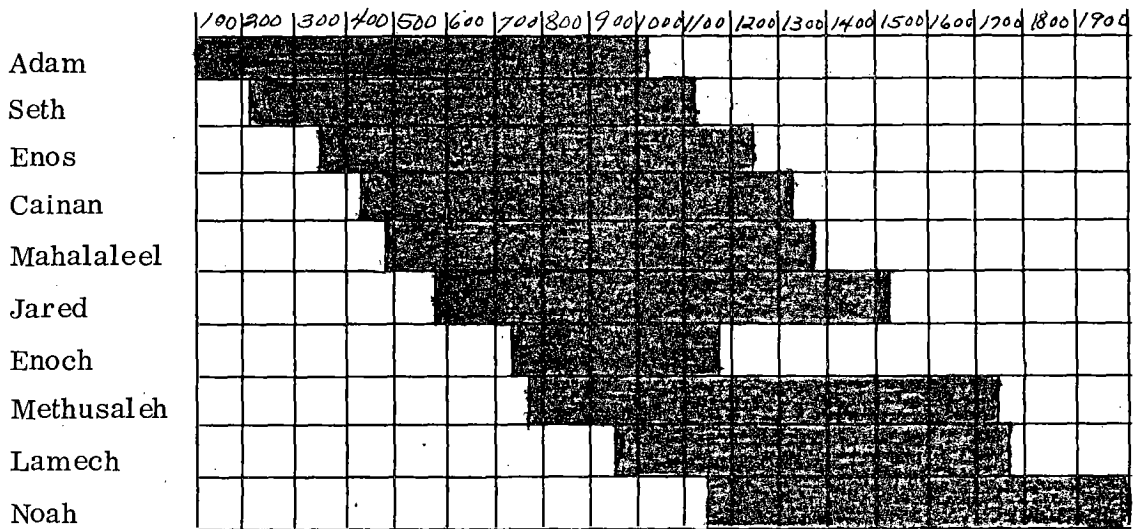
The preservation of all life that He has created tells everyone something more about God's wisdom, power, and especially His love toward all His creatures. The interchange of the seasons, the power of the seeds, the rain and the sunshine, food for the hungry, all tell us much about God. Ps. 104 excellently expresses those thoughts of God's creation and His preservation.

Furthermore, everyone has the natural law of God written in his heart. The people who lived during those first 2,500 or more years of world history also had it, as St. Paul writes: "They (the heathen without the written Word) show the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness" (Rom. 2:15, NIV).

Again, during some 2,300 of those 2,500 years when there was no inspired written Word, even to the days of Jacob and Joseph, the Lord frequently communicated directly with various people. He either spoke to them or He made His will known through dreams and visions. For example, He communicated directly with Adam, Cain, Noah and his sons, Abraham, Hagar, Abimelech, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. The pertinent passages, all from Genesis, are written in 2:16; 4:6; 6:13-21; 7:1; 8:15; 9:1-17; 12:1-3, 7; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 16:7-12; 20:3; 26:2-6; 28:13-15; 37:5-10. We know also from the books of Exod., Lev., Num., and Deut. how frequently God spoke directly with Moses.

Another fact that made the writing of God's Word unnecessary in those early days was the longevity of the first patriarchs. Gen. 5, that familiar chapter with its genealogies of the earliest patriarchs, tells us that men then lived an average of some 900 years. When the sons of God lived that long, they could easily transmit God's Word to many generations of their descendants. Consult, for example, the graph following this paragraph to see how long each generation lived (top numbers) and how Adam was still living during the early years of Lamech's life. Lamech, the father of Noah, was the great-great-great-great-great-great-grandson of Adam. We may rightfully assume that those early, faithful patriarchs with their tremendous mental and spiritual qualities brought up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). Not only did they transmit God's Word faithfully to their descendants, but, like Enoch (Jude 14, 15), they undoubtedly preached that same Word to unbelievers also.

¹ Numbers refer to question numbers in *Doctor Martin Luther's Small Catechism Explained for Children and Adults*, C. Gausewitz, ed., Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1956.



This graph is taken from Genesis 5, the great genealogy of earliest times.

The critics, of course, ridicule those long ages, stating that something like this is completely impossible. They either deny those ages entirely, or they attempt to explain them away by saying that those years must have been much shorter than ours. For example, if each of those years were the equivalent to one of our months, the ages of those men at death would be in the 70-80-year range, quite understandable by our standards. Yet, one always is confronted with almost impossible situations every time that he tries to change Scripture to make it more acceptable to human reason. For example, if the one-month-equals-one-year-theory holds true, then Enoch would have been a little more than five years old when he had his first son (Gen. 5:21). That would probably prove to be more difficult for human reason to swallow than the 900-year age of the patriarchs.

Why shouldn't people in those days have lived much longer than we? God wanted the earth populated (Gen. 1:28), and He had made man in the beginning so that he would live forever. It was sin that brought death into the world, but the ravages of sin had not yet become so great in those early years as they are today. Sin and its evil effects put a black mark on God's creation, including the shortening of man's life during the course of the centuries.

B. Beginning with Moses (about 1500 B.C.) and continuing until the Bible was finished, God called various men to write His Word (6, 7, 8, 9, 10).

1. The great dogmatician Johann W. Baier (died 1695) correctly suggested *four different reasons why God gave us His written Word*: 1) Growth of the human race; 2) Shortening of the life span; 3) Infiltration of corrupt doctrine; 4) Frailty of memory.

We can readily understand the reasons for mentioning particularly these four points. The population of the world must have increased tremendously during the first centuries after the Flood, a fact that would surely require some type of a written record. During the same period the life span of mankind gradually decreased from Noah's 950 years (Gen. 9:29) to Shem's 600 (Gen. 11:10,11) to Eber's (Shem's great-grandson) 464 (Gen. 11:16, 17) to Terah's (Abraham's father) 205 (Gen. 11:32) to Abraham's 175 (Gen. 25:7) to Moses' 120 (Deut. 34:7).

In those days too there must have been a tremendous amount of false doctrine everywhere in the world, as many of Noah's descendants gradually turned away from God's Word, to invent their heathen gods and goddesses. Thus the memory of God's true Word was dimmed. Therefore beginning about 1500 B.C. with Moses and continuing for some 1,600 years until the Bible was finished, God at various times chose about 45 men to write His holy Word. The result was that everyone could now read the Word; no one would ever be able to say that he had no way of knowing

it.

Who were the people whom God called to write His Word? The Bible calls them “Holy men of God” (II Pet. 1:21). Our Lord called them Moses, the prophets and the psalm writers (Luke 24:44). At other times Jesus just used the common expression for the Old Testament: *Moses and the prophets* (Luke 16:19, 31; Luke 24:27). New Testament writers often referred to Moses and the prophets as writers of the Old Testament (Matt. 8:4; 19:7; 22:24; etc.; Matt. 1:22; 2:5, 15, 17, 23; 3:3; 4:14; etc.).

2. *Moses wrote* the first five books of the Old Testament, called the Law of Moses or the *Pentateuch*, about 1500 B.C. Even though recent critics deny this statement (see I, E, 5), yet Christ, the Apostles, and all Bible believers have always accepted Moses as the writer of these five sacred books.

We can be certain that Moses wrote the Pentateuch for various reasons. Moses himself repeatedly indicated his authorship in Exod., Lev., and Deut. (see, for example, Exod. chapters 3-12; Lev. chapters 1-7 and 11-27; and especially Deut. 31:24-26). Jesus Himself confirmed that Moses indeed was the author of the Pentateuch. For example, in Luke 16:29, 31, He twice referred to Moses (the first five books of the Old Testament) and to the prophets (the rest of the Old Testament). He accused the Jews of not believing what Moses had written (John 5:46, 47). In Luke 24:44 Jesus used the actual words “Law of Moses,” the common designation for the Pentateuch.

The Apostles also repeatedly referred to Moses as the writer of the first five sacred books of the Bible (see, for example, Acts 3:22; 6:11; 7:44; 13:39; 15:5; 21:21; 26:22; 28:23). St. Paul stated that same thought in various Epistles (see, for example, Rom. 10:5, 19; I Cor. 9:9), as did the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (7:14; 9:18; 10:28).

Bible scholars tell us that there are no less than 42 New Testament passages that refer to Moses as the author of the Pentateuch. Should we then accept the Bible doubting critics’ contention that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, rather than the infallible Word of Christ and the Apostles in the New Testament? God forbid!

The Pentateuch was always highly honored, continually regarded as sacred, carefully preserved in or at the Ark of the Covenant (Deut. 31:9, 24-26), and exactly copied by the various scribes. (The copying of the Old Testament was so meticulously done that not even the Bible-doubting critics bother much about the slight discrepancies in the various manuscripts, as we shall hear later.)

3. *The prophets wrote the other Old Testament books.* When the Bible speaks of prophets, it always means primarily preachers of God’s Word. It does not necessarily mean a foreteller of the future, although that was part of their work.

The Jews divided the writings of the other Old Testament books into three classes: The Former Prophets, who lived at an earlier date (Joshua, Judges, I-II Samuel, I-II Kings, with the two last named each considered as one book); the Latter Prophets who lived later (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the one book of the twelve minor prophets); and the Other Writings (Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, I-II Chronicles, with the two last named each considered as one book). The Other Writings were probably so-called, because, although they were written by people who were truly prophets of the Lord, yet in most cases their official position was something different. Daniel, for example, was a prime minister, while Solomon and David were kings. Today we simply call all of them prophets, in keeping with New Testament usage, as previously mentioned in part 2 of this section.

One notes that the order in the Jewish Old Testament is somewhat different from that in our Bibles. Originally, of course, there was no particular order in which the books were listed, since they were all written on scrolls. (A scroll is a long roll made of skins or parchment and rolled on two rods. When the reader read a section, he unrolled the scroll from one rod and rewound it on the

other.) The Jews simply placed one scroll next to the other in the proper container and in no special order. The order of the Jewish Old Testament today may have been divided by Ezra, while our division of the Old Testament into 17 historical, 5 poetical, and 17 prophetic books stems from the Septuagint, the first translation of the Old Testament.

In some cases we know a great deal about the writers of the Old Testament (for example, David, Jeremiah, and Daniel). In other cases we know next to nothing about them (for example, Obadiah and Habakkuk); in a few instances even their names are unknown (for example, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, I and II Chronicles).

We do know that Malachi, the writer of the last book in the Old Testament, lived about 400 B.C. Consequently, the Old Testament was composed during a period of about 1,100 years, a tremendously long time for the writing of just one part of one book.

We also know that the inspired Old Testament writers wrote in the Hebrew language, with the exception of just three short Aramaic sections, the language that gradually supplanted Hebrew among the Jews. These Aramaic sections are Jer. 10:11; Dan. 2:4-7:28; Ezra 4:8-6:18.

4. *The four evangelists wrote the Gospels*, the first four books of the New Testament. An evangelist is a writer of an evangel, the good news of Christ's life and death to save the world. None of these four evangelists makes any attempt to write a complete biography of Christ. St. John explains why this could not be done: "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written everyone, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25). Each evangelist, therefore, wrote from his own point of view, choosing only those events and words from the life of our Lord that helped to carry out his particular theme. (We shall briefly mention these viewpoints in the summary of Bible books at the end of section I, D.)

The evangelist *St. John also wrote the book of Revelation* of Jesus Christ, which God had shown to him. Both his Gospel and Revelation were undoubtedly written in the decade of the 90's A.D. They were the last inspired books.

5. *The apostles wrote the other New Testament books*. An apostle is one who was sent, in this case one sent to preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. St. Paul, the great Apostle, wrote 13 of these epistles, in length just about one-third of the entire New Testament. The other 8 epistles were written by Sts. James, Peter, John, and Jude. Hebrews is by an unknown author.

Unlike some of the Old Testament authors, we know a great deal about the life of most New Testament authors. Any good Bible dictionary will provide many facts about them. All of them wrote in Greek, the universal language at that time.

Our division of the New Testament into three parts is a natural one: 5 historical books, 21 epistles, and 1 prophetic book. One could also divide the historical books into two sections: the four Gospels or the accounts of Christ's life, and the Acts of the Apostles or the history of the early New Testament Church. The epistles may be divided into 13 Pauline, 5 general epistles (James, I and II Peter, I John, and Jude are called "general," because they are not addressed to any particular group or individual) and 3 other epistles.

C. God gave us His Word by inspiration and bound us to it (9-12).

1. *What is meant by inspiration?* God Himself gives us the answer in various Bible passages. One of the best known is II Pet. 1:21: "For the prophecy (in the sense of God's Word) came not in old time by the will of men: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Another widely quoted Bible passage is II Tim. 3:16: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (NIV).

Those two Bible passages taken together form a perfect definition of inspiration, telling us exactly how this Holy Book originated. It did not originate in man's will; in fact, man had absolutely nothing to do with its origin; God did it all. God called certain men to do the writing; in a miraculous way, at various times in their lives, the Holy Ghost "breathed, into" their hearts and minds exactly what they were to write; and then they wrote it.

Those Bible passages do not say that God dictated His Word, as one might dictate a letter for his secretary to type. Had that been done, then the entire Bible would undoubtedly have exhibited the same style of writing, and the writers would simply have mechanically put down everything that was dictated. Rather, God used the individual style of all the writers in making them His own penmen. Consequently, one can expect such tremendous differences in style as there actually are between Isa. 40-66 and the Law of Moses or the book of Jer. Contrast also the vast differences between the short, almost staccato-like style of Mark with the more leisurely, highly profound style of St. John's Gospel.

In his generally excellent, *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), pp. 50-52, René Pache pointed out that "a decisive meeting with God normally marks the beginning of a prophet's career. This meeting proves that it is the Lord who takes the initiative, choosing and preparing His instrument before He communicated His message to Him." With Moses it was the time that God appeared to him in the burning bush to say, "Go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say" (Exod. 4:12). The Lord came to young Samuel three times in one night and then told him what would happen to Eli and his household, and Samuel "did let none of His words fall to the ground" (I Sam. 3:19). God showed Isaiah a vision of His glory and then said, "Go, and tell this people..." (Isa. 6:9). At Jeremiah's call the Lord said, "Behold, I have put My words into thy mouth" (Jer. 1:9). Time after time, in both Old and New Testament days, God thus appeared to His penmen at some decisive period in their lives with a similar promise that He would give them His Word.

This breathing into these writers' hearts and minds the very word of our heavenly Father is inspiration. Sometimes we call it *verbal* (word for word) or *plenary* (complete) *inspiration*, meaning that every individual word, not just the thought, is inspired. Time after time the Bible proclaims this truth. For example, "The Lord said unto Moses, write thou these *words*" (Exod. 34:27). In the New Testament Jesus said, "My *words* shall not pass away" (Luke 21:33). In almost the very last chapter of the Bible, the angel of the Lord said of this revelation: "These are the true *words* of God" (Rev. 19:9). One could even go a step farther to say that not only is every single word of Scripture inspired, but the very form of the word, whether it be singular or plural is inspired also. St. Paul gives us an example of this in Gal. 3:16, where he makes the distinction between seeds (the wrong word) and Seed (the right word).

The doctrine of verbal or plenary inspiration is so vitally important for our faith and it is presently so violently attacked on every side, that we shall delve into it somewhat more at length in the next two parts of this section C. We shall show first how the Old Testament and then how the New Testament are unquestionably inspired verbally.

2. *The Old Testament is divinely, verbally inspired.* Our Catechism asks (15): "Why are we so certain that the Bible is the Word of God?" Part of the answer given is this: "The Bible says so itself." Someone might object to that answer by responding that any book could claim to be the Word of God. That objection might have some validity, if our Bible began with a simple statement like this: "What follows in this book is the Word of God," and then would end the last chapter with "There you have the Word of God."

However, our Bible, is not like that at all. Amazingly, the Old Testament (according to René Pache, p. 81,82, *op. cit.*):

declares 3,808 times that it conveys the express words of God... The Pentateuch mentions this point 420 times... The psalmist in Ps. 119 calls the Scriptures ‘the word (or the words) of Jehovah’ twenty-four times. Using ten different expressions, he mentions this fact 175 times and constantly exalts the Scriptures in these terms: ‘Thy Word is very pure. Thy law is truth...’ We find such expressions (as the Word of the Lord came unto me, the Lord said unto me, etc.) in Isa. 120 times, Jer. 430 times, Ezek. 329 times, Amos 53 times, Hag. 27 times (in 38 verses) and Zech. 53 times.

In the following paragraphs we shall examine a few of these assertions by the writers of our sacred books.

Time after time Moses tells us that God said to him exactly what he (Moses) should write. See, for example, Exod. 3:4, 7, 12, 14-22; 4:2-9, 11, 12; and in many other chapters previously mentioned in section B, 2.

Shortly before he died, King David confessed regarding the Psalms that he wrote: “The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His Word was in my mouth” (II Sam. 23:2).

At the very beginning of his famous book, the Prophet Isaiah wrote: “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord has spoken” (Isa. 1:2). In 8:1 Isaiah wrote: “Moreover the Lord said unto me...” Then there follow, especially in chapters 13-22, the burden or the judgments that will surely come upon various countries, as revealed to the prophet by the Lord.

After the Lord told Jeremiah that He would put His Word into this prophet’s mouth, there follow many expressions like this: “The Word of the Lord came to me, saying...,” “The Word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying...,” “The Lord saith.” Note, for example, the first verse in these chapters: 2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, etc., plus many similar expressions within these chapters.

Ezekiel wrote, “The Word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel” (1:3), while God said to him, “Thou shalt speak my words unto them” (2:7). Time after time each chapter begins, like those in Jeremiah, with “He said unto me,” or “the Word of the Lord came unto me.”

