

Pilfering the Power of the Paper Pope of Protestantism: Understanding Why the Reformation Fizzled

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The following study is an excerpt from the 2017 West Michigan Grace Bible Conference commemorating the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Revolution. To access the complete notes from the entire weekend please [click here](#).

Introduction

- Eph. 3:4—in order to understand “the mystery of Christ” all one needs to be able to do is read the scriptures.
- This simple principle was not lost on the adversary. All he needed to do to keep people ignorant of the mystery and Paul’s unique apostleship was simply to hamper their ability to read about it. Prior to the Protestant Revolution this was accomplished through two primary mechanisms:
 - Extremely low literacy rates
 - Binding God’s word in an elite scholar’s language i.e., Latin
- So even if people could read their native tongue they lacked the specialized academic training to have access to the Bible.
- The Protestant Revolution reversed both of these trends that had held sway for the first 1500 years of the dispensation of grace.
 - Literacy rates exploded
 - God’s word was made available in the vernacular languages of the people.
- These trends, coupled with the Protestant doctrine of *Sola Scriptura*, converged to create a seismic shift in the established power structure of Europe. The availability of the Bible in the vernacular languages of Europe was the driving force of the Protestant Revolution. In addition, the notion that the Catholic hierarchy was not needed to interpret scriptures created a very serious problem for the Catholic Church.
- Roman Catholic thinkers and theologians immediately began to devise strategies for how the combat the Paper Pope of Protestantism.

Pilfering the Paper Pope: Originals Onlyism

- One of the goals of the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation (we looked at this in Lesson 5) was to call into question the Protestant view of the Bible. Above all, the Jesuits attacked the Protestant belief in *Sola Scriptura* as the following quotes will attest:

- “Wherever the so-called Counter-Reformation, started by the Jesuits, gained hold of the people, the vernacular was suppressed and the Bible kept from the laity. So eager were the Jesuits **to destroy the authority of the Bible—the paper pope of the Protestants**, as they contemptuously called it—that they even did not refrain from criticizing its genuineness and historical value.” (Dobschutz, 136)
- “This translation (Unitarian translation of 1869) is a decided help in the great battle against Bibliolatry and the doctrine of verbal and plenary inspiration. Every new version, even if it be not so good as this, aids in overthrowing the power of the "**Paper-Pope**" **which has ruled Protestantism as with a rod of iron**. Such superstition in an enlightened land, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, seems almost incredible; but it is asserted on good grounds that nine-tenths of the members of Protestant churches in this country believe as implicitly in the infallibility and absolute freedom from error of King James's version as the Catholics of Spain do in the infallibility of Pope Pius IX and the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary.” (Morse & Marvin, 442)
- The aims of the Catholic Counter-Reformation were beginning to bear fruit in the 19th century just as resurgence of Pauline truth that we studied in Lesson 6 was underway. The practice of constant revision of the Bible would cause people to question whether they had God’s word.
 - “Revisions at moderate intervals of fifty years, will keep alive the idea of man's limited acquaintance with the **original Scriptures** in all the fulness of their meaning, and prevent superstitious attachment to the letter. Whatever checks bibliolatry is good and profitable.” (Davidson, 2)
- According to Davidson, the way one “checks bibliolatry” i.e., the Protestant doctrine of *Sola Scriptura* is to remind mankind of his “limited acquaintance with the original Scriptures.” Put another way, how do you know that you really have God’s word, the original autographs are lost, don’t you know.
- The notion that the “originals” only were inspired and inerrant originated within the Catholic Counter-Reformation. Philip Schaff, in his 1893 publication *A General Introduction to the Study of Theology: Exegetical, Historical, Systematic and Practical*, states the following in a footnote on page 393:
 - “The distinction between “inerrant autographs ” and errant copies seems to have been first made by Richard Simon (1638-1712), the father of biblical isagogic, to prove the necessity of textual criticism and to silence the attacks of Protestant and Roman Catholic champions for the inerrancy of the existing text of the Bible.” (Schaff, 393)
- Richard Simon was a Roman Catholic monk/priest who sought to counter *sola scriptura* by arguing that only the lost originals were inspired and therefore Catholic tradition was necessary to interpret scripture. This argument the missing “first originals” was first adanced by Simon in his 1682 work *A Critical History of the Old Testament*:

- **“The great alterations which have happened, as we have showed in the first Book of this Work, to the Copies of the Bible since the first Originals have been lost, utterly destroy the Protestants Principle, who consult only these same Copies of the Bible as we at present have them. If the truth of Religion remained not in the Church, it would be unsafe to search for it at present in Books which have been subject to so many alterations . . .**

Those Protestants without doubt are either ignorant or prejudiced who affirm that the Scripture is plain of itself as they have laid aside the Tradition of the Church, and will acknowledge no other principle of Religion but the Scripture itself, they were obliged to suppose it plain and sufficient for the establishing the truth of Faith without any Tradition.

But, as we but consider the conclusions which the Protestants and Socinians draw from the same principle, we shall be convinced that their principle is not as plain as they imagine, since these conclusions are so different and the one absolutely denies what the other affirms.

Instead of believing with the Protestants that the shortest and most certain way of deciding the Questions of Faith is to consult the Holy Scriptures, we shall on the contrary find in this Work that if we join not Tradition with the Scripture, we can hardly affirm anything for certain in Religion.” (Simon, Author’s Preface pages unnumbered)

- In 1689 Simon wrote another book titled *A Critical History of the Text of the New Testament* from which many similar quotes could be multiplied.
 - “Is it possible (may some say) that God hath given to his Church, Books to serve her for a Rule, **and that he hath at the same time permitted that the first Originals of these Books should be lost ever since the beginning of the Christian Religion?** There have been from the very first planting of the Church, Hereticks who have disputed against the Writings of the Apostles, and therefore it seems to behoove the Divine Providence to **preserve these Originals** at least for some time, from whence these Hereticks might be solidly confuted. Although the Scriptures are a sure Rule on which our Faith is founded, yet this Rule is not altogether sufficient of itself; it is necessary to know, besides this, what are the Apostolical Traditions . . .” (Simon, 30-31)
 - Whereas the Protestants make the Holy Ghost to descend on the Apostles to translate the Gospel of S. Matthew out of Greek into Hebrew: some Catholic Divines on the other side pretend also that the ancient Latin Version of the New Testament hath been inspired. But **it is much more reasonable only to admit this Inspiration for the Originals of the Holy Scriptures**, which have been translated into different Languages according to the necessities and occasions of the Churches.” (Simon, 79)
- The historical evidence suggests that Roman Catholic thinkers sought to attack the Protestant doctrine of *sola scriptura* based upon the notion that only the “originals” were inspired, the originals are lost, and therefore the traditions of the Catholic Church are necessary to interpret

scripture. This served to plant a seed that would later be used to undermine the Protestant view of the Bible.

Protestant Bibliology Before 1860

- Bibliology is a word used by theologians to describe one’s view of the scripture.
- [*The Westminster Confession of Faith*](#) (WCF) drafted in 1646 is viewed by many as the standard bearer for the Protestant view of scripture. It was influential in the drafting of the following creeds:
 - 1658—[*The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order*](#) (Reformed)
 - 1689—[*The London Baptist Confession*](#) (Baptistic)
 - 1742—[*The Philadelphia Baptist Confession*](#) (Baptistic)
- Please note that the WCF was drafted 40 years before Richard Simon authored the two pieces quoted from above in the 1680s in which he refers to the “first originals.” For the purposes of this lesson we will note what the Reformers believed regarding the Bible:
 - Inspiration
 - Preservation
 - Translation
 - Inerrancy/Infallibility
 - *Sola Scriptura*

Inspiration

- The WCF states the following regarding the doctrine of inspiration.
 - Chapter I Article II—Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testament, which are these . . . All which are given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.
 - Chapter I Article III—The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the Scripture, and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.
 - Chapter I Article VIII—The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the

writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God.