Then what shall we say about Hos. 1:1, 2, 4, 6, 9; Hag. 1:1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14; Zech. 1:1, 3, 4, 7, 13, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, thoughts that are repeated again and again in every section of the Old Testament?

Not only did the Old Testament writers maintain that every syllable they wrote were indeed the inspired, infallible Word of our God, but Jesus verified their claim. Pache (*op. cit.*), p. 221, claims that one-tenth of Jesus’ recorded words are either quotations from the Old Testament or direct allusions to it. Never in any way did He indicate that the Old Testament was anything but inspired. He never criticized it in the least, nor did He even suggest that its tiniest particle needed correcting. He certainly would have done that, if it had needed criticism, since He regularly rebuked wrong whenever He met it. See, for example, His rebuke of the Pharisees (Matt. 23), of the merchants in the Temple (John 2), and of the Woman of Samaria (John 4). In fact, He recognized the authority and inspiration of the Old Testament in just about the strongest language that anyone could ever use: “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle (the tiniest part) shall in no wise pass from the Law (the Old Testament), till all be fulfilled” (Matt. 5:18). (Norman Geisler, in his generally excellent *Christ: the Key to the Bible* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1968, pp. 21-30], lists many of Christ’s quotations or allusions to the Old Testament, and the reader is referred to these pages.)

Very early in His ministry our Lord read from the Prophet Isaiah in the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and in His comments He spoke these memorable words: “This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears” (Luke 4:16-21). He immediately continued by quoting a Bible story from I Kings 17, accepting it also exactly as written. One time He quoted Abraham with approval, “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them” (Luke 16:31). About 90 times He referred His listeners to the inspired Old Testament with His penetrating, “Have ye not read?” (See, for example,

Matt. 12:3, 5; 19:4; 21:16, 42; 22:31; Mark 2:25; 12:10, 26; Luke 6:3; 10:26.) Often He quoted Old Testament Bible stories as being absolutely true (see, for example, Matt. 12:41; 24:37; Mark 2:25; Luke 11:50, 51; etc.) Indeed as Pache (*op. cit.*, p. 220) wrote, “Jesus, it would seem, deliberately authenticated the passages of Scripture most attacked today... He attested the account of Adam and Eve (Matt. 19:4, 5), the Flood (Matt. 24:37ff), Jonah (Matt. 12:40, 41), Daniel (Matt. 24:15).” Our Lord’s acceptance of the Old Testament as authoritative, verbally inspired, and inerrant is sufficient for us; we too can do nothing less than accept it wholeheartedly in its entirety.

The apostles and other writers of the New Testament always followed their Master in accepting the inspiration and the complete trustworthiness of the Old Testament Scriptures. For example, if you will page through the Gospel according to St. Matthew, you will learn that he continually used expressions like the following: “All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet” (in various books of the Old Testament). See, for example, the genealogy of Jesus, taken directly from the Old Testament (Matt. 1:1-17); also 1:22; 2:15, 17; 3:3; 4:14; etc.

St. Luke wrote (1:70) that Christ was coming, exactly as God “spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began.” The Book of Acts also has striking confirmation of the authenticity of the Old Testament. Chapter 1:16 tells us that King David wrote about the betrayal of Judas (Ps. 41:9). Stephen’s final words to the unbelieving Jews were really a summary of the entire Old Testament (Acts 7:2-53). In preaching to the Jews St. Paul constantly referred to various Old Testament events, showing especially that Jesus was their Messiah who fulfilled every promise spoken of Him (Acts 13:16-41; 17:1-4; 24:10-14; 26:22-27; etc.).

Pache (*op. cit.*, p. 226) tells us that the Epistle to the Romans has 37 direct quotations from the Old Testament, exactly the same number as the Epistle to the Hebrews. (We must, of course, remember that these quotations are not always the exact words; sometimes the Old Testament is loosely quoted, sometimes summarized, sometimes the substance is repeated, sometimes just a part of a quotation is emphasized, although the exact words are also frequently quoted.) Pache lists quotations from the Old Testament by Christ and by the New Testament writers in chapters 18 and 19 of his excellent book. He also wrote, p. 97:

At least 295 quotations or direct references to the Old Testament have been counted in the New, a total of one verse out of every 22. If we add to this the evident allusions (613, according to C. H. Toy), the proportion reaches to about 10 percent of the New Testament text. The discourses of Jesus and such books as Hebrews, Romans and Revelation are literally saturated with expressions, allusions and actual texts drawn from the Old Testament. The exact quotations number 278, coming from every book of the Jewish canon except 6 (Judges-Ruth, the Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Ezra-Nehemiah and the Chronicles); whereas the allusions go back to every book in the Old Testament without exception.

There is indeed no question that the writers of the New Testament accepted the Old Testament as the genuine, verbally inspired Word of God. We can do no less.

3. *The New Testament is divinely and verbally inspired.* At the beginning of this section C, we quoted II .Pet. 1:21 and II Tim. 3:16 to show that all Scripture is inspired. That surely includes the New Testament, since many of its books had been written and circulated by the time that St. Paul and St. Peter penned those passages. Yet, someone might object that both of the Apostles had primarily the Old Testament in mind when they referred to the Scriptures, and that is probably correct.

Yet, there is many another passage in Scripture which shows that the New Testament is also truly inspired. For example, during His public ministry, Jesus said, “As My Father hath taught Me, I

“speak these things” (John 8:28). At the close of His ministry He said to His Heavenly Father, “I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me.” In looking forward to the ministry of the apostles and to their writing of the New Testament Scriptures, Jesus promised: “The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26). Since it was the Holy Ghost who inspired the New Testament writers, they could not err. Jesus could say of the Gospels they wrote, in which His exact words and deeds were recorded, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away” (Matt. 24: 35). That is a prophecy that has been abundantly fulfilled. Up to this very day we have in the Gospels the exact words that Jesus spoke during His earthly ministry. What St. Luke wrote in the prologue to his Gospel (1:4) applies to every one of the four Evangelists: They all wrote “that thou mightest know the *certainty* of these things” in the life of our Lord.

The other writers of the New Testament were no less emphatic in telling us that what they wrote was indeed the infallible Word of our God. St. Paul, for example, wrote: “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord” (I Cor. 14:37). Gal. 1:11, 12 and I Thess. 2:13 are just as emphatic: “But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ... For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.” Many other similar passages could be cited from the Epistles of St. Paul. The Christian Church has always recognized that St. Paul’s Epistles were truly inspired by the Holy Ghost. They were, therefore, placed into the same category with all of the other infallible Scriptures, as St. Peter, testified (II Pet. 3:15, 16).

St. Peter also clearly stated in his second letter, 1:16: “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.”

St. John in his Revelation is no less emphatic that everything he wrote there is not the word of man, but “the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him (John), to show to His servant things that must shortly come to pass” (Rev. 1:1).

All of this and much, much more shows us conclusively that the New Testament, no less than the Old, is indeed the inspired, infallible Word of Truth. We can depend upon it in life and in death.

(We must, however, remember that certain parts of our King James and other versions are not a part of the original inspired text. For example, the division into chapters was first introduced by Cardinal Hugo, about 1250 A.D. while the verses were first numbered by Robert Stephanus, a scholarly printer, for the publication of a Greek text in 1551. Supposedly he did the versification while still in France, traveling on horseback from Paris to Lyons. Both chapter and verse divisions leave something to be desired at times. The Geneva Bible was the first English version to use italicized words, a custom followed in the King James Version to designate words that are not in the original Greek or Hebrew. They are added to help the reader to a better understanding of the passage. Marginal notes were added to the King James Version to help the reader to understand difficult or doubtful words and phrases. Various people later added other comments and references to the Bible versions. Many King James Bibles have dates in them, carefully prepared by Bishop Ussher and inserted into the King James text in 1701 by Bishop Lloyd. Chapter summaries also appear in many Bible versions, and they can be helpful in understanding the chapter, but they too are not a part of the inspired text.)

4. *Consequently every word in our Bible is eternally true.* Every statement in it that tells about Jesus and His salvation, every word that refers to some scientific or geographical matter, every single bit

of sacred arid secular history, every one of the genealogies in Gen. 5 and 11 and in various other places including Matt. 1 and Luke 3, every list of names like that in I Chron. 1-11, every prediction regarding the future, all these and everything else written in Scripture is unchangeably, infallibly true. Every single “scientific fact,” every statement that in any way contradicts the Scripture is everlastingly false. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov. 1:7).

Can it really be any different? If our all-holy, all-knowing God inspired men to give us the Scriptures, can they contain any error? Can God lie? The very thought is blasphemy. Our blessed Bible cannot possibly contain any errors, since God Himself gave it to us and preserved its text for us, as we shall hear in I, E. That’s why our Lord said of it, “The Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35) and “Thy Word is truth” (John 17:17). It will never mislead us and even though the entire world should deny one or more of its parts, the world in this case is wrong, while God’s Word will remain true forevermore.

The Formula of Concord, the very last of our confessional writings, begins this way:

We believe, teach, and confess that the sole rule and standard according to which all dogmas together with (all) teachers should be estimated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and of the New Testament alone, as it is written Ps. 119, 105: Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. And St. Paul: Though an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you, let him be accursed, Gal. 1, 8.

That is exactly in keeping with what we have been saying all along.

5. *The Holy Ghost convinces us of the truthfulness and the power of God’s Word* (15C). All that we really need to do is to read, study, hear, and meditate upon the Scriptures, and surely the Holy Ghost will convince us that they are indeed the very words of the living God. We know that the Holy Ghost not only gave us the Word, but He works through it upon the heart of everyone who hears, always using it to call us to faith, to enlighten, to sanctify, and to keep us in the true faith. St. Paul wrote about that in I Thess. 1:5: “Our Gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit, and with deep conviction” (NIV). He also wrote that his preaching was not in the words of man’s wisdom, but “with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power” (I Cor. 2:4, NIV). The Prophet Isaiah spoke along similar lines long before Jesus was born: “As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall My (God’s) Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isa. 55:10, 11).

Because of the Spirit’s working through and in the Word, it is both an invincible defensive and a mighty offensive weapon, as St. Paul writes in Eph. 6:16, 17. There he speaks of the “shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked” and “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” In Jer. 23:29 we read: “Is not My Word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” Heb. 4:12 says of the Word that it is “quick, powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” St. Paul wrote in the well known passage, Rom. 1:16: “I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.” And the Psalmist expressed this important truth, “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path” (Ps. 119:105).

Yes, friend; you just read the Scripture, and through it the Holy Ghost will surely show you the way to heaven through faith in Christ. Then, like Dr. Luther, you will joyfully proclaim to all the

world that it seems as if heaven is open and you can see the Son of God in glory, where you will be with Him one day. Just listen intently to the Word, as did the Emmaus disciples of old, and see if you won't also exclaim: "Did not our hearts burn within us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" Just read the many thundering denunciations of your sin, and see if you will not be pricked in your heart and cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Then consider the overwhelming comfort that will be yours when you hear from the lips of the apostles and the prophets the precious Gospel message of forgiveness through Christ, our Savior.

Oh, indeed, the Word convinces us of sin, comforts, heals, rescues, guides, saves. Just try it to experience the overwhelming power of the Holy Ghost, who surely will convince you that the Bible is indeed the precious, life-giving, life-sustaining, eternally-true Word of our ever-living God.

6. *Every prophecy of Scripture that was scheduled to be fulfilled before our day has come to pass exactly as predicted.* If we examine the course of church history, we shall plainly see the fulfillment of dozens of Old Testament and New Testament prophecies. For example, at the same time that God promised Abraham the land of Palestine (in a day when he owned none of it), He also prophesied that Abraham's descendants would have a difficult time in Egypt for 400 years (Gen. 15:13, 14). We need only read the books of Exod. and Josh. to see the fulfillment of these prophecies. In his farewell address, Moses clearly told the Israelite nation that if they forsook their Lord and His Word, "Thou shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth" (Deut. 28:25). Deut. 28:64-69 is still more explicit on this point. Just a short time before the Southern Kingdom was carried away into exile, the Prophet Jeremiah also warned, "This whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment; and the nation shall serve the king of Babylon 70 years" (Jer. 25:11). That is exactly what happened.

The Prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel foretold with dramatic clarity the destruction of many ancient empires, while Jer. 31:35, 36 foretold that the Jewish race would survive, again exactly what happened. The Prophet Daniel (chapter 2) foretold with absolute accuracy that four great empires would rule much of the world after his time.

When we think of prophecies in the Bible, many of us will undoubtedly immediately recall the many Old Testament words concerning Christ, our Savior. Pache (*op. cit.*, p. 283) asserts: "It is affirmed that 333 of the prophecies concerning Christ have been fulfilled." On pp. 216 and 217 the same author has a long list from just one Gospel (Matt.) of events in the life of Christ that are an exact fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. W. A. Criswell in his excellent *Why I Preach That the Bible is Literally True* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1969) states:

The messianic prophecies and their fulfillments in Christ are simply amazing in their number and in their detail. Let us consider just a few of them:

- (1) Gen. 3:15 says He is to be born the seed of the woman.
- (2) Isa. 7:14; 49:1; Mic. 5:3 tell us He is to be born of a virgin.
- (3) Gen. 9:18, 27 says He is to be a descendant of Shem.
- (4) Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18 tell us He is to be a descendant of Abraham.
- (5) Gen. 17:19; 21:12; 26:4 tell us He is to be a descendant of Isaac.
- (6) Gen. 28:4-14; Num. 24:17; Isa. 49:3 tell us He is to be a descendant of Israel, that is, of Jacob.
- (7) Gen. 49:9, 10; I Chron. 5:2; Mic. 5:2 tell us He is to be born of the tribe of Judah.
- (8) II Sam. 7:12-15; 23:1-5, and other passages too numerous to mention, tell us that he is to be born of the house of David.
- (9) Mic. 5:2 tells us that he is to be born in Bethlehem, the City of David.
- (10) The passages in the Bible that describe the characteristics of His life and work are too numerous even to mention.
- (11) Isa. 62:11 and Zech. 9:9 describe His triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

- (12) Ps. 41:9 and Zech. 11:12, 13 describe His betrayal by a friend and disciple even at the cost of thirty pieces of silver.
- (13) Gen. 3:15; Ps. 22:1-21; Isa. 50:6; 53:1-12; and Zech. 13:7 describe His sufferings on the cross and His death for our sins.
- (14) Ps. 22:16 and Zech. 13:6, 7 describe the piercing of His hands and His feet.
- (15) Ps. 22:16 and Isa. 53:8-12 describe His death on the cross.
- (16) Ps. 22:18 describes the lots cast for His vesture.
- (17) Ps. 16:10 and Isa. 53:9 describe His being embalmed and His being entombed.
- (18) Ps. 16:10; 17:15; and Jonah 1:17 portray His resurrection on the third day.
- (19) Ps. 8:5, 6 and 110:1 describe His ascension into heaven.

To these prophecies should be added at least the following: The prophecy of Christ's forerunner, John the Baptist (Isa. 40:3); the betrayal of Christ by Judas (Ps. 41:9); the smiting of the shepherd and the dispersal of the sheep of the flock (Zech. 13:7); the fourth word from the cross (Ps. 22:1); Christ's burial in the tomb of a rich man (Isa. 53:9).

Even as all of those Bible prophecies have already been fulfilled, even so every prophecy of events still to happen will surely come to pass also. You can depend on it! St. Paul writes about conditions in the world toward the end of time in I Tim. 3:1-7, and it does not require a master mind to realize how much of this is being fulfilled in our last days of world history. St. Peter wrote about the end of the world also and conditions at that time, stating "that the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Pet. 3:10). We had better believe that, too, even as we should carefully note our Lord's description of the last days in Matt. 24.

Yes, indeed, the fulfillment of almost countless prophecies is an added, powerful reason for believing in the absolute truthfulness of the Scripture.

7. *The remarkable unity of Scripture is another "proof" for us of its inspiration by God.* Can you imagine a dozen scientists, beginning about 100 years ago and each writing about ten years apart on the theme, "How the earth was formed"? Each one of them would undoubtedly have an answer completely or at least greatly different from every other one, as we know from the scientific history of the past century. Try also to imagine a dozen doctors doing the same writing on how to treat a certain disease. Again the answers over the last century or more will vary greatly; in some cases they will be completely contradictory.

Scripture, on the other hand, was not written over a period of a century, but during the course of 1,600 years! The writers varied tremendously in age, education, social standing, occupation, preparation for their work, culture in which they lived, etc. As Pache (*op. cit.*, p. 111) informs us, of the approximately 45 human authors

there were shepherds, kings, statesmen, scribes, priests, scholars, poets, historians, lawyers, a tax collector, a medical doctor, and unlettered fishermen. Still, we observe with astonishment the prodigious unity of inspiration throughout the Bible, as seen in its message and doctrine and even in its structure, yet along with all that a refreshing diversity.

Not a single author contradicts another in major or minor details. Everywhere and at all times all agree completely that there is one God, yet three Persons, one perfect creation, one Fall of man, one state of mankind (sin), one need for redemption, one promise of a Redeemer, one incarnation of the Holy Ghost by the Virgin Mary, one perfect life of Jesus, one sacrificial death to save the world,

one justification of the sinner, one terrible Tempter, one Church with one set of members, one type of God-pleasing life, one Great Commission, one end of the world with one description of conditions before the end of the world, plus perfect agreement on many other matters. Each writer may add details, but the sum of their remarks forms one astonishing unity. That perfect unity certainly must be one of the most remarkable miracles that this evil, old world has ever witnessed.

Pache (*op. cit.*, p. 113, 114) mentions other evidences of unity. For example, he quotes Augustine's "The New (Testament) is in the Old concealed; the Old is by the New revealed." He shows the link between the last book of the Old Testament and the first book of the New (Mal. closes with a prediction of the Messiah and His forerunner). Especially noteworthy is his fine sketch, showing the progression of ideas throughout the Bible:

in the Old Testament:	salvation prepared
in the Gospels:	salvation effected
in the Acts:	salvation propagated
in the Epistles:	salvation explained
in Revelation:	salvation fulfilled

Another fine, short outline of the Bible is furnished by the Introduction in the *Scofield Reference Bible* which says that:

The Old Testament speaks of *preparation*.
 The Gospels speak of *manifestation*.
 The Acts speaks of *propagation*.
 The Epistles speak of *explanation*.
 Revelation speaks of *consummation*.

Nothing remotely like this unity could possibly have happened, if Scripture were not inspired by the Holy Ghost.

8. A final point must be mentioned: *Archaeology has "verified," never contradicted, thousands of Bible statements.* We do not need this type of "proof" to move us to accept the Scriptures as God's inspired truth, for only the Holy Ghost can make us believe that the Bible is truly God's Word. Yet, after we have been brought to faith in the Lord Jesus and have accepted the infallible Scriptures which He gave us, we can enjoy reading various good books on archaeology to learn the many Bible facts that archaeology has found to be absolutely true. Just a few examples will be mentioned here; many more can be learned from various titles on the recommended book reading list.

At one time the critics claimed that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch, since the art of writing had not been invented at that time. Many archaeological discoveries have shown that this contention was absolutely ridiculous—writing was practiced for many centuries before Moses' time.

At another time the critics derided the idea that there ever existed a people called the Hittites, even though the Bible speaks about them and their powerful, rich empire some four dozen times, especially in the books from Gen. through II Sam. Yet, as W. A. Criswell (*op. cit.*, p. 41) writes:

The Hittites are now shown to be everything that the Bible had predicted and more. The uncovering of the Hittite empire and the Hittite civilization is one of the miracles of modern archaeology. As a result of the labors of the number of scholars on Hittite inscriptions, a people and an empire scarcely less important than the Egyptian or the Assyrian has emerged... Once again Bible history has proved to be accurate, while

the scoffing of the critics has proved to be ridiculous and absurd.

Dan. chapter 5 tells us the story of Belshazzar's infamous feast and his destruction. Once again the critics "proved" that no such person as Belshazzar ever lived; indeed, there was no room for him in the list of Babylonian kings. Pastor Criswell (*op. cit.*, p. 41) tells the rest of the story:

But once again the archaeologists have come to the rescue. Not only was there a Belshazzar whose name is written on the tablets of Babylonia but also he now stands before us as one of the greatest figures of that period. We know the names of his secretaries. We are introduced to his sisters. We know him to be the son and coregent of Nabonidus, his father, and we know that the two reigned together in Babylon when the city fell to King Cyrus. Thus, once again, what was a subject for ridicule on the part of the critics has been discovered to be one of the great, historical facts of the Bible. It is a marvelous thing that this Belshazzar whose very name fell out of human history should have been introduced to the world by the Holy Scriptures which have been once again proved to be correct.

Dozens of facts in the New Testament have also been "verified" by archaeology. For example, the critics once claimed that St. John's Gospel was something like historical fiction, since they knew nothing about Aenon (3:23), the Pool of Bethesda (5:2), Solomon's Porch (10:23), Gabbatha (19:13); etc. What a ridiculous claim: "We do not know anything about these places from secular history and, therefore, they never existed!" Yet, archaeology has within recent years identified almost all of these places.

Indeed no statement of the Bible has ever been proved false by archaeology. The child of God might profitably read about some of these amazing discoveries that have shed new light upon the absolute truthfulness of Scripture.

In this section C we have presented a number of reasons why we are completely convinced that the Bible is indeed God's eternally true Word. We have not done that with the idea of "proving" this doctrinal truth to the unbeliever. We cannot "prove" inspiration the way in which we would prove a theorem in geometry or experimentally verify a scientific fact. Even if someone were to arise from the dead to tell the unbeliever that the Bible is authoritative in every detail, he would not necessarily believe it (Luke 16:27-31), since "natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God" (I Cor. 2:14). It is the Holy Spirit alone who has convinced us of the inspiration and authority of Scripture, and we cannot help but praise Him for it.

Since we know that all of Scripture is eternally true, therefore, the next point follows naturally.

9. *God binds us to His written Word.* That is exactly what Jesus said in John 8:31, 32: "If ye continue in My Word (the entire Bible), then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." He called that Word "the one thing needful" (Luke 10:42), and He asked us to "search the Scriptures" (John 5:39). In his farewell addresses Moses likewise exhorted his people to "hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God" (Deut. 28:2). He also warned, "Ye shall not add unto the Word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it" (Deut. 4:2). The same thought is again stressed in almost the very last verses of the Bible, Rev. 22:18, 19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Therefore you must never expect a new revelation from God, as many false prophets have proclaimed. For example, an official Mormon spokesman said: “We believe all that God revealed, all that He is revealing, and all that He will reveal,” utter nonsense, since God’s revealed written Word was finished 1,900 years ago with the last verse of Rev. The Roman Catholics also at times have made much of the “teaching function of the Church,” as if the Church could add anything to the inspired written Word.

The Church is already “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (the Old and the New Testament), Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner Stone” (Eph. 2:20). A “new revelation” would, therefore, either agree with what has been written in Scripture by the prophets and by the apostles, and then it is unnecessary, or it will disagree with what has been written, and then we must avoid it (Rom. 16:17). We are bound to an infallible, complete Bible forevermore.

True, our Church bases some of its practices on tradition. For example, confirmation, the method of baptism, the form of worship, the robes of the pastor, the form of the church building, the custom of sponsors, the church year, and many other matters called adiaphora, or matters neither commanded nor forbidden in Scripture, are all based upon tradition. Of them the Augsburg Confession, Article XV, states:

Of usages in the church they (the Lutherans) teach that those ought to be observed which may be observed without sin, and which are profitable unto tranquility and good order in the Church, as particular holy-day festivals, and the like... Nevertheless...(they are not) necessary to salvation...human traditions instituted to merit grace...are opposed to the Gospel.

Vows and traditions concerning meats and days are useless, says the Augsburg Confession, and Rome has in recent years tended to agree with that last statement, contrary to their previous teachings.

This point is one of the major areas of disagreement between the Lutherans and the Roman Catholics. In years gone by the Roman Catholics placed much emphasis upon tradition, drawing many of its major teachings from these sources. For example, the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption of Mary, Papal Infallibility, Transubstantiation, Confirmation, etc., are all based upon tradition. None of these doctrines is so much as hinted at in Scripture. The Roman Catholics accept them, because in instances like these they equate the teaching function of the Church with the revealed Word of God. That is making the same mistake as the Pharisees of old with their hundreds of minor laws.

Yes, tradition is human; it is by no means in the same class with Scripture; it is subject to Scripture; it dare never be used to establish or to maintain a doctrine; Scripture alone determines doctrine. We know how often Christ clashed with the Pharisees, who erred greatly in following their traditions (read, for example, Matt. 12 and 23). It is, therefore, good for us to examine our traditions from time to time in the light of the Scriptures to which alone we are bound for time and for eternity.

D. God inspired the writing of 66 books (39 Old Testament, 27 New Testament), and they form the canon of Scripture. (7, 8)

1. *The 39 Old Testament books.*

We know from Deut. 31:9, 25, 26 that Moses wrote the Pentateuch and delivered it to the priests for safekeeping beside or in Israel’s most sacred place, the Ark of the Covenant. Joshua did something similar (Josh. 24:26); so did Samuel (I Sam. 10:25). Thus *the Old Testament was gradually completed*, as one by one the inspired books were written and added to the sacred collection, ending with Mal. about 400 B.C. These 39 books form what is called the Old Testament

canon (“canon” means a rule with which to measure, in this case the inspired books of God, the only rule for faith and conduct).

How did the Jews know that these 39 books and no others belonged to the canon, especially since they also had a number of other important books at that time? Various scholars have listed those other books, as mentioned in the following Bible passages: Num. 21:14; Josh. 10:13; I Kings 11:41; I Kings 14:19; I Chron. 29:29; II Chron 9:29; II Chron. 20:34. None of those books, important as they were, ever appeared in the canon, and not a single copy remains today. One naturally wonders why the Jews never considered them canonical.

The answer is simple: The canonical books are those that are inspired, as II Tim. 3:16 says: “All Scripture (and only Scripture, no other book) is given by inspiration of God.” These inspired books proved their power in the hearts of God’s children from the time that they appeared. The Holy Spirit convinced the children of God, even as He convinces us today, that these books are in truth the very Word of our eternal God.

It is a matter of record that the Jews always accepted the 39 books of the Old Testament as canonical almost without question. For example, Josephus, a famous Jewish historian of the first century, tells us in *The Works of Flavius Josephus* (New York: Leavitt and Allen; 1852, p. 787):

For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another (as the Greeks have), but only 22 books, which contain the records of all the past time; which are justly believed to be divine; and of them, five belong to Moses, which contain his laws and the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death... The prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their time in 13 books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life... During so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them, to take anything from them, or to make any change of them; but it becomes natural to all Jews, immediately and from their very birth, to esteem those books to contain divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if it occasion be, willingly to die for them. (“Against Apion,” book one, paragraph eight)

(Note: Sometimes the Jews counted 24 books with I-II Sam., I-II Kings, I-II Chron., Ezra-Nehemiah, and the 12 Minor Prophets in each case counted as one book. To arrive at the figure of 22, as Josephus wrote, the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, Ruth was apparently combined with Judg. and Lam. with Jer. No matter, the total number and titles are exactly the same as we have them in our Bible’s 39 books.)

We have previously indicated (in C, 2 and 3) that Christ and the apostles accepted the same 39 books of the Jewish Old Testament canon and repeatedly quoted from almost every one of them.

The early New Testament Church naturally followed the example of our Lord and His apostles by also accepting the 39 books of the Old Testament canon. True, there were questions at times about Esther (the only book that never mentions God), the Song of Solomon, and a few of the Apocrypha. Yet, the earliest known New Testament catalog of Old Testament books by Melito, about 150 A.D. lists the entire Old Testament canon except Lam. (possibly included with Jer.) and Ezra-Neh. (possibly a copyist’s error).

Origen, about 250 A.D. lists all of the books of the Old Testament canon, except the 12 Minor Prophets (possibly also a copyist’s error). He added the Epistle to Jeremiah, but we do not know the reason for doing that. Athanasius, about 370 A.D. , lists all of the Old Testament canon except Esther, and he said that the Apocrypha were not canonical. In his world-famous translation, the Vulgate, about 400 A.D., Jerome has the entire Old Testament canon. He translated two of the Apocrypha, no more, for he stated that they could not be used to confirm doctrine. Other early

Christian lists have essentially the Old Testament canon, except that some omitted Esther or added the Epistle to Jeremiah and some of the Apocrypha.

Throughout all the ages since about 400 B.C., children of God, with only a few minor exceptions, everywhere accepted the Old Testament canon exactly as we have it today, no more and no less. It remained for the Council of Trent (1546-63) to add the 14 Apocrypha in Roman Catholic Bibles, despite much previous and subsequent opposition. No Protestant denomination ever accepted the Apocrypha as God's inspired Word (see section IV).

Above all we must not think that any one person or a group of people, no pope or a church council ever had the power to declare a book canonical. That would be placing human beings above God. The Church did not create the canon; it did not choose the books that belong to the canon; God did that through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

2. *The 27 New Testament books.*

These books were generally accepted by the Church everywhere, as they appeared. With just minor exceptions they, too, soon proved their inspiration and canonicity in the hearts of the Christians. For the most part Bible critics never challenged their authenticity until the 19th and 20th centuries. (We have treated the inspiration of these New Testament books at length in C, 3).

3. *A summary of the canonical Scriptures.*

For the benefit of those who may be largely unacquainted with the plan of the Bible, we offer a very brief summary of the various books of the Bible in Appendix A. For a fuller explanation the reader is referred to books like *Halley's Bible Handbook*; Schaller, *The Book of Books*; the various standard Bible encyclopedias; etc.

E. God marvelously preserved His Word against loss, against destruction by unbelieving enemies, and against attacks by Bible-doubting critics.

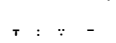
1. *God wondrously preserved the Old Testament text against loss.* The original manuscripts, called autographs, have long since disappeared. All that we have today is copies or copies of copies, and so on. Before the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in that remarkable discovery, beginning in 1947, the oldest Hebrew manuscript dated from about the 10th century A.D.; in other words it was many generations of copying removed from the autographs. Now, thanks to the Isaiah manuscript of the Dead Sea Scrolls; we have an Old Testament text that goes back to about 100 B.C., possibly only 600 years after the time of Isaiah himself.

One would immediately surmise that after so many years of copying by so many different people that an enormous number of changes would unavoidably have crept into the text. (It's practically impossible to copy exactly a much smaller book than the Old Testament.) Fortunately, that is not the case at all. The Jews had exceptionally strict laws in their Talmud regarding copying the Scriptures. Their trained scribes wrote with especially prepared ink on long-lasting parchment (the skin of animals, especially of sheep or goats, mentioned by St. Paul in II Tim. 4:13) and on the finer grade, also long-lasting vellum (the skin of a calf, lamb, or kid), or on the shorter-lasting papyrus (something like our paper, mentioned in II John 12). These scribes were almost religiously fanatical in the care with which they copied the sacred texts. They wrote only a certain number of lines to each column and a certain number of letters to each line. After they finished the column, they counted its lines and letters to make sure that nothing had been omitted or added. When a copy was worn through constant usage, it was buried (this is the reason why so few Old Testament manuscripts survive from the time of Christ or before).

With such meticulous care it is not particularly surprising that the Isaiah text from the Dead Sea Scrolls of 100 B.C. is almost exactly the same as the text from the earliest previously known

Hebrew manuscript about 1,000 years later. (The scribes continued their excellent work until the 15th century A.D. At first they ridiculed the idea of printing a Bible, but printing progress soon eliminated the work of the scribes.)

When the authors wrote the Hebrew Old Testament, they did not include any vowels, just the consonants. In English their work would appear like this: FR GD S LVD TH WRLD THT H GV HS NL BGTTN SN THT WHSVR BLTH N HM SHLD NT PRSH BT HV VLSTG LF. That is a well-known Bible passage, which most Christians will probably have little difficulty in reading. However, if the message were completely unfamiliar, one could readily understand that the reading would be difficult, and that one could easily misread some of the words. The sense would then be changed. For example, one might not always know if the word designated by the letter “t” were to, too, or it; if the letter “n” represented in, on, or no; or if “gdI” were goodly or godly. The problem becomes still more difficult when a language is no longer spoken, as was the case with Hebrew during the last few centuries B.C. During that time the Jewish people gradually began to speak Aramaic, the language of Christ and the apostles.

Yet, the Lord overcame this threat to misreading or misunderstanding the Old Testament Word also. God used the diligent work of the Masoretes during the 5th and 6th centuries A.D. to continue transmitting His Word in all its purity. These outstanding scholars, among other accomplishments, invented a system of vowel points that could easily be added to the Hebrew text without changing it in the least. The vowel points look like this , and they were added either above, below, or within the word. In the original text the Hebrew word for LORD looked like this: יהוה; with the vowel added it would be like this: יהוה. Any Hebrew scholar could then read the word without difficulty. These Masoretes also did their work with religious devotion, diligently trying to avoid even the slightest change in the original pronunciation or sense of the word.

The results of all this meticulous care by the scribes who copied the Old Testament are that not even the critics can find any major discrepancies in the various manuscripts. Thus marvelously did our God preserve the exact message of the Old Testament over the course of many centuries. (We must remember that about 3,000 years passed between the time of Moses’ writing and the invention of printing. May we not forget to thank God for giving us those diligent scribes!)

2. *God wondrously preserved the text of the New Testament against loss.* The story of how our God did this is also a fascinating one, and the reader is referred to the appropriate authorities for further information. Here we shall present just a few of the highlights.

Papias and Polycarp, who knew St. John, tell us that he wrote of actual events. St. Peter mentioned that he and the other apostles were eyewitnesses of the things they wrote about (II Pet. 1:16). Fragments of the New Testament date back to the first century, not long after it was written, although the autographs have also long since disappeared. The oldest Greek manuscripts of the New Testament date from about 250-300 A.D., much older than any other ancient document. For example, the oldest manuscript of the famous Plato’s writings dates from about 1300 A.D., some 1,650 years after his death, yet no one questions its authenticity. Pache (*op. cit.*, p. 192) mentions a number of other ancient writers like Caesar, Tacitus, and Herodotus. The most ancient copies of their writings date from about 800-1400 years after their deaths. Yet scholars do not question their authenticity either.

Scrolls were still used as writing material in early New Testament times, even as they had been used in the Old Testament. By the 3rd century A.D., however, the codex form began to appear. (A codex is a set of leaves stacked together and sewn down the middle, like our books.) The story of the finding of some of these ancient codices, for example, that of *Codex Sinaiticus*, is a fascinating one, and one ought to read about it in the appropriate references.

At first these codices were written in the so-called uncial style (those letters were large and rounded, something like our capital letters, and this style of writing was used especially from about

the 4th to the 10th centuries A.D.). Photographs of pages from the *Codex Sinaiticus*, dating from the early 300's and written in uncial letters, and other manuscripts can be found in Bruce Metzger's *The Text of the New Testament* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968). In uncial style codices, there is no spacing between the letters and no punctuation between sentences. Some 200 manuscripts with this type of letters have been preserved.