- There is absolutely no language in the WCF limiting inspiration to the original autographs alone.

Preservation

- The framers of the WCF also believed in the doctrine of preservation.
 - Chapter I Article VIII—The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and, **by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic**; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.
- The WCF demonstrates the historic Protestant belief in the notion of preservation or the idea that God kept his word pure in all ages. This belief was held across denominational traditions (Reformed and Baptist) as well as geographical boundaries (Old and New World).

Translation

- All four *Confessions* hold that the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament were “inspired by God” and “kept pure in all ages.” Moreover, the saints responsible for these *Confessions* assert the need for these pure Hebrew and Greek words to be translated in the “vulgar language of every nation unto which they come.”
 - Chapter I Article VIII— The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them. **But, because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated in to the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that, the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship Him in an acceptable manner; and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.**
- This is a strong appeal for the accurate and proper translation of the pure Hebrew and Greek words into the vernacular languages of all peoples. Note how this notion was opposed by the Catholic priest Richard Simon. It is also important to note that the drafters of these *Confessions* were ascribing these statements to the Masoretic Hebrew Text and the Greek *Textus Receptus*, the only Greek text they had available to them. It was the act of translating the *Textus Receptus* into the vernacular languages of Europe that drove the Reformation and touched off the greatest era of

Christian mission work the world has ever seen. These are historical FACTS that cannot be disputed.

Inerrancy/Infallibility

- The Westminster divines believed in the infallibility of the scriptures despite not having access to the original autographs.
 - Chapter I Article V—We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to a high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture. And the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is, to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, **and the entire perfection thereof**, are arguments whereby it does abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God: yet notwithstanding, **our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof**, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.
- My investigation into the writings of Luther and Calvin revealed that these men believed the scriptures were inerrant simply because they were the word of God. The belief that the scriptures were infallible was based upon “the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts,” according to the WCF. There was no formal theological doctrine of inerrancy and it was certainly not limited to the original autographs only.

Sola Scriptura

- It is clear from the final two Articles of Chapter I that the WCF maintained the Protestant conviction that scripture alone is the final authority in matter of faith and practice.
 - Chapter I Article IX—**The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself**: and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.
 - Chapter I Article X—The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, **can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.**
- Richard Simon sought to attack Protestantism by seeking to undermine one of its foundational tenants. His approach was to call into question the Protestant understanding of scripture by bringing up the absence of the “first originals” and “errors” that were present in the copies. Thus, the tradition of the church is needed to tell us what the scriptures teach. This tactic of using the originals, first utilized by Simon, would be codified in Protestant Doctrinal statements in the 19th

century; but mark well the notion does not appear in the great Protestant Confessions of the 17th century.

- For the Reformers, *textual criticism* began with the following presuppositions:
 - the scriptures were the inspired word of God and of Divine origin
 - what God gave by inspiration was preserved and “kept pure in all ages”
 - God’s word was available to be translated into the vernacular languages of the nations.
 - When it was translated, it remained the word of God and retained its divine authority.

Protestant Bibliology is Attached and Revised

- Between 1860 and 1900 the Protestant view of the Bible was attacked and rewritten in response to the following forces: 1) Evolution, 2) Liberalism/Modernism, 3) German Higher Criticism, and 4) Rationalism.
- The attackers pointed out the existence of *variant readings* in the manuscript copies as part of their attack on Protestant Bibliology. The existence of *variant readings* leads to a confining of inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy to the nonexistent original autographs. It was widely thought by defenders of the Bible at the time that the scriptural standard for preservation required “verbatim identicality.” This understanding combined with the undeniable existence of a multitude of *variant readings* in the body of manuscripts became Mt. Impassable for those wishing to hold to historic Protestant Bibliology.
- Instead of holding the line in the face of attack, Protestant Theologians “revised” Protestant Bibliology according to terms set by their opponents. In an attempt to address the existence of *variant readings*, three of the doctrines noted above were altered in the following ways.
 - *Inspiration*—was limited to the nonexistent original autographs; Divine Dictation was dropped and ridiculed as a descriptor for how inspiration was accomplished.
 - *Preservation*—the promise of preservation was dropped from doctrinal statements.
 - *Inerrancy*—formal doctrine developed that limited inerrancy to the nonexistent original autographs; took shape in a logical syllogism that met the German Higher Critics on their own terms.
- These “revised” points became the new Protestant Orthodoxy on the Bible and were carried forward into the 20th century by Fundamentalists in their doctrinal statements.
- These changes, among others, caused textual criticism to be reworked starting with the rationalistic/naturalistic notion that the Bible is like any other book and should be treated in like manner as any work of antiquity. The net effect of these phenomnon was that the traditional