Later a cursive style of writing was introduced. Some 2,400 of these manuscripts have survived plus numerous early translations and many editions of the Vulgate, of which more will be said later.

Christianity Today, 6/22/73, states that there are 5,338 known Greek manuscripts of the New Testament plus thousands of copies of early translations plus many Bible quotations from the early church fathers. "This vast quantity of biblical material far surpasses that of all other documents of early antiquity combined." Thus our God marvelously preserved the New Testament text also from all the ravages of time and usage.

3. Though there are variant readings in the manuscripts, we can be sure that God has carefully preserved the original text of the Bible. Every ancient copy of the Bible was, of course, written by hand until the middle 1400's A.D. (The word "manuscript" comes from two Latin words meaning "written by hand"). In copying such a large book as the Bible, slight variations always occurred. In fact, no two ancient copies are completely alike in every detail, exactly what one would expect of even the most diligent copyists. Scholars tell us that there may be as many as 250,000 or more variant readings in all of the known manuscripts. (In the 200 or so Hebrew Old Testament manuscripts, there are only tiny variations, as was already mentioned. Therefore, what follows in part 3, applies particularly to the New Testament text.) Lest anyone imagine that this many variations have seriously affected the reliability of the original text, we shall examine the matter more closely to see that these variations should neither trouble nor surprise us in the least.

Since there are variations in the ancient Greek manuscripts, a highly-technical art, called textual criticism, came into being. It involves a number of Bible scholars who have performed a highly valuable service for us in determining the original text from the available manuscripts. They tell us, for example, that almost all of the variant readings are inconsequential, that only 400 of them materially alter the sense, and of them only 50 have any real importance. "Even in the case of these 50, not one touches on any article of faith or any moral commandment not forcibly supported by other entirely clear passages, or by the teaching of the Bible as a whole" (Pache, *op. cit.*, p. 193). Not a single doctrine or any other Bible fact is ever changed by the variants.

What are some of these variants? Many of them involve unimportant spelling changes like our Saviour-Savior. For example, my Greek Testament lists Dabid for David in Matt. 1; Thamar with the accent on the second syllable, instead of on the first in verse 3; Boodz for Boos in verse 5; Solomonta for Solomon in verse 6. If any of these changes occur in 3,000 manuscripts, for example, they would be counted as 3,000 variant readings.

In the number of other instances words are transposed, like "the Lord Jesus Christ" for "Jesus Christ, the Lord," or "King Herod" for "Herod, the King." Sometimes a conjunction for the definite article is added to the text, making it "the Lord Jesus," instead of "Lord Jesus."

In a very few instances some manuscripts omit certain portions that are included in our King James Version. For example, many ancient copies omit John 7:53-8:11, the story of the woman taken in adultery; I John 5:17, the reference to the Trinity; and Mark 16:9-20, the last part of this Gospel. In these few instances newer translations generally have a note to this effect; "Many early manuscripts omit this section." This does not mean that these particular events never happened or that they are unscriptural; it simply means that this particular section or verse was probably not included in the original copy.

After treating the matter of variant readings quite extensively, Pache (*op. cit.*, pp. 186-198)

quoted the following paragraph from Louis Gaussen, *The Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*:

When one thinks that the Bible has been copied during thirty centuries, as no book of man has ever been, or ever will be; that it was subjected to all the catastrophes and all the captivities of Israel; that it was transported seventy years to Babylon; that it has seen itself so often persecuted, or forgotten, or interdicted, or burnt, from the days of the Philistines to those of the Seleucidae; when one thinks that, since the time of Jesus Christ, it has had to traverse the first three centuries of the imperial persecutions, when persons found in possession of the holy books were thrown to the wild beasts; next the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries, when false decretals were everywhere multiplied; the tenth century, when so few could read, even among the princes; the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, when the use of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue was punished with death, and when the books of the ancient fathers were mutilated, when so many ancient traditions were garbled and falsified, even to the very acts of the emperors and to those of the councils—then we can perceive how necessary it was that the providence of God should have always put forth its mighty power, in order that the Jews. . .and the Christian Church (especially during the Middle Ages). . .should transmit to us, in all their purity, those Scriptures.

When all of this has been said, we cannot help but marvel at the way in which our Lord has preserved for us the exact text of His inerrant Word. May we always be grateful for it!

4. Equally important is the manner in which *God protected His sacred Word against all attacks by its enemies*. It need not surprise us that the Bible has had its enemies in every age. You can be sure that the Devil always does everything in his power to prevent people from hearing or reading the Word, since he knows very well that it saves souls. If people do hear or read the Word, he will make every attempt to remove it from their hearts, before it can bless and save, as Jesus said in His parable of the Sower and the Seed: “Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the Devil, and taketh away the Word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved” (Luke 8:12).

Furthermore, we know that “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (I Cor. 2:14). We also know that our Lord foretold the hatred of the world toward His disciples (John 15:18-25). This hatred will surely be directed toward the Word also, since it condemns the sins of the world. Indeed, the indifference to, the denial of, the hatred, and the general opposition of the world to God’s Word can surely be expected. We shall in the following paragraphs list a few examples of this opposition, showing especially how God preserved His Word amidst all of the persecutions and attacks.

About 175 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes, King of Syria, determined to root out the Jewish faith and its Old Testament Scriptures. He tried to force pagan idolatry upon the Jews; he defiled their Temple. Yet, the Jews were ready to die rather than to give up their sacred Scriptures and their worship of the true God.

In 303 A.D. the Roman Emperor Diocletian began a dreadful, ten-year persecution of the Christians. He has been called “the most savage among persecutors.” He set for himself no less a goal than the complete extirpation of Christianity and of the Christian name. The death penalty was decreed for anyone taking part in Christian worship; churches were demolished; and all Bibles were sought and burned. Yet, just a few years later (323 A.D.) Constantine became emperor of Rome, and he favored Christianity over against paganism.

About the time of the American Revolution, the noted French atheist (or deist), Voltaire, was savagely attacking Christianity. He claimed that the Christian Church would disappear in another 50

years. In one of the great ironies of history, some years after his death the very house in which Voltaire had once lived became a distribution center for Bibles. It all reminds us of Ps. 2:4: “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them (His enemies) in derision.” Indeed the Bible is today distributed in more copies than at almost any other time in the history of the world.

5. These attacks on God’s Word by unbelievers and atheists have certainly not ceased in our day, as contemporary newspaper accounts tell us. Yet, to some extent Satan has changed his tactics in our day. When he began to realize that he could not destroy the Scriptures with persecution, he began to try different methods. He tried and succeeded, probably beyond his wildest dreams, in persuading millions of Americans to set their own anti-God standards without ever asking what the Scriptures say about these matters. Without ever labeling it as such, Satan has quietly and often phenomenally successfully entered upon a “Forget-the-Bible” campaign.

Nor has the Devil forgotten church members by any means. Again in a phenomenally successful campaign, he has persuaded *millions within the visible church to deny various parts of God’s Word*. In fact, this is the great, modern battleground within almost every church body in the world in which the Bible-doubters have not yet won the victory. The great battle centers on this question: Shall we accept the Bible exactly as it is written or are we at liberty to decide which parts are true and which are only myths? Are there statements in the Bible that in themselves are untrue, yet express a religious truth?

This method of attacking the Scriptures has become particularly ferocious in the latter half of the 20th century. The authenticity of almost every book in the Bible has been challenged; every doctrine of the Scriptures has been attacked (even the doctrine that God is living); almost every chapter in the Bible has been challenged, attacked, or set aside. All of this has been done by the so-called “experts in Scripture,” who are really Bible doubters. They place themselves above the Word that God gave us, instead of under it, as God would have us do. In their blasphemous attempts to decide what is true in Scripture and what is untrue, what must be literally accepted or what considered as myth, they are forever echoing Satan’s question to Eve, the mother of us all: “Yea, hath God said?” (Gen. 3:1). Instead of this infamous attitude, they should be following our Lord’s clear and wonderful example. He said repeatedly: “It is written” (Matt. 4:4, 6, 7, 10; 21:13; 26:24; etc.). (Many examples of these attacks against Scripture by people within the Church and their refutation are cited by Professor Raymond F. Surburg in his *How Dependable is the Bible* [Philadelphia and New York: J.B. Lippincott, 1972], one of the best presently available books on the subject.) Some major, widespread examples of these denials of Scripture follow in the next paragraphs.

In almost every denomination, there are many people who claim that the Bible is true when it speaks of salvation in Christ, but that it does or may have various errors in geographical and historical matters, in its report of miracles, and in other matters. The “Bible contains much myth,” says a curriculum adopted by Roman Catholics and Protestants in 1968. In the same year Robert Marshall, President of the large LCA (Lutheran Church in America), claimed that the Old Testament has many myths and fables taken from pagan religion. A religion professor at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, said: “We who teach at Luther College cannot subscribe to Scriptural inerrancies, because our knowledge of Scripture prevents us from making such a claim.” Teachers at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (before 1973) said about the miracles recorded in the Old Testament: “Whether or not men worked these miracles is unimportant; the main point is what do these stories tell us?” One author stated, “He (Jonah) would be amused by fundamentalists who take him literally.” A Lutheran clergyman who has held important positions in several Lutheran synods said in effect: “No, Christ certainly did not change water into wine—people were simply so impressed with His person and with His words that they thought they were drinking wine.” Others have denied the miracle in Peter’s draught of fishes (Luke 5) by saying that Jesus could see the school of fish from his position

on the shore and then simply told the disciples to let down their nets. In fact, an entire school of critics has come into being called the demythologizers, that is, those who aim to remove all myths from the Bible. By that they mean to remove every trace of miracles in Scripture, but then how much is left?

In answer to such destructive critics, one might well ask, “Why did God inspire men to write myths, if indeed they are myths? Why did Christ say of the Old Testament that ‘Scripture cannot be broken’ (John 10:35) and ‘Thy Word is truth’ (John 17:17), if indeed some of it is untrue? Why did our Lord accept the story of Jonah as absolutely true, if indeed it is only a fairy tale (Matt. 12:39, 40; Luke 11:29)? If Christ did not actually change water into wine, then why does the Bible say of it, ‘This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory’ (John 2:11)?”

A second area in which there has been much destructive criticism of Bible truths is the first 11 chapters of Genesis. Gen. 1 and 2 especially are rejected almost everywhere, with millions of laymen and clergymen within the church either regarding them as a fictional account of the world’s origin, although the best that could be done with the knowledge then available, or rejecting these chapters completely. They maintain that these two chapters simply state that God gave everything a start and then evolution took over the world’s development. A professor at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, who has since left, said in 1971 that Gen. 1 and 2 form the “great symphony of creation” (whatever that is) and need not be taken literally. Some of the critics claim that the word “day” in Gen. 1 must mean a long period of time, that Adam may be the missing link, that neither the Fall of Man nor the world-wide Flood, nor the Confusion of Tongues at Babel ever happened. An enormous number of people believes that if there is a conflict between what science teaches and what the Bible teaches, then, of course, science must be believed and Scriptural truth rejected, something that applies particularly to Gen. 1. Critics everywhere believe that the entire Pentateuch was written by four different authors. They are designated as *E*, *J*, *P*, and *D*. *E* supposedly wrote those passages in the Pentateuch in which the name Elohim is used for God; *J* supposedly wrote those passages in which the name Jehovah is used for God; *P* supposedly wrote the section that applies particularly to the priesthood like Leviticus; and *D* supposedly wrote the Deuteronomic section.

Yet, Christ accepted creation, as we learn from Bible passages like Matt. 19:4 and Mark 10:6, where Jesus plainly stated that God created man and woman in the beginning, exactly as Gen. 1 and 2 tell us. St. Paul in his inspired writings (for example, Rom. 5:14; I Cor. 15:21, 22, 45, 47) repeatedly refers to our first parents, Adam and Eve, and to the death they brought into this world by their sin. (We shall provide much more evidence both from Scripture and from science in favor of Gen. 1 and 2 as opposed to the ridiculous theory of evolution in our treatment of the First Article.) We should also like to ask, since when can scientific “truths,” which have repeatedly been found to be false, ever be accepted instead of Bible truths, which have never been shown to be false?

Furthermore, if Gen. 3, the story of the Fall is not historical, if we are simply products of evolution without any responsibility to God, why did Christ have to appear at all to rescue us from sin? If the worldwide Flood never happened, shall we also discard chapter 3 of II Peter? Gen. 1-11 is the foundation for our Bible; if these chapters are not true, then we might just as well discard the rest of Scripture also.

If four different writers wrote the Pentateuch, why do Christ and the apostles repeatedly refer to it as the Law of Moses or imply that Moses wrote all of it (see the passages cited in I, B, 2). (Hebrew scholars have long shown that whenever the Hebrew word Elohim is used for God, it refers to the God of power, while the word Jehovah stresses that God is the gracious Lord of the promise of salvation in Christ.)

Another major area in which critics deny Bible truths is the Old Testament Messianic promises, like Gen. 12:3; Gen. 22:18; Isa. 7:14; and many others. Some of the newer translations of Scripture effectively rob these passages of their Messianic content thereby harming the great truth

that Christ is the theme of all the Bible. We shall quote the three previously mentioned Bible passages in both the King James and the RSV versions to show how the RSV robs these passages of their Messianic content.

King James

Gen. 12:3: "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed"
(meaning in Abraham's Seed, Christ).

Gen. 22:18: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

Isa. 7:14: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

RSV

Gen. 12:3: "And by you all the families of the earth will bless themselves." (In a footnote the RSV has the correct translation)

Gen. 22:18: "By your descendants shall all of the nations of the earth bless themselves."

Isa. 7:14: "Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (the word "virgin" is indicated in a footnote).

There are many other attacks on the credibility of the Bible: Some people claim that there were two or more writers of the book of Isa., the one wrote ch. 1-39, while the other wrote 40-66, since these later chapters differ greatly in style from the first 39. Yet, John 12:37-41 quotes from Isa. 53:1 and from 6:9, stating that they were written by Isaiah. The Dead Sea Scrolls must have provided some embarrassment to these particular Bible doubters since they show that as early as the first century B.C. there was just one Isaiah. (Critics love the idea of two or more sources, whose writings were then combined into one book by some unknown author.)

Many church members also deny every form of predictive prophecy like that in Isa., Jer., and Dan., claiming that these men lived long after the event, but wrote their books in the form of prophecy. In other words, the writers supposedly tried to deceive their readers into believing that they foretold the event, a blasphemous thought indeed.

Many Lutherans attack the immortality of the soul, claiming that this thought comes from Greek philosophy and not from the Bible. If that were true, what then shall we say about Matt. 10:28 where Christ bids us not to fear those who can only kill the body, "but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell"?

Despite these ever-increasing attacks upon the truthfulness of Scripture by Bible doubters, the Word of our God stands firm and sure, a true Rock of Gibraltar, amidst all the storms of this wicked world. You can be completely certain of the truth spoken by our Lord, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). God will see to that, even as He has marvelously done so up to this very moment.

If we look about us, we can see the ways in which God is preserving His true Word against all of the Bible-doubting critics today. He has raised up defenders of His inspired Word everywhere. In the middle 1970's they include people who write and read *Affirm* (members of the Missouri Synod) and *Christian News* (Lutheran), the WELS, some Baptist groups, and many others. Within the ALC (American Lutheran Church), a body not generally known for its close adherence to all of Scripture, is a group of faithful Bible believers called Lutherans Alerts. The head of their seminary, Dr. J.E. Farup, shows their love and their defense of the inerrant Scriptures in paragraphs like the following, in a paper read before a meeting of a Lutheran Free Conference:

As a proof of heavy scholarship on the conservative side, let me here insert the testimony of a leading scholar, and authority in his chosen field; a man who probably knows more about the original documents and ancient manuscripts in the Biblical and

related ancient languages than any other man of his time. I refer to Prof. Robert D. Wilson of Westminster Theological Seminary, a man who formed a remarkable plan for his thorough investigation of the trustworthiness of the Bible. This was his plan: he would first spend fifteen years in studying ancient languages—and this part he carried out so well that he learned 26 languages, ancient and modern—not only such well-known languages as French and German, or only Greek and Hebrew, of which every theologian should have a working knowledge, but also such little-known languages as ancient Egyptian, Ethiopian, Persian, Syriac, Assyrian, Babylonian and Arabic. Then after mastering the 26 languages he would spend the next 15 years in examining the ancient documents related to the accounts of Scripture. He actually compared 100,000 citations from those ancient documents to get at the basic facts. And then he would give the world the result of his thorough investigations. And do you know what these results are? I shall quote word for word his own conclusion about the, Old Testament, which was at that time the object of so much negative criticism. These are his words: “I have seen the day when I just trembled at making a new investigation; but I have gotten over that. I have come now to the conclusion that *no man knows enough to assail the truthfulness of the Old Testament*. Whenever there is sufficient documentary evidence to make an investigation, the statements of the Bible, in the original texts, have stood the test.”

Gentlemen, a wonderful Book has come down to us from the ages of long ago. Rather: we have come to the Book, as our forefathers have done, and have been transformed by it, and as our children and our children’s children will come to it; because this book was here many centuries before we were born, and will still be here when we are gone! It is a very *ancient* book: over 1800 years ago its last pages were written; over 3,000 years ago its first pages were prepared. But although it is one of the oldest books in the world, it is never out of date. The things it tells about God and man, about sin and salvation, are true today as when they were written, and will be true to the end of time. Thousands of other books have been read and forgotten, and no one looks at them any more. This book lives through all the centuries undying and imperishable, because it contains the truth from God, which can never perish; and it influences the lives of approximately one billion people living today.

6. *God also preserved His precious Word from an contradictions or discrepancies.* We have already written about the unity of Scripture in I, C, 7, yet critics love to point to apparent contradictions or discrepancies in the sacred text. A few examples of these supposed contradictions will be presented in the following paragraphs:

Num. 25:9 states that 24,000 Israelites died in the plague, while I Cor. 10:8 says that it was 23,000. Yet, note that the I Cor. passages speaks of those who died in *one* day, while the Num. passage could very well refer to all who died over several days’ time.

II Sam. 24:24 says that David bought a threshing floor and oxen for 50 shekels of silver, while I Chron. 21:25 speaks of 600 shekels of silver. Note that the Chron. passage, however, speaks of “the place,” which must have included much more than what was mentioned in II Sam.

I Kings 4:26 says that Solomon had 40,000 stalls of horses, while II Chron. 9:25 places the figure at 4,000. Either of two explanations are possible: A scribe may have made an error in copying 4,000 for 40,000 or vice versa; or one figure lists the horses at the beginning of Solomon’s reign, while the second lists it towards the end, when peaceful conditions did not require so many.

According to Matt. 9:18 a ruler came to Jesus, saying “My daughter is even now dead, but come and lay Thy hand on her, and she shall live.” According to Mark 5:23, he said, “My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray Thee, come and lay Thy hands on her, that she may be

healed; and she shall live.” But note that Matt. apparently summarized the story, while St. Mark tells it in more detail.

Matt. 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38; and John 19:19 all report slightly different superscriptions over Jesus’ cross. Yet, note that St. Luke also says that the superscription was written in three languages. Each evangelist could have reported what was written in one of the three, while St. John reported the gist of the writing.

Other critics have pointed to apparent discrepancies in the Easter story.

Yet, this much is certain that every apparent discrepancy in the Bible can undoubtedly be explained in some rational way. Dr. Arndt does it excellently, for example, in his *Does the Bible Contradict Itself?*. He also wrote *Bible Difficulties*, both books originally being published by Concordia Publishing House at St. Louis. If there is still a difficulty in our minds after reading conservative Bible scholars like that, you can be sure that this is due to our lack of understanding. If we knew all of the facts, the difficulties probably would disappear immediately, for God could never allow His holy Word to have any contradictions in it.

II. Why did God give us the Bible? (17)

- A. After all that has been said about the giving of the Bible, its inspiration, its truthfulness, its attacks, its preservation, and the massive amount of work needed to get it to us today, we can well expect that the purpose of it all must be extremely important. Indeed it is more important than anything else in the world, more valuable than any book that was ever written, more necessary than food and drink, clothing and shoes, house and home. It is all important, because **it shows us Jesus, makes Him our own, brings us to faith in Him, and keeps us in the faith as long as we live**. The Bible tells us how we can spend a blessed eternity with our all-holy God in all of the glories of heaven because of the work that Jesus did to save us from our sin. The Bible makes the difference between an eternity of torment and an eternity of blessedness. Through the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ it saves our souls.

St. Paul wrote about the purpose of the Bible in II Tim. 3:14, 15: “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (NIV). You will note that St. Paul says several things with this excellent admonition to his young co-worker, Timothy, especially these three: 1) Be sure to continue in all that you have learned from the sacred Scriptures; 2) The holy Scriptures, through the power inherent in them, convinces you of their truthfulness and trustworthiness; 3) The holy Scriptures have saved you through bringing you to faith in Christ Jesus.

St. John writes along the same lines. After telling his readers that Jesus did many signs that were not written in his Gospel, he summarized the entire purpose of his writing in just one short verse: “These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name” (John 20:31). He wrote a similar message toward the close of his first Epistle: “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God” (I John 5:13).

This is by all means the first and foremost purpose of the Bible. If one does not understand this truth, then he can have the highest regard in the world for the Bible, he can try to live according to its precepts, he can be inspired by its poetry, and he can prize its history, but it is all in vain. He really does not understand the Bible at all; it is useless for him, since he cannot see Christ, the Savior of mankind, towering above and thoroughly penetrating everything that is there written from Gen. 1 to Rev. 22. If the reader does not see Christ everywhere in Scripture, he really cannot understand the structure of the Levitical priesthood, the sacrifices, the holy days, the types of Christ, etc. (In I, C, 6 we mentioned some of the many Old Testament prophecies that were perfectly fulfilled by our Lord in His lifetime.)

For additional information on this topic, the reader is referred to Geisler’s *Christ: The Theme of*

the Bible. On pages 88-110, the author shows how Christ is to be found in every book of the Bible, and the reader is referred to those pages.

B. For everyone who knows that Christ is the Key to the Scriptures, the Bible. will also provide a number of secondary blessings. For example, it answers all three of the world's greatest questions authoritatively: Where did we come from? Answer: God created us in the beginning of time, even as He created all life in the world today (Gen. 1, 2). Why are we here? We are here to serve our Lord, as I Pet. 2:9 (and many other Bible passages) tells us: "Ye shall show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." Where are we going? To heaven through faith in Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6), as we showed in section A.

In addition the Bible provides many another blessing for us:

1. *It aids us in living a godly life* as St. Paul wrote: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16, 17). The NIV has a somewhat better translation of the last part of that passage: "So that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." The story of Jesus' temptation by the Devil and the way in which our Lord overcame these temptations through the Word of God is a good example for us in all times of temptation (Matt. 4:1-11). Ps. 119:9 reads as follows: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy word." Yes, indeed, Scripture shows and guides us along the way to a God-pleasing life.
2. *It is food for our souls that makes spiritual growth possible.* "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby," so admonishes the great apostle Peter in I Pet. 2:2. Again, that same apostle in the very last inspired word that he ever wrote admonishes us: "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 3:18). Such spiritual growth comes about only through the regular use of Word and Sacrament.
3. *It teaches us sound doctrine.* We read the Bible "that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:14). The Christians at Berea "were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. "In our day of general apostasy we need to know the Word thoroughly in order that we might not be led astray by false teaching.
4. *It is our comfort* in days of trouble. For example, it tells us: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). Ten verses further on in that same chapter St. Paul wrote: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Ps. 23, 91, and 121 are among many other comforting passages from Scripture. Scripture is likewise *our strength* in days of weakness. Dr. Luther was frequently strengthened in his faith by singing the 46th Psalm. We can receive that same strength through a Ps. like this one and through many other Bible passages. Scripture is also *our joy* in time of sorrow. Consider, for example, the story of Jesus and His raising of Lazarus, John 11:1-45, and the joy it has brought to Christians of every age.
5. *It enables us to give answer* to anyone who inquires *about our faith*. St. Peter admonished us: "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (I Pet. 3:15). How can we testify to our faith, if we do not know the Word well?
6. *It enables us to transmit the Word, the world's greatest blessing, to our children.* That is God's

command: “And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up” (Deut. 6:6, 7). Again we read: “He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children” (Ps. 78:5, 6). We can do nothing greater for our children than to transmit the Scriptures to them, but we must know the Bible in order to do this.

7. *It is a treasure house* to which we can go day and night to receive blessings for ourselves. We read in Ps. 119:72: “The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.”

III. How should we therefore use the Bible? (18)

A. We should read the Bible.

After all that has been said about the value, the power, and the blessings of the Bible, it surely should be self-evident that everyone of us reads his Bible daily. If you have a refrigerator filled with nourishing food, will you leave the door closed and slowly starve yourself to death? If you have some medicine that will surely cure your illness, will you leave it in the unopened container, while your health is ruined without it? If you have an unlimited amount of money in the bank, will you deny yourself and your family the necessities of life? It should be equally unthinkable to leave your Bible unopened on your bookshelf.

Our Lord Himself said to all of us who are His disciples: “Search the Scriptures” (John 5:39), a thought that is echoed by other inspired writers. King David, in speaking of God’s words, said that “More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb” (Ps. 19:10). The writer of Ps. 119, the longest chapter in the Bible (176 vv.) speaks about the Word of God in every one of its verses excepting two (122, 132). Without any particularly logical sequence, each verse nonetheless says something striking about God’s Word, using ten different synonyms for it. If we want to summarize this Ps., we might use verse 97: “O how love I Thy law (Word)! It is my meditation all the day.” The Prophet Isaiah wrote, “Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read” (34:16).

In keeping with these admonitions, a father who gave his son a Bible, wrote in it, “Either this book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this book.” Before he died, Sir Walter Scott, the famous British author, said, “Bring me the Book.” When someone asked him, “Which book?” he answered that there is only one Book, the Bible. Dr. Luther wrote in his Preface to the Large Catechism:

Now, for this reason alone you ought gladly to read, speak, think, and treat of these things, if you had no other profit and fruit from them than that by doing so you can drive away the Devil and his thoughts. For he cannot hear or endure God’s Word; and God’s Word is not like some other silly prattle...but as St. Paul says, Rom. 1:16, the power of God. Yea, indeed, the power of God which gives the Devil burning pain, and strengthens, comforts, and helps us beyond measure.

Indeed, since the Scriptures are God’s own series of letters to us, we should regard their reading as the high point of every day, the blessed moments when we can refresh our souls with spiritual food and drink.

B. We should devise a plan for reading the Bible.

1. *The exact method that we choose for reading the Scripture is a matter of Christian liberty.* God never outlined a plan for us to follow in this matter. He did not even suggest that we read a chapter a day, since the Bible was not divided into chapters when originally written. Consequently, everyone must devise the plan that is best for him. Some suggestions follow.
2. *Choose specific daily times for reading the Bible.* God gave us the excellent example of the Bereans who “were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). One will need to determine whether his own daily Bible reading can best be done in the morning or in the evening, or perhaps at another time. Such reading need not, of course, be limited to once a day. Yet, all of us can and should set some time aside each day to spend with God’s Word. That is what Douglas McArthur, the famous World War II general, did. He said that, no matter how tired he was in the evening, he always read something from the Scriptures every night.
3. *At times we may want to read with the entire family.* That is what Aquila and Priscilla did with Apollos. “They invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately” (Acts 18:26, NIV). Deut. 6:6-9, the passage that asks us to teach God’s Word diligently unto our children, also shows us the necessity of taking this Word and bringing it to our entire family at all times of the day and the night.
At other times one might want to read by oneself. That would be in keeping with what our Lord said regarding prayer: “When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen” (Matt. 6:6, NIV). There are obvious advantages in reading by oneself. One can then peruse sections of the Bible that are particularly applicable to one’s life, one can take his time in reading, and the like. Just let no one ever forget the admonition of St. Paul: “Till I come, give attendance to reading” (I Tim. 4:13).
4. Even though “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (II Tim. 3:16), yet *some parts are more applicable to us today than are others.* For example, Exod. 21-40, Lev., and Num., are to a great extent concerned with laws and events that applied more specifically to Old Testament Israel than to us; I Chron. 1-12 with its various lists of names is again important particularly for the Old Testament Israelites, while the rest of I Chron. and all of II Chron. supplements and repeats those certain parts of I and II Sam. and I and II Kings that apply particularly to the Southern Kingdom.
5. Some people say, “I’ll read the Bible exactly as it is written, beginning at Gen. 1 and continuing all the way through the Old Testament till the end of the New Testament.” One may, of course, read the Bible in just this way, but this is not exactly the way in which the Bible was written, and the person who follows this order will not be doing it chronologically. The Old Testament books from Esther through Malachi were not for the most part written chronologically. *If one wishes to follow a modified chronological order,* he could read all of Gen., Exod. 1-20; Deut. through Neh. or Esther, then possibly the New Testament, before returning to the Old Testament, beginning with Esther and finishing the Old Testament books omitted during the first readings. One must remember that, even though the entire Bible displays a remarkable unity, it is nevertheless a collection of 66 books.
6. *A good suggestion for one who has not been reading much of the Scriptures previously is this:* Begin with one of the New Testament Gospels like Luke, for example, to learn much of the story of Christ’s life; continue with Acts, the story of the early Church; read several of the Epistles to understand their purpose; turn back to Gen., Exod. 1-20, and Deut. through II Kings to obtain a picture of Israel’s history; read Psalms and Proverbs; then perhaps reread a few of these portions. If one desires, he may vary this plan somewhat to allow for reading appropriate sections during the

festival parts of the church year or to intersperse parts of the Psalms or Proverbs with the other readings. By this time one will undoubtedly be able to find his way around the rest of the Bible.

Various other methods of reading the Bible are suggested in books like *Lutheran Hymnal*, pp. 161-164; Perry and Culver, *How to Search the Scriptures*; *Halley's Bible Handbook*; and the like.

7. Eventually, of course, one will want to *read the entire Bible*, since all of it is “given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (II Tim. 3:16). Therefore, every child of God should prepare a plan for a systematic reading of the entire Bible on the basis of suggestions made in the previous paragraphs or found in other books on the subject.
8. *Which version of the Bible should I choose for my reading?* As this paper is being written in the middle 1970's, there are so many new translations of the Bible that one hesitates somewhat in wholeheartedly recommending any of them, until we have examined them more closely. Any version that we choose must be as faithful as possible to the original text, and its language should be in good, readable, Bible style.

Several translations seem to meet the necessary criteria. For example, The New International Version (abbreviated NIV), by the New York Bible Society International and published by Zondervan, has many points to recommend itself (a paperback is available from the Bible Society). Phillips Translation of the New Testament, especially that of the Epistles is excellently done in many instances, even though it is not a literal translation. Yet, both of these versions have appeared only in the New Testament (the NIV Old Testament is scheduled for printing in the late 1970's, while Phillips has thus far translated just a small part of the Old Testament). A good suggestion, therefore, may be this one: Use the old, but familiar and excellent King James Version as a basic translation, and use the two translations just mentioned for supplementary reading; or use the NIV for the New Testament, the King James for the Old Testament, and supplement both versions by the New English Bible (NEB), and use Phillips as a supplement in reading the Epistles.

Even though the King James translation is the most widely used version ever to appear in world history, even though its lofty style has endeared it to countless thousands, yet its language in parts is archaic and, therefore, difficult for some people. Consequently, our own church is seeking a newer translation that it can recommend wholeheartedly. When that is found, our people will be notified. (More will be said about this in section V of this paper.)

9. *After one has chosen a Bible version and prepared a plan for reading, several other suggestions can be made.*
 - a. *Have a proper setting.* One cannot read the Bible, as he would read a newspaper. God is speaking to us in His Book, and that requires reverence on our part. One is reminded of Hab. 2:20: “The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him.” Therefore, one should find a quiet place without radio or TV or other noises to disturb one's concentration.
 - b. *Pray for understanding.* While much of Scripture is easily understood by almost everyone, yet as St. Peter wrote, occasionally there are in it “some things hard to understand” (II Pet. 3:16). That is why we should begin our Bible reading with a prayer like that of the Psalmist: “Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law” (Ps. 119:18). It is indeed the Holy Ghost who only inspired men to write the Scriptures and He is the only one also who can open our understanding of the simpler and of the more difficult parts of the Scriptures. Just ask Him for that understanding; reread any difficult part; or compare it with other parts of the Bible, and you will soon be surprised at the understanding which the Holy Spirit gives you. In the end,

it is a good idea to remember also what Augustine wrote long ago: “If you find dark and difficult passages in the Bible, live in the light of the clear ones.”

After we finish reading, we ought to remember that it is God who “giveth the increase” (I Cor. 3:7). Therefore, we might well conclude our reading with a prayer like this one:

On what has now been sown
Thy blessing, Lord bestow;
The power is Thine alone
To make it spring and grow. (Lutheran Hymnal 46, 1)

- c. *Concentrate on a book at a time.* Dr. Luther wrote: “First read a book carefully; then study it chapter by chapter and verse by verse and lastly word by word.” He also wrote: “You cannot read your Bible too much; what you read much, you cannot read too well; and what you read well, you cannot believe too well; and what you believe well, you cannot live too well.” He once compared Scripture with a lovely fruit tree to which one might go at any time for nourishing, spiritual food. There is indeed so much spiritual wealth in the Scriptures that we always receive more blessings, the more we read them.

Before reading a book, one could well read something about it in any one of a number of reference works such as

Schaller, John, *Book of Books*; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924.

Davis, John D., *A Dictionary of the Bible*; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1936 and later editions.

Halley, H.H., *Bible Handbook*; Zondervan; many editions.

Tenney, *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*; Grand Rapids: Zondervan; 1963 and later editions.

All of these generally reliable sources will help to give one an overall picture of the particular book; then we can start reading with a somewhat better understanding.

- d. *Read carefully, reverently, attentively.* The Lord said, “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth in My Word” (Isa. 66:26). When Samuel realized that the Lord was speaking to him, he answered, “Speak; for Thy servant heareth” (I Sam. 3:10), a good attitude for us to follow. We must not skim through our reading hurriedly and halfheartedly, but “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom” (Col. 3:16). Many people devise a *system for marking* passages that they would particularly like to remember.

During his reading, one will always want to ask himself: *What is God saying to me in this section of His Word?* Is He strengthening me in my faith in Christ, my Savior? In the collect for the Word we pray, “that we may in such wise hear them (the Scriptures), read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of Thy holy Word we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which Thou hast given us in our Savior Jesus Christ.” Or, is my God guiding me, in the section that I am reading, in Christian living? Whatever it is, the Scriptures were written for “our learning,” and we surely want to apply them to our own lives. It will never do to read them merely as interesting history or as a message meant for someone else at a different time.

- e. *After we are finished reading, then the time has come for us to reflect, to meditate upon, and to live according to what we have read.* That thought is expressed in various ways by the sacred writings. For example, Josh. 1:8 tells us: “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth;

but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein.” Of the godly man, the Psalmist wrote (1:2), “His delight is in the law (the Word) of the Lord; and in His law does he meditate day and night.” The Apostle James wrote (1:22), “Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only deceiving your own selves.” Our Lord Himself said, “Blessed are they that *hear the Word* of God, and *keep it*” (Luke 11:28). And, finally, a minister, when asked if his sermon was finished, answered, “No, it must still be lived.”

- f. *Some parts of the Bible are particularly applicable to specific situations in life.* They are sections that you might wish to read often. In the course of reading the Scriptures, you will undoubtedly want to prepare a list of those sections that apply particularly to certain areas of your life. In order to help you get started on such a list, a few passages are cited below:

When you wonder about your salvation, read John 3:16; Rom. 3:19-28.

When you forget to serve God with your work: John 15.

When you have sinned: Ps. 32 and 51.

When you are lonely or afraid: Ps. 23 and 46.

When you are discouraged or ill: Rom. 8:31-39.

When you are looking for comfort: Ps. 23 and 46.

When you want a picture of heaven: Rev. 21.

When you are traveling: Ps. 121.

When you forget your blessings: Ps. 103.

When you are in danger: Ps. 71.

When you feel your prayers are not answered: Luke 11:1-13.

When you are in mourning: I Cor. 15.

If you are a husband or wife (Eph. 5:21-33); a child (Eph. 6:1-3); an employer or employee (Eph. 6:5-9); a mother (Prov. 31:10-31).

There are, of course, many other Bible passages that apply to all situations in life, and you will want to gradually prepare your own list of them.

IV. What shall we say about the Apocrypha?

A. They are not canonical.

The word “apocrypha” means “hidden, spurious, not genuine.” As applied to various books, the very name tells us that they are not a part of the canon.

There are really many Apocrypha from both Old Testament and New Testament times. Generally, however, when we speak of them, we mean 14 non-canonical Old Testament books, found today in all Roman Catholic Bibles. Most or all of them were probably written after the time of Malachi, possibly during the second and first century B.C.

These 14 books were never accepted into the Jewish Old Testament canon, as was already mentioned in I, D. They were kept in a locker separate from the inspired books. They were never recognized as canonical by either Christ or the apostles. In fact, one would look in vain throughout the hundreds of New Testament quotations from the Old Testament to find even one quotation from the Apocrypha. There are none. Nor were they ever accepted as canonical by the early Church; despite a few attempts to have several of them regarded as canonical. Not even Jerome, the translator of the Vulgate, the official Roman Catholic Bible, regarded them in the same class as the inspired Scriptures. (Various early editions of the Septuagint, the first translation of the Old Testament, do include some Apocrypha.)

One can readily understand why Christ and His Apostles and His true Church never regarded the

Apocrypha as canonical, because

1. Some of the Apocrypha contain anti-Scriptural teachings, as other clear, inspired Bible passages tell us. For example, II Maccabees 12:43-45 speaks approvingly of intercession for the dead, a passage on which the Roman Catholics base their doctrine of purgatory. Scripture, however, says, “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment (not purgatory)” (Heb. 9:27).
2. II Maccabees 14:41-46 speaks approvingly of suicide, contrary to the clear words of the Fifth Commandment. Some of its history is also false.
3. Tobit 6:15ff. speaks of using the heart and liver of a fish to scare away a demon. That is the sort of magic strenuously forbidden for the children of God by passages like Deut. 18:10, 11 and especially by the Second Commandment.
4. Parts of other Apocrypha are obviously fiction, for example, the story of Judith, or the claim that King Solomon wrote the Book of Wisdom that bears his name.

Throughout the centuries, until the middle 1500’s, the Church generally followed the lead of our Lord in not accepting the Apocrypha as canonical.² That was true as late as 1520 when the famous Complutensian Polyglot Bible appeared. That great edition of the Bible was ordered by Cardinal Ximenes of Spain and approved by Pope Leo X. It is a five-language Bible, consisting of the Hebrew, Targum of Onkelos (Aramaic paraphrases), the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and the Greek New Testament, all in one edition for easy comparison. It has few Apocrypha, since the cardinal claimed that Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, and additions to both Esther and Daniel were not canonical.

Yet, amazingly and despite the overwhelming weight of evidence against such a move, just a few years later at its famous Council of Trent (1546-1563), the Roman Catholic Church accepted 14 Apocryphal books as canonical. Despite much previous and subsequent opposition, that church compelled its people to regard these spurious 14 books on the same level as the 39 truly inspired Old Testament books. In fact, its Bibles, like the *New American Bible* of 1970, interweaves some of the Apocrypha among the other canonical books so that one can hardly tell that they are not canonical. (The notes in this edition say that Ecclesiasticus was not included in the Hebrew Bible after the 1st century, but that it “has always been recognized by the Catholic Church as divinely inspired and canonical.” Of Susanna and Bel and the Dragon, additions to the book of Daniel, the same edition states: “They are excluded from the Jewish canon of Scripture (true) but the Church has always included them among the inspired writings” (false). In regard to I and II Maccabees, the introductions state that they were not accepted as canonical by the Jews and that I Maccabees has not been accepted by the Protestants, but that both “have nevertheless always been accepted by the Catholic Church as inspired, on the basis of apostolic tradition.” What this introduction to that Roman Catholic Bible should have said is that the Apocrypha were accepted as canonical by the Council of Trent, contrary to the clear evidence of the centuries, an outstanding example of the way in which man has placed himself above the Bible to declare which part of it is and which part of it is not canonical.)

Pache (*op. cit.*, p. 173) asks,

Why, then did Rome take so new and daring a position (as to declare the Apocrypha canonical)? Because confronted by the Reformers, she lacked arguments to justify her unscriptural deviations. She declared that the Apocryphal books supported such doctrines

² However, some early Church Leaders did accept various Apocryphal books as inspired.

as prayers for the dead (II Macc. 12:41); the expiatory sacrifice (eventually to become the mass, II Macc. 12:39-46); almsgiving with expiatory value, also leading to deliverance from death (Tobit 12:9; 4:10); invocation and intercession of the saints (II Macc. 15:14; Bar. 3:4); the worship of angels (Tobit 12:12); purgatory and the redemption of souls after death (II Macc. 12:42, 46).

The Roman Catholic Church had to include the Apocrypha in its canon to justify some of its doctrines, while the Protestant Church just as forcefully followed the example of our Lord and the entire early Church in regarding them as uninspired.

B. They are useful for reading.

1. *Dr. Luther* translated the Apocrypha, and they are included in his translation of the German Bible. Yet, they are all placed into a separate section headed by this note: “The Apocrypha are books that must not be considered like the holy Scriptures, and yet they are *useful and good to read.*” The Lutheran Church has always followed that same position of the great Reformer.

Some Protestants also accepted the Apocrypha as good, but uninspired reading in the early days of the Reformation. The Geneva Bible of 1560, for example, states that the Apocrypha

were not received by a common consent to be read and expounded publicly in the Church, neither yet serve to prove any part of Christian religion. . .but as books proceeding from godly men, were received to be read for the advancement and furtherance of the knowledge of history and for instruction in godly manners.

Later, especially after the formation and prominence of the Bible societies in the early 1800’s, whose principles forbade the use of the Apocrypha, *their appearance* in Protestant Bibles *declined greatly*. Most Protestant Bibles no longer contain the Apocrypha, although they are available in separate editions. Today most Protestant churches do not use them in any way.

2. To facilitate our reading of the Apocrypha, we might divide them into four categories as follows:
 - a) Spurious additions to the Old Testament canon: Prayer of Manasseh was added to II Chron. 33; Baruch was added to Jer.; Susanna, the Song of the Three Children, and Bel and the Dragon were added to Dan.; and there are Additions to Esther.
 - b) Legendary tales: Judith, Tobit.
 - c) Jewish history: I and II Esdras, I and II Maccabees.
 - d) Books of wisdom: Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom of Solomon.
3. These 14 Old Testament Apocrypha are summarized in Appendix B:

V. What are the major events in the history of the English Bible? (16)

In Appendix C most major events in the history of the English Bible are outlined. The reader will note that four translations are highlighted. They are by all odds the all-important translations of all time. The *Septuagint*, the first translation of the Old Testament, was widely used for hundreds of years wherever Greek culture had spread. It’s the translation used by the early Church and most New Testament quotations

from the Old Testament are taken from it. The *Vulgate*, the first complete translation of the Bible (into Latin), was the version used everywhere in the Western Church for some 1,100 years. It is still the official Roman Catholic Bible. *Dr. Luther's German Bible*, regarded by many as possibly the greatest of all translations, is the version used by countless thousands of German-speaking Lutherans up to this very day. *The King James Version* enjoys an equal popularity among English-speaking people. It is so outstanding that for 350 years no other English translation could begin to compare with it in popularity. It is estimated that it can still be found in possibly two-thirds of all American homes.

The other versions that are listed on the chart all have in one way or another made some substantial contribution to the history of the English Bible. One must not think, however, that the translations mentioned on the chart are the only English ones. The United Bible Societies' *The Book of 1,000 Tongues* (revised 1972 edition) lists over 125 English translations of either the Bible or parts of it. The American Bible Society's and the New York Public Library's *The English Bible in America* (1962) provides a splendid, annotated list of some 2,600 Bible versions that have appeared in America up to 1957. One can see that a chart of the type in Appendix C must be selective. For example, no Roman Catholic English translation of the Bible is listed, since they all contain the uncanonical Apocrypha.

The story of Bible translations is interesting, in many cases even fascinating. Sometimes it required a construction of an alphabet, the analyzing and formation of a grammar; translators often had many other difficulties including countless hours of time and effort in learning both the original and the new language; sometimes they were persecuted or even put to death. One ought to read their story in such books as those previously mentioned by the Bible societies, or

Phillips, Harold L., *Translators and Translations*; Anderson, Indiana: The Warner Press, 1958.

Halley, Henry H., *Halley's Bible Handbook* (24th edition); Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1965.

Smyth, J. Patterson, *How We Got Our Bible*; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1912.

Herklots, H.G.G., *How Our Bible Came to Us*; New York: Oxford University Press, 1957.

MacGregor, Geddes, *A Literary History of the Bible*; Nashville and N.Y.: Abingdon Press, 1968.

Why are Bible translations necessary? Because there are an estimated 3,000 languages and dialects on earth, a tremendous number indeed. All of them owe their origin to man's pride and godlessness, exhibited particularly in the building of the Tower of Babel, Gen. 11. At that time God was forced to "confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech" (Gen. 11:7). Ever since that sad and dreadful day, missionaries and other preachers of the Gospel have had to overcome immense difficulties and to spend much diligent work in bringing God's Word to all people of the earth's various languages.

One little example of the difficulties encountered in translating the Bible is furnished by Dr. Luther: "I have undertaken to translate the Bible. That was good for me; otherwise I might have died in the mistaken notion that I was a learned man. All those who think that they are learned ought to do some such work." Dr. Luther tried to make the sacred writers speak German, not always an easy task, especially with the Old Testament. He said that sometimes he and his co-workers would spend many hours in translating just a verse or two from Job, for example.

Yet, ever since the days of the Septuagint, about 270 B.C., countless people have spent innumerable hours in translating the Scriptures or parts of them into a huge number of languages. So prolific and so successful has been their work that by the middle 1970's parts of the Bible have been translated into more than 1,500 languages, while the complete Bible has appeared in more than 250 of them.

Much of the work of translating has been done within recent times, especially during the 19th and 20th centuries. By the early 1800's the Bible had been translated into only 67 languages. However, the rest of the 19th century saw 400 languages receiving parts of the Bible, while during the period from 1900 to

1950 some 500 more received parts or all of the Bible. Some 1,000 languages and dialects, representing but 2% of the world's population, has no part of the Bible in their own language, but translators are working at approximately half of them. We thank God for the consecrated labors of the many people who translated the Scriptures.

Notes regarding each of the translations mentioned on the chart in Appendix C are given in Appendix D.

The many translations and versions have helped to make the Bible the world's "Best Seller" by far. For example, *Guinness Book of World Records*, 1972, Revised American Edition, tells us: It has been estimated that between 1800 and 1950 about one and one-half billion Bibles have been distributed. Many times that number of parts of the Bible have been printed and distributed worldwide. For example, in 1973, the United Bible Societies alone distributed six million Bibles plus 243 million parts of it. Besides this, the sale of Bibles or parts of it by other publishers must also run into many millions.

The next highest "best seller" is *Quotations from the Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, supposedly distributed in over 800 million copies when its "possession became virtually mandatory in China." That is an excellent example of the way in which the Devil walks behind God; trying in one tremendous effort to undo everything that God has done.

Yet, the Bible in all of its glory remains for us today our most valuable possession. The World Home Bible League, 425 West 107th Street, Chicago, expressed that thought beautifully in its card entitled "The Glorious Bible" (This Book Reveals the Mind of God):

Its Author is God
Its writers were men,
It's infallibly inspired.

It's given you in life.
Opened in judgment,
And will endure forever.

It's a mine of wealth,
A river of pleasure,
And a paradise of glory.

God's glory is its end.
The Lord Jesus Christ
Is its wonderful Object,
And our good its design.

God's Word is the
traveler's map, the pilot's
compass, the pilgrim's
staff, the soldier's sword,
and the believer's log.

The Bible contains light
to direct you, comfort to
console you, food to
sustain you, wisdom to
teach you, fire to warm
you.

Here Heaven opens,
Paradise is restored,
Hell's gates are disclosed.

Its histories are true,
Its doctrines are holy,
And its precepts binding.

Read it thoughtfully,
Read it frequently,
And read it prayerfully.

Read it to be wise,
Believe it to be safe,
Practice it to be holy,
Memorize it to grow.

Two different hymn writers gathered our thoughts together and expressed them in this way:

How precious is the Book Divine,
By inspiration giv'n!
Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine
To guide our souls to heav'n.

This lamp through all the tedious night
Of life shall guide our way
Till we behold the clearer light
Of an eternal day.

(*Lutheran Hymnal*, 285, 1 and 6)

We have a sure prophetic Word
By inspiration of the Lord;
And tho' assailed on ev'ry hand,
Jehovah's Word shall ever stand.

Abiding, steadfast, firm, and sure,
The teachings of the Word endure.
Blest he who trusts this steadfast Word;
His anchor holds in Christ, the Lord

(*Lutheran Hymnal*, 290, 1 and 4)

Appendix A

A Summary of the Books of the Bible (7)

I. The Old Testament, a time of preparation for the coming of Christ.

A. *The Five Books of Moses, called the Pentateuch*

1. Genesis: The beginnings of world history (creation, Fall, promise of Savior, Tower of Babel), Ch. 1-11; the beginnings of God's Kingdom, ch. 12-50 (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, 12 sons of Jacob, Joseph's story, sojourn in Egypt).
2. Exodus: Bondage and exodus from Egypt; Moses and the contest with Pharaoh; beginning of Israel's journey to Canaan; Ten Commandments and other ordinances at Mt. Sinai; building the Tabernacle.
3. Leviticus: Israel's worship; laws concerning sacrifices, priesthood, Levitical purity, Jewish festivals, others.
4. Numbers: Various events during the forty-year wanderings in the desert, caused by Israel's rebellion; two censuses (over 600,000 men); Israel at the border of the Promised Land.
5. Deuteronomy: Moses' farewell addresses, including a review of Israelite events from Egypt to the border of Palestine; review of God's laws and admonitions to keep them; Moses' death and burial about 1500 B.C.

B. *Twelve Historical Books that Tell Israel's History from Their Entrance into the Holy Land to the Return of Judah from Captivity*

6. Joshua: Israel enters Palestine and conquers it under Joshua; division of the land among the 12 tribes.
7. Judges: For about 450 years (Acts 13:20), about 1475-1025, Israel repeatedly conquered because of its sin; when repentant they were delivered repeatedly by God through 15 judges; a time of religious and moral decay.
8. Ruth: Beautiful story of Ruth, a gentile and an ancestress of Christ, in time of Judges, possibly 1300 B.C.
9. I Samuel: Story of Eli, then Samuel, the last and a great judge; Israel requests a king; Saul given; Saul's gradually deteriorating reign; beginning of David's story.
10. II Samuel: Story of David's forty-year reign, the man after God's heart; enemies conquered; David's sin and grief, about 1000 B.C.
11. I Kings: Story of Solomon's spectacular reign; his building of the Temple; his wisdom and wealth; beginning of the divided kingdom; Israel (10 northern tribes) and Judah (2 southern tribes); Elijah and Elisha, the great prophets; from about 1000-900 B.C.
12. II Kings: Story of the two kingdoms with 38 kings, sometimes warring against each other, from the death of Solomon (about 975 B.C.) to their captivities; Israel, the northern kingdom, carried away to Assyria in 721 B.C. and disappeared from history; Judah captive in Babylon 586 B.C., some returned under Ezra; that severe punishment happened because of their ever increasing wickedness; most prophets lived and worked during this time; II Chron. 36:14-16 is a summary of the period.
13. I Chronicles and
14. II Chronicles: Supplements and repetitions regarding the southern kingdom only of I and II Samuel and I and II Kings; I Chron. chapters 1-15 has various genealogies and lists of names.
15. Ezra: Return of some Israelites from the Babylonian captivity according to King Cyrus' decree; rebuilding Temple, despite opposition from enemies; about 530 B.C.
16. Nehemiah: Rebuilding Jerusalem's walls; reestablishing worship after return from exile; ch. 9, the Levites' prayer to God, a summary of Old Testament history, Israel's wickedness and God's grace; end of Old Testament inspired history; about 445 B.C.

17. Esther: Jews delivered from death by Queen Esther's intercession (Purim Festival), possibly about 500 B.C.; God's name not mentioned, but His hand is evident.

C. *Five Poetical Books*—Hebrew poetry does not consist of rhyme or rhythm, but of parallelism, that is, two or more parallel thoughts or lines that either say much the same thing (see Ps. 1) or contrast two thoughts (see Prov. 10, etc.) or additions to a thought (Ps. 105, etc.).

18. Job: The problem of affliction discussed by Job and his three friends; date unknown, possibly from the time of the earliest patriarchs; a great drama in three acts and the conclusion (Job severely tested, 1-2:10; Job "comforted" by three friends, 2:11-31:40; Elihu speaks, 32-37; God concludes, 38-42).

19. Psalms: 150 hymns and prayers on various topics by various authors, especially David.

20. Proverbs: Discussions on wisdom; religious proverbs or sentences on many different topics; written by Solomon.

21. Ecclesiastes or The Preacher: Reflections on the vanity of earthly life, written by Solomon.

22. Song of Solomon: Religious poem signifying the mutual love between Christ and His bride, the Church, written by Solomon.

D. *Four Major Prophets* (called major, because writings are long; dates are approximate; a prophet in the Bible sense is, a preacher of God's Word; he may or may not say much about the future).

23. Isaiah, 725 B.C.: Ch. 1-39, prophecies concerning nations, and a coming King; ch. 40-66, called "Old Testament Gospel," Messianic prophecies, especially in ch. 53; Isaiah worked in southern kingdom.

24. Jeremiah, 600 B.C.: Warned Israel that because of its sins it would be destroyed by Babylon; the warning went unheeded; bondage in Babylon and eventual restoration; God's judgment on nine nations; Jeremiah worked in southern kingdom just before Captivity.

25. Lamentations: Jeremiah, stunned by Israel's destruction, weeps bitterly, yet God is faithful.

26. Ezekiel, 580 B.C.: Prophet during captivity of Judah in Babylon; visions of Israel's troubles, but a remnant will be restored; prophecies against heathen nations and of the future glory of Christ's Kingdom.

27. Daniel, 560 B.C.: Biography of Daniel, the government official during Judah's captivity in Babylon; visions of future sacred (Christ and His Kingdom) and secular (the four great world powers, their rise and fall) history; ch. 1-6 are history; ch. 7-12 are visions of the future.

E. *Twelve Minor Prophets* (called "minor" because books are shorter)

28. Hosea, 770 B.C.: Using the picture of Hosea's home life (his wife a prostitute), God rebuked Israel's unbelief (spiritual adultery), threatened their dispersion; the eventual restoration of the remnant; probably worked in northern kingdom.

29. Joel, 830 B.C.: A dreadful locust plague foretells future judgment; call to repentance; promise of mercy to the penitent; the future day of the Lord.

30. Amos, 760 B.C.: The herdsman pronounced judgment upon various heathen nations for their sins and upon all Israel; call for Israel to repent was unheeded; visions of destruction (Israel would soon be in captivity, yet the kingdom of David would be restored); worked mainly in northern kingdom.

31. Obadiah, 600 (?) B.C.: Edom is doomed; deliverance of the remnant of Israel.

32. Jonah, 800 B.C.: Jonah refused God's command to prophesy in Nineveh; his disastrous flight that ended inside the great fish; his prayer and rescue, his eventual preaching at Nineveh; worked in northern kingdom.

33. Micah, 740 B.C.: God's judgment upon Israel's wickedness; the Messianic Kingdom of forgiveness in Christ will be established.

34. Nahum, 650 (?) B.C.: Greatness of God who will destroy Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, because of its terrible wickedness (Assyria captured Israel in 721 B.C., was captured by Babylon in 612 B.C.).

35. Habakkuk, 630 B.C.: God will chastise Israel, because of its wickedness, through the Chaldeans (rulers of Babylon); they, in turn, will be punished; Habakkuk's prayer; a key verse is 2:4: "The just shall live by his faith."
36. Zephaniah, 630 B.C.: God's terrible wrath because of Judah's evils; nearby nations will be dreadfully destroyed; but the remnant will be preserved; worked during the last years of the southern kingdom.
37. Haggai, 520 B.C.: Reproved Israel for not rebuilding the Temple; Israel rebuilt it; the Temple a picture of the glorious Messianic Age; worked in the south after Exile.
38. Zechariah, 520 B.C.: Nine visions showing the triumph of God's Kingdom; discourses regarding Christ's Kingdom; various Messianic references.
39. Malachi, 425 B.C.: Close of the Old Testament; sins of the rebellious people (even after Exile) rebuked; Christ and His forerunner prophesied.

II. The New Testament tells of the Manifestation of Christ and his Teachings.

- A. *Four Gospels*, each presenting the life of Christ, the first three called Synoptic Gospels (written from the same point of view), John often supplementary, none really a complete biography of Christ.
 1. Matthew: The life of Jesus, indeed the Messiah, foretold in the Old Testament, written by one of His disciples, particularly for Jewish people (therefore, many Old Testament prophecies cited).
 2. Mark: The life of Jesus, the wonderful Savior, shown especially in His works, come to serve us and to die for us, evidently written particularly for Gentiles, a book of action particularly showing Christ's power in His miracles; written by a coworker of Peter and Paul.
 3. Luke: The life of Jesus, the perfect Person, the gracious Savior, concerned about mankind, written by a doctor who was also a great missionary and writer, who carefully investigated the facts regarding Christ's life.
 4. John: Jesus, the true God, as shown particularly in His lengthy discourses and conversations; John assumed knowledge of first three Gospels, illuminates many points in them.
- B. *One History Book, Acts*: The wide spread of the Gospel from Christ's ascension through St. Paul's imprisonment at Rome; the story of the early Church with emphasis on Peter, Stephen and especially on St. Paul's work; the spreading of the Gospel from Jerusalem to far-away Rome, the world's capital; written by Luke; most New Testament Epistles written during this time (30-67 A.D.).
- C. *Thirteen Epistles of St. Paul*
 6. Romans: The foundation book of Christian doctrine; justification by faith, its need, its acceptance, its results, and its application to our lives; theme 1:16, 17.
 7. I Corinthians: The congregation should be cleansed from various evils; problems that Paul brought up (ch. 1-6) and that the Corinthians asked about (7-14) with ch. 13 the greatest ch. on Christian love and 15 the longest, excellent one on the resurrection of Christ; doctrinal instruction.
 8. II Corinthians: Various teachings including judgment of Christ, Christian giving, and a defense of St. Paul's ministry.
 9. Galatians: Paul's ministry is from God; defense of justification by faith without the deeds of the law; warnings against false teaching; excellent presentation of salvation by faith and condemnation of Judaizers, who taught that O.T. works are necessary for salvation.
 10. Ephesians: The establishment of the Church, the entire number of believers (Jew and Gentile) redeemed by Christ, the crucified, who thus manifested His grace; therefore, walk worthy of your calling.
 11. Philippians: Encouragement to rejoice in Christ, no matter what the outward circumstances, and to abide in sound doctrine.

12. Colossians: Similar to Ephesians; the glory of Christ, the Head of the Church; continue in Him; warnings against hypocrisy; encouragement to holiness.
 13. I Thessalonians: Praise of the Thessalonians' faith; work of the evangelists; desire to see them; prayer for them; exhortation to godliness, especially in view of Christ's second coming, which is quite fully described.
 14. II Thessalonians: Christ's second coming; comfort for the afflicted; description of the antichrist; encouragement to holiness and to keep on working.
 15. I Timothy: Advice for a young congregation and a young pastor; good for all younger and older persons.
 16. II Timothy: Paul's last Epistle; final instructions to Timothy; encouragement to continue in the faith and to combat false doctrine; description to the last evil days; therefore, preach the Word; personal matters.
 17. Titus: Instruction concerning how true ministers should conduct their work and how to live a godly life in an evil world; Christian conduct.
 18. Philemon: A beautiful appeal to Philemon to receive and to forgive Onesimus, his runaway slave, who otherwise would be executed.
- D. *One Epistle by an Unknown Author, Hebrews*: Christ and His new covenant are infinitely better than the old covenant, better than angels, Moses, etc.; Christ the perfect High Priest; therefore, how can readers return to the old elements of Judaism? We have Christ!
- E. *Seven Other Epistles*
20. James: Real faith shows itself in good works; written by Jesus' half brother.
 21. I Peter: Encouragement in Christ to scattered, persecuted Christians (Christ is the Lamb of God, the chief Cornerstone, the dying one, the coming one).
 22. II Peter: Warnings against false teachers and scoffers; Judgment Day is certain and we should accordingly lead a godly life.
 23. I John: God's love in Christ saved us; it is to move us to love our brothers, avoid false teachers, keep God's Commandments.
 24. II John: Letter to the "Elect Lady" encouraging Christian love; warning against deceivers.
 25. III John: Letter to Gaius regarding his steadfastness and hospitality, Diotrephes's opposition, and praise of Demetrius.
 26. Jude: Exhortation to faithfulness amidst apostasy; written by one of Jesus' half brothers.
- F. *One Prophetical Book, Revelation*, telling of the consummation of Christ's Gospel: Messages to seven churches; visions and various symbols regarding the future of the Christian Church on earth and the final victory of the Lamb; probably the last inspired book written possibly in the 90's A.D. by St. John.

Appendix B

A Summary of the Books of the Apocrypha

- I. *I Esdras*: Greek for Ezra; additions, repetitions, or variations of parts of Chron., Ezra, and Neh.; historical; Judah's last days, the Babylonian Captivity, some exiles returned, three men were asked who is the strongest? Rebuilding of the Temple, Ezra's return to Jerusalem, the opposition to mixed marriages, praise of truth. Date unknown, possibly from the 2nd century B.C.
- II. *II Esdras*: Only partially historical; Israel denounced for its sin; seven prophetic visions centering on the miseries of this world and the glories of the future; miseries will precede the end of the world; a religious treatise; first two and last two chapters are later additions. Dates possibly from the 2nd century B.C.
- III. *Tobit*: In Nineveh during Assyrian Captivity Tobit was faithful to God; he buried Jews who had been killed, and he was persecuted for it; Sara also had problems; her seven husbands had been killed on their wedding night by the demon Desmodeus, who loved Sara; in response to their prayers for death, God sent the angel Raphael to help both; Tobit sent his son Tobias to collect some money; Tobias met and married Sara, and burned the heart and liver of a fish in the bridal chamber, whose smoke scared Desmodeus away so that he fled to Egypt; Tobias and Sara lived happily ever after. Tobias cured his father's blindness with the gall of the fish. This is an example of pious Jewish family life; written perhaps in the 3rd century B.C.
- IV. *Judith*: A beautiful Jewish widow penetrated the camp of the Assyrians, who had been warring against the Jews under commander-in-chief Holofernes, after rebuking the elders of Bethulia for agreeing to surrender. Judith prayed and when General Holofernes was sleeping because of drunkenness, she took a sword and cut off his head; her maid carried it to Bethulia; the people then attacked the Assyrians, defeated them, and plundered their tents. Judith sang a psalm of thanksgiving and lived happily ever after. It's a good story, but of doubtful truthfulness. Written possibly in the 2nd century B.C.
- V. *Additional chapters of Esther*: Supposedly a continuation of the canonical book of Esther, chapters 10:4-16; amplifies and sometimes contradicts part of the scriptural narrative; Mordecai's dream in which the Jews appeared to be in great danger; prayers of Mordecai and Esther; Esther appeared before King Artaxerxes and fainted, but the king decreed in favor of the Jews who then triumphed as prophesied in Mordecai's dream. The book helps to explain the Festival of Purim; written possibly 2nd century B.C.
- VI. *Wisdom of Solomon*: Written as if the writer were Solomon, the king and builder of the Temple (he wasn't); shows the contrast between true wisdom and evil idolatry; the eternal fate of the Jews depends upon true wisdom; the excellence of wisdom; wisdom's work on behalf of Israel; the foolishness of idolatry and the contrast between wise Israel and the foolish Egyptians. An encouragement to the pious Jews, for eventually God will punish the wicked; written possibly 100 B.C.
- VII. *Ecclesiasticus* or the *Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach*: Written in Hebrew by Sirach, possibly in the 3rd century B.C., and translated into Greek by his grandson (or later descendant), Jesus, son of Sirach, about 130 B.C.; it is a valuable treatise on wisdom, a shrewd observation of human conduct in a series of unconnected and connected sayings; it is the longest Apocryphal book; it has two parts: Ch. 1-23 speak of the origin, the attainment, the reward of wisdom, contrasted with sin; in ch. 24-50 wisdom is personified and applied to every day affairs, like marriage, family and society, teachers, friends, suffering, death, etc. This book is abbreviated *Ecclus.*, not *Eccles.* (*Ecclesiastes*, a canonical book).

- VIII. *Baruch*: A friend of Jeremiah; generally historical; three parts: The Jews confess their sins after Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 B.C.; there is praise of wisdom, which the Jews had forsaken; and the promise that Israel will return from Exile; ch. 6 is the Epistle to Jeremy, attacking Babylonian idolatry. Possibly dates from about 100 B.C.
- IX. *Song of Three Children*: A spurious addition to Dan. 3:23; two parts: The prayer of Azariah (Abednego) and of the three young men in the fiery furnace, confessing sin and imploring forgiveness; and a liturgy in praise of God. Date and author unknown.
- X. *Susanna*: A spurious addition to the canonical book of Daniel, at the beginning or after ch. 12; the fine home life of the Jews and the triumph of virtue over villainy; a beautiful, pious wife of Joakim was desired by two evil judges who wanted to commit adultery with her; when she refused, they accused her of adultery with a young man and she was condemned to death; but Daniel, examining the witnesses separately, asked under which tree the adultery occurred, and when the judges disagreed, Susanna was released and the judges were executed. An important principle: Two witnesses must agree, and they can be examined separately. Date and author unknown.
- XI. *Bel and the Dragon*: An addition to Dan. 14; ridicules Babylonian idolatry; Babylonians gave Bel 12 barrels of flour, 40 sheep, 50 gallons of wine daily; Daniel ridiculed this thought; Cyrus decreed that the priests were to be killed, if they were wrong, and Daniel would be killed, if he was wrong; the Temple doors were sealed, after the food was placed on the table, but Daniel had scattered ashes on the floor, and examining the footprints the next morning proved that the priests and their families entered by a secret trap door and consumed the food; the 70 priests were executed and the Temple destroyed. The Dragon: When Daniel was asked to worship it, he received permission to slay it without sword and staff; he fed it lumps of pitch, hair, and fat, and the dragon burst asunder. Threatened by the Babylonians, Cyrus then threw Daniel into the lions' den, but God delivered Daniel, and the enemies were fed to the lions. Possibly dates from 150 B.C., but exact date and author unknown.
- XII. *Prayer of Manasseh*: A supplement to II Chron. 33:18-20; a penitential psalm by King Manasseh after he was bound and exiled to Babylon, when death was near; either historical or fictional. Author unknown; date maybe during the 1st century B.C.
- XIII. *I Maccabees*: Possibly written about 100 B.C.; fairly reliable historical account of Jewish history from 175-135 B.C. Alexander the Great and then Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syrian, conquered Palestine, determined to root out Judaism, when the Maccabees successfully rebelled. Various wars, various leaders, especially Judas Maccabeus, various results. A good history of the Jewish war of independence.
- XIV. *II Maccabees*: Two letters to Egyptian Jews; then parallel thoughts with I Maccabees, but not so reliable, history and legend intermixed; writing independent from that of I Maccabees; describes the Jewish period of history from 170-161 B.C. ; wars, rebellions, legends, and some moralizing. Written possibly about 100 B.C. or later. Note the false doctrine, the basis of the Roman Catholic purgatory, in 12:43-45.
- N.B. There are a *III* and *IV* book of *Maccabees*, not regarded as canonical by any church.

Appendix C

Major Events in the History of the English Bible

1500 B.C.-	Original Manuscripts; Hebrew O.T., Greek N.T.; none exists today
1400 B.C. – ca. 150 A.D.	Copies of original manuscripts (autographs) on scrolls of vellum, parchment, papyrus
150 A.D. – ca. 1000 A.D.	Various codices, copies of autographs in book form
ca. 270 B.C.	<i>Septuagint</i> , first translation, O. T. into Greek, used by Apostles and early N.T. Church
ca. 400 A.D.	<i>Vulgate</i> , entire Bible into Latin by Jerome, official Roman Catholic Bible, the Church Bible for some 1100 years
ca. 735 A.D.	Venerable Bede among others, translated John into Anglo-Saxon, one of the first English translations
1384 A.D.	Wyclif Bible, first complete English Bible, manuscript, based on Vulgate
1456 A.D.	Gutenberg printed Vulgate, first printed Bible
1522-1534 A.D.	<i>Dr. Luther's German Bible</i> , first and greatest Reformation Bible
1525 A.D.	Tyndale's N.T., first complete printed N.T. in English; accurate; based on Greek, Vulgate, and German
1535 A.D.	Coverdale's first complete, printed English Bible, based upon Tyndale
1539 A.D.	Great Bible, translated in Geneva Switzerland; the Bible of Shakespeare, Milton, and the Pilgrims; first to use verses and italicized words; first to be brought to America
1568 A.D.	Bishop's Bible, official Church of England Bible till 1611
1611 A.D.	<i>King James Version</i> , also called Authorized Version, great event in history of English Bible, <i>the</i> English version for some 350 years
1885 A.D.	English Revised Version, because revisions needed in KJ; American and English scholars
1901 A.D.	American Revised Version, because American translators not satisfied with the 1885 edition
1901 – 1939 A.D.	Various American translations: Twentieth Century New Test. (1901), Weymouth (1903), Moffatt (1913), Goodspeed (complete in 1939)
1952 A.D.	Revised Standard Version (RSV), great impact
1958 A.D.	Phillips, New Test. in Modern English, not a literal translation
1963 A.D.	New American Standard, revision of American Revised Version
1966 A.D.	Good News for Modern Man (TEV, Today's English Version), widely used
1970 A.D.	New English Bible, good, idiomatic English
Since the 1960's	Various other new translations have appeared. For accuracy, clarity, and good English, The New International Version, published by the New York Bible Society (N. T. only in 1973) seems best.

Appendix D

Notes Regarding Translations in Appendix C

- I. *The Septuagint, probably about 270 B.C.* is the first translation. It was a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek, the common language of all countries in the Eastern Mediterranean World at that time. With his conquest, beginning about 335 B.C., Alexander the Great had spread Greek culture throughout that entire area.
- The facts concerning the early history of the Septuagint are somewhat uncertain, but it was probably prepared by Alexandrine Jewish scholars for the Jewish people in Egypt who knew but little Hebrew. A letter of about 150 B.C. states that 72 Jewish elders worked for 72 days to complete the translation. A legend states that the 72 worked separately and when they compared their work, all 72 agreed exactly. This is manifestly impossible, but the translation is called the Septuagint from the 70+ men who supposedly prepared it.
- The Septuagint has errors in translation; its later, but possibly not its earlier editions, contain all of the Apocrypha except II Esdras; it was widely used by the Jews, especially in the East and in North Africa; it was the Old Testament version of the early Church; it was widely used and widely quoted by St. Paul, by the apostles, and by other early Church fathers. Even though the translation is far from perfect, yet it was often highly regarded.
- II. *The Vulgate, 400 A.D.* , was the first translation of the entire Bible. Both Testaments were translated into Latin, which because of the Roman conquests had long been the universal language. It remained the language of law, of scholarship, and of the Church until far into the 16th century.
- There were Latin translations before this time, yet an authoritative edition was needed, and Jerome, the pope's secretary, was commissioned to prepare a Latin translation according to the true Greek text of the New Testament. (Jerome was to decide which was the true Greek text.) He spent the last 34 years of his life in a Palestinian convent, much of the time in preparing the Vulgate translation (a rabbi helped him with the Old Testament Hebrew).
- This translation is called the Vulgate, because it was translated into the vulgar or common speech rather than into literary Latin. It was gradually accepted everywhere in the Western Church, even though it was also gradually corrupted by copyists and then repeatedly corrected.
- Other translations existed in the Middle Ages*, yet for the most part the Church frowned upon or even forbade the translation of the Bible. The laity was to receive milk, not meat, and milk was the stories about the saints, etc., or those parts of the Word that the priests chose to give to the people. The Synod at Oxford, 1408, for example, forbade a translation into English and stated that no translation was to be read, unless approved by the Church (the clergy were afraid that there might be errors in the translation). Yet, the Vulgate itself had a number of errors, one of the major ones being "do penance" for "repent" in Matt. 3:2. This discovery by Luther moved him to reject the Sacrament of Penance.
- III. Between the time of the Vulgate and the Middle Ages, the *Venerable Bede, 700 A.D.*, among others, did some Bible translation. Supposedly this outstanding church scholar finished translating the Gospel according to St. John just before he died. The language was Anglo-Saxon, the ancestor of English, and his translation (no copy remains) was undoubtedly *one of the first portions of the Bible in English*.
- IV. John Wyclif, who died in 1384, prepared, with help, the *first complete English Bible* to be circulated in *manuscript* form. Wyclif was a great 14th century reformer; he denounced the evils in the Church; he denied that the papacy was a divine institution; he attacked indulgences, relics, masses for the dead; and the doctrine of transubstantiation; he stressed *sola Scriptura*, Scripture alone, stating that everything in the Church had to be tested by it. He believed that every Christian should read Scripture and interpret it

himself. He, therefore, prepared an English translation based on the Vulgate. His translation was highly popular (about 200 copies are still existent today), despite much opposition (the archbishop called it the work of the anti-Christ). Those who read it could lose their land, goods, and life. After Wyclif's death the Council of Constance, 1414-18, ordered his body removed from hallowed ground, burned, and his ashes scattered on the river Swift. His version was extremely expensive (one man gave a load of hay for a few pages of the Epistle of James). It was not a particularly good translation, but it was the forerunner of many other English translations, some of which were very good indeed. His followers, the Lollards, spread the translation widely, and it was the English Bible for the next 250 years.

- V. *Tyndale's Translation was the first complete, printed New Testament*; it was printed in Germany in 1525, and it was the first complete English Testament to be based on the Hebrew and the Greek. Tyndale hoped that the plowboy would get to know Scripture better than the priest knew it before this time. Yet, Tyndale was persecuted for his efforts; he fled to Europe, particularly to Germany where he was in Wittenberg for a time; he completed his work there; and two editions of his New Testament were finally printed at Worms in 1525. Copies (at one-half crown, or about five-days wages for a mason) were smuggled into England. His translation was called a "pestiferous and pernicious poison"; the Bishop of London claimed it contained 3,000 errors, a gross exaggeration; both the king and the church authorities prohibited its use, while the church authorities bought all the copies that could be found and burned them. The objections were particularly directed against Tyndale's prefaces and his notes. In reality, the translation from the original Greek was accurate. A revised edition appeared in 1534. This edition by the scholarly Tyndale is the primary source for many later editions, so much so that he has been called "the father of the English Bible."

Meanwhile Tyndale was working on the Old Testament, and both the Pentateuch and Jonah were in print by 1531. However, before he could translate much more of the Old Testament, he was betrayed into the hands of his enemies, kept for 16 months in a Belgium prison, tried as a heretic, and finally strangled to death on October 6, 1536. He died with this prayer on his lips, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes," a prayer that was abundantly answered in succeeding years.

- VI. *1534, the first edition of Dr. Martin Luther's complete German Bible*. We have treated this point extensively in section I of the article on the Catechism, the Life of Dr. Martin Luther. It remains only to be said that Dr. Luther's translation had much influence upon later English versions.

- VII. *Coverdale's Translation was the first complete printed English Bible, 1535*. Two pre-Reformation events tremendously influenced Bible translations in the years after 1500: The Renaissance with its emphasis upon the study of classical languages and the invention of movable type. With the help of these two events, correctly translated Bibles soon became available in many hundred thousand copies, an excellent example of the way in which education and technology can serve the spread of the Gospel.

Coverdale, however, was not well-versed in Greek and Hebrew; consequently, he used Tyndale's, Luther's (Luther influenced him greatly), the Vulgate, and other translations to prepare his own; King Henry VIII reluctantly authorized the 1537 edition. (Coverdale probably completed his work in Germany, and the first edition was printed either at Marburg or at Zurich.)

This seems strange, since Tyndale, at just about the same time was killed for doing what Coverdale was now doing. Some of the Old Testament books had never before been printed in English. This translation changed or omitted some of Tyndale's notes that had offended a number of people; it was the first English Bible with chapter summaries and the first to separate the Apocrypha from the Old Testament canon, placing them at the end of the Old Testament.

The notes and prefaces in Coverdale's translation (and in the so-called Matthew's Bible of 1537) aroused so much controversy that the king asked Thomas Cromwell to supervise the preparation of a new Bible that would "avoid any private opinion or contentious words."

- VIII. *The Great Bible*, dated 1539, was prepared by Coverdale and others in response to the king's command. It was a fine, large (the pages were 16½ inches x 11 inches), well-prepared edition, without notes or aids. Cromwell ordered every church to have a copy; this edition so excited the people that a royal proclamation was issued in 1541 forbidding anyone to read or discuss it with "loud and high voices," while mass was being celebrated. It was the official English Bible till 1568.
- IX. *The Geneva Bible*, 1560. "Bloody" Mary Tudor, who ruled England from 1553-1558 was an ardent Catholic, who persecuted the Protestants, putting many of them to death. Consequently, many English Protestant refugees moved to Geneva, Switzerland, where Calvin was molding his church. Geneva was at that time a center for Bible scholarship. Here new Hebrew and Greek testaments and various Bible versions appeared, including the Greek New Testament of 1551 (previously mentioned), the first one to divide the text into verses. Somewhat naturally, a number of English refugees decided to translate the Bible for the common people: Chief among the translators was William Whittingham, but he must have been assisted by many others. In two years the work was completed. It was the first version to appear in the easier-reading Roman, rather than black letter type; it was *the first English version to divide the text into verses*; it used *italics for interpolated words*; it had many comments from the Protestant viewpoint (they were widely condemned); it had woodcuts, maps, "arguments" preceding each book, page headings, and other helps. It was highly popular with over 120 editions appearing from 1560-1611, although there were other English translations. It greatly influenced the King James Version; it was the Bible of Shakespeare (especially in his later years), Milton, the Pilgrims, and possibly also of the Jamestown Colony.
- X. *The Bishops' Bible* was published in 1568. This translation, mostly by English bishops, was ordered by the Archbishop of Canterbury, because the Geneva Bible was associated with just one church. Nor was the Geneva Bible, despite its all-around excellence, ever sponsored by Queen Elizabeth or by the English Church. The Bishops' Bible became and remained the *official Bible of the Church of England till 1611*, even though it was inferior to the Geneva version in both style and quality of translation. Many homes continued to use the Geneva version.
- XI. *The King James Version (KJV)*, 1611, is the greatest event in the history of the English Bible. It is "the most influential version of the most influential book in the world, in what is now its most influential language" (MacGregor, *op. cit.*).

The idea of a new English translation was suggested at a church convention in 1604. King James I, for all his faults, liked the idea of directing a new Bible translation that would replace several major English translations, the Great, the Geneva, and the Bishops' Bible. He appointed 54 Hebrew and Greek scholars, divided into six companies, with a section of the Bible assigned to each one for translation. A number of rules were devised for them; the Bishops' Bible was to be closely followed; there were to be no notes except to explain the Hebrew and the Greek; each man in each company was to translate a part that would then be reviewed by the entire company; other translations were to be consulted, including Dr. Luther's German and Jerome's Vulgate; and, finally, 12 men met daily for nine months to revise the translation.

The KJV is frequently called the Authorized Version or the AV, although this is somewhat misleading. It was planned by Church and State, but there was no legal document authorizing it. Nor was it universally accepted at its appearance—one man said that the translators had to give an account for their errors on Judgment Day; and the Geneva Bible was still highly popular, with its New Testament appearing in some 60 editions after 1611. Yet, despite a few deficiencies (the translation was not faultless; some words were a bit archaic even for 1611; nor had the Codex *Alexandrinus* or the *Sinaiticus*, two tremendously important codices, been discovered. It gradually won acceptance

everywhere in the Protestant English-speaking world, so much so that between 1611 and 1800 approximately 1,000 editions appeared. Indeed, it is still the Bible of many English-speaking Protestants, despite a number of newer English translations.

In time a few changes were made in the KJV; its language was modernized by Thomas Paris for the 1769 edition published at Oxford and this “The Oxford Standard” is the text used in preparing modern editions. Printing errors were gradually eliminated. Bishop Ussher’s chronology was introduced into the 1701 Oxford edition and into many later ones.

The KJV has spoken to English-speaking people and it has had an influence upon English literature like no other book in world history. It is indeed a unique translation and no other translation (no other book either, for that matter) has ever approximated its record number of sales.

Time magazine, 12/30/74, said of it that it is

a masterpiece whose cadenced phrasing is an indestructible part of Western culture. It is, in fact, something of a miracle that a church committee could produce a volume that three centuries later sells in the millions and can be found in perhaps two-thirds of America’s homes.

- XII. *The Revised Version of 1885*. The American Bible Society said: “So incomparable was the translation of the King James Bible that for almost 250 years no other lasting revision appeared.” However, in the course of time *the need for a new version was felt*, because new codices had been discovered, there was a better knowledge of Hebrew and Greek than there had been in 1611, the KJV contained archaic words, etc. In 1870, therefore, the Bishop of Winchester, at a Church of England convention, proposed a new revision. British scholars, joined later by Americans, consequently, began working on a revision of KJV, not a new translation: The New Testament Committee met 273 times for the first revision and 97 times for the second, completing the translation and the suggestions for changes in time to have it published in 1881. The Old Testament Committee met 792 days, with revisions shuttling back and forth across the Atlantic. They completed their work in 1884. The translation of the Apocrypha was finished 11 years later.

The translation is scholarly and it appears in a desirable paragraph form; two Chicago newspapers printed the entire New Testament as a supplement when it appeared; the New Testament sold 3 million copies the first year; yet, it really never became lastingly popular. Few parish churches adopted it. Its language is somewhat stilted and some parts of the translation are somewhat unfortunate.

- XIII. *The American Standard Version appeared in 1901*. Because the American members of the committee that worked on the Revised Version were not satisfied with the translation, they continued working and eventually prepared this version. It was fairly popular for a time and accurate, but it was a revision of the KJV, not a new translation.

- XIV. From the early 1900’s until today many discoveries have been made regarding the Greek language, while the language of the KJV has become increasingly obsolete. Consequently, many new translations have appeared. Among them are the following:

- A. *The Twentieth Century New Testament, 1901*, was prepared by 20 scholars. It uses the paragraph form and quotation marks; it’s a fairly good version.
- B. *Weymouth* produced his dignified, intelligible *New Testament in Modern Speech* in 1903, a version that had a modest circulation.
- C. *Moffatt* came to America from Scotland, skillfully translated the New Testament into modern

English, and produced his popular version in 1926 (the New Testament appeared in 1913). New editions of this work have appeared.

D. *Dr. Edgar J. Goodspeed*, University of Chicago, prepared the *New Testament, an American Translation* in 1923, with the *Old Testament*, prepared by *four scholars*, appearing in 1931. The *complete Bible, an American Translation*, including the Apocrypha, appeared in 1939.

XV. *The Revised Standard Version (RSV)*, 1952, was a project of the International Council of Religious Education, consisting of representatives of 40 denominations from the United States and Canada. It also is more of a revision of the KJV than a new translation: It attempts to retain the dignity of the KJV; and it was prepared for both public and private use. It became highly popular, with a number of churches adopting it as their official Bible. Twelve million copies were sold in the first ten years. It was accepted by the Roman Catholics in 1963, after a certain number of corrections were made, a huge, ecumenical step in its continued popularity.

The RSV is in paragraph form; Hebrew poetry is indicated in the format; and many parts of its translation, especially in the New Testament, are an improvement over KJV. Unfortunately, parts of the Old Testament are not well translated, especially the Messianic Prophecies, as we indicated previously.

XVI. *The New English Bible*, 1970, was quietly begun in England before World War II by the church in Scotland, joined later by delegates from other English churches in 1946. There were four panels of translators, one each for translating the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, and the New Testament, plus one for literary style. One member translated a book, circulated it to other panel members, to the literary panel, back to the entire panel and then to the entire commission for review. The aim was to produce a version in idiomatic English, to avoid archaisms and passing modernisms, and to convey the meaning to any reasonably intelligent person. It was not a revision like the RSV, but it was based on the original Hebrew and Greek. It omits headings from the Psalms and some of the Messianic Prophecies are poorly translated. It is somewhat colloquial, there are paragraphs, quotation marks, and verse numberings in the margin; it is frequently quite vivid in its English, more British than American, less literal than many other translations, and it does have its faults. *Time* magazine said of it that it is “an elegant, churchly, yet readable British version under Anglican-Protestant auspices, drawn from ancient texts without dependence on a previous translations.”

XVII. *Phillips, the New Testament in Modern English*, 1958, is somewhat different from most modern English translations, because it is frequently more of a paraphrase than a literary translation. Phillips continually asked himself what the sacred writers would really be saying, if they were talking in contemporary English. There are paragraphs, quotation marks, helps, and verse identification only at the beginning of each longer section.

Unquestionably, this is in many respects an excellent translation; it is highly readable; and it often presents the thoughts of the Greek writers in an outstanding manner.

XVIII. *The New American Standard Bible*, 1963, was produced under the direction of the Lockman Foundation of California. It is really a revision of the American Standard Version with an emphasis on grammatical correctness and understandable English that honors the Lord Jesus Christ. Many people think that it is a very good translation. It has quotation marks, Hebrew poetry is so indicated, every verse is numbered, and there are no paragraphs. Also the text is somewhat cluttered with almost innumerable letters to denote cross references and numbers to indicate marginal notes. *Time* magazine said of it, “This stiffly worded revision of an earlier, neglected version, has become a fundamentalists’ favorite.”

XIX. There are a number of other contemporary translations, none of which we should care to recommend to

you for one reason or another. That list includes TEV (Good News for Modern Man or Today's English Version) first published in 1966 by the American Bible Society "in basic, pared-down language." It is a phenomenal best seller. We cannot recommend this version, because it translates "girl" instead of "virgin" in Luke 1:27; it frequently avoids any mention of redemption through the blood of Christ in passages like Col. 1:14, 20; Heb. 10:19; I Pet. 1:19; Rev. 1:5. It also tries to make Joseph the father of Jesus in Luke 2:33, 43.

- XX. There is, however, one new version of the New Testament that we can recommend to our readers, or so it appears after a certain amount of study. This is the *New International Version* (NIV), with the New Testament appearing in 1973. It was prepared by the New York Bible Society International, and *Time* magazine says of it that it is a "lucid, fresh rendering of the New Testament by an international panel of 108 evangelical scholars." A committee of our own Synod that has spent a certain amount of time in examining it agrees that it is quite faithful to the original Greek and that it is written in a very readable style.