Greek text of the Reformation, the *Textus Receptus*, was replaced with a “new and improved” Greek text based upon the Rationalistic suppositions of Westcott & Hort.

- Drs. Westcott and Hort were the chief architects of the critical methodology and authors of the new and improved Greek text. They began their work with the presupposition that the Bible was like any other book and should be treated using the same rules of textual criticism as the writings of Plato, Aristotle, or any other work of antiquity. Moreover, they infer that textual corruption could have entered the text via the hands of the original authors or their amanuenses.
 - “The principles of criticism explained in the foregoing section hold good **for all ancient texts preserved in a plurality of documents. In dealing with the text of the New Testament no new principle whatever is needed or legitimate.** (Westcott and Hort, 73)
 - “Little is gained by speculating as to the precise point at which such corruptions came in. **They may be due to the original writer**, or his amanuenses if written from dictation, or they may be due to one of the earliest transcribers.” (Westcott and Hort, 280-281)
- On this point Hort stands in opposition to modern Evangelical scholarship in that he allows for “corruption” to have entered the text via the “original writer.” Such a position explains why Hort is reluctant to ascribe infallibility to the text in any form. In a letter addressed to J.B. Lightfoot dated May 1, 1860, Hort stated in part:
 - “I am convinced that any view of the Gospels, which distinctly and consistently recognizes for them a natural and historical origin (whether under a special Divine superintendence or not), and assumes that they did not drop down ready-made from heaven, must and will be ‘startling’ to an immense portion of educated English people. But so far, at least, Westcott and I are perfectly agreed, and I confess I had hoped that you (Lightfoot) would assent. . . **If you make a decided conviction of the absolute infallibility of the N.T. practically a *sine qua non* for co-operation, I fear I could not join you**, even if you were willing to forget your fears about the origin of the Gospels. **I am most anxious to find the N.T. infallible, and have a strong sense of the Divine purpose guiding all its parts; but I cannot see how the exact limits of such guidance can be ascertained except by unbiased a posterior criticism.** . . (Regarding the question of “Providence” in Bibliology Hort writes) Most strongly I recognize it; but I am not prepared to say that it necessarily involves absolute infallibility.” (Hort, 419-421)
- This is the type of textual criticism that Dr. Edward F. Hills is referring to when he talks about the “naturalistic method” in the *King James Version Defended*. He is speaking about an approach to the scriptures that doubts their supernatural origin, doubts their infallibility even in the original autographs, and treats the Bible as though it were any other book. Such was the approach of Drs. Westcott and Hort.
- In the English speaking world, the net effect of this process was the publication of the Revised Version in 1881. This version was based upon the rationalistic Greek text of Westcott and Hort.

The Revolution Fizzles

- Recall from the introduction the following changes brought about by the Protestant Revolution:

- Increased literacy rates
- Scriptures available in the vernacular languages of the people
- In the 19th century these forces gave birth to the Reformation 2.0 or the resurgence in Pauline truth that we studied in Lesson 6.
- Then, in the midst of the Pauline resurgence, the adversary introduced a new challenge designed to keep the revelation of the mystery under wraps. The new challenge took shape around the question, “What is the Bible anyway?” It is our job to reconstruct the Bible and that process is still ongoing.
- The publication of the Revised Version in 1881 opened the flood gates for all the modern versions that now fill the market place. Even at the time of its publication it was viewed as a triumph for theological liberalism and Roman Catholicism.
- The May 26, 1881 issue of *The Free Religious Index* ran a piece titled “The New-New Testament”. It stated the following about the newly released Revised Version:
 - “And we think one of the certain effects of this acceptance of the revised version will be the increase of more rational views about the Bible. A book that can be amended cannot be infallible. Yet thousands of readers of the King James Version have read it in the firm belief that they were reading an infallible book. They will now begin to see that that belief, at least, was a mistake. But, since no claim is made that the new revising committee have been inspired, and their process of working with the instrumentalities of human scholarship is even frankly described, have these readers an infallible book now? Have all mistakes been corrected? And these "manuscripts" that are talked about—on what authority do they rest? **And so, the question of infallibility having once been started among readers who never raised it before, it may not rest until it reach the question of original authorship, and the popular theories of the Bible be reconstructed on a more rational basis. From this point of view, therefore, the revised New Testament has a special interest for Liberals. That the revision, on points where any doctrinal change is involved, favors liberal Christian rather than orthodox interpretation is also apparent.** But this is a matter of much less moment than setting the Bible-reader's wits to work on the question whether the Bible he is reading is an infallible book. **Let that question once fairly get started among the plain-thinking people of Christendom in the nineteenth century, and the twentieth century will answer it by placing the Bible on the library shelves alongside of other historical religious books, classified as one of the human literatures of the world's religions.** (Potter, 570)
- *The Dublin Review* from July-October 1881 contains an essay titled “The Revision of the New Testament” that is pregnant with pertinent quotations. According to Lord Panmure “the prospect

of a new version is fraught with the utmost danger to the Protestant liberties of this country, if not the Protestant religion itself." (132-133)

- "Now, it must be remembered that since the year 1611, a new science has been born into the world, called Textual Criticism--a science which professes to enable men of sufficient self-confidence to determine with absolute certainty, by the aid of a small number of MSS., hardly legible, what the text of the Scripture really is. This science, at least in the opinion of its professors, quite compensates for the **loss of the inspired autographs**, and by its aid the textual critic has no difficulty in telling amidst thousands of various readings, what the sacred writer really wrote. This would be an unmixed blessing to the religious world, if textual critics could but agree one with another. That each critic should have his own theory of recension, and his own view of the age and genealogy of different MSS., is not to be wondered at. But that no two critics can agree upon a plain matter of fact is certainly surprising . . .

What, then, has textual criticism done for the New Testament? **It has destroyed the old *textus receptus***, but it has failed to construct another in its place. Since the days of Griesbach every critic of any textual pretensions makes a text for himself. Lachman, Scholz, Tregelles, and Tischendorf have published their texts. Dr. Westcott and Dr. Hort have just published another, the result of twenty years' toil.

Here, then, lay the chief difficulty of the revision of the New Testament. King James's Revisers had an easy task--simply to translate the text that Pope Stephens, as Bently calls him, had fixed for them. But the Revisers of 1881 had first to find the text and then make the translation. Like Nebuchadnezzar's wise men, they were required first to find the dream and then make the interpretation. If they have failed, the blame must rest not upon them, for they could hardly be expected to be all Daniels but upon the Church which put them to such a task. To anyone who knows what textual criticism is, how dubious in its methods, how revolutionary in its results, it is amazing that any Church calling itself Christian should hand over the Sacred Scriptures, the very title-deeds of its existence, to the change voting of critics, who are scholars first, and Christians afterwards, and some not Christians at all. That it should give to these men power over the Word of God, to find and lose, to revise and excise, to put in and leave out, to form the text as well as to give the interpretation. Yet this has been done by that Church, which made it an article of its creed that other Churches had erred and that nothing was to be believed but was found in Scripture and could be proved thereby!" (133-134)

- "A revision which leaves out some forty entire verses and makes twenty thousand changes cannot be charged with timidity. But "comparative finality" is another matter. It is an illusion to suppose that finality can be attained by petty compromises with rationalism. **Now textual criticism is a tool belonging to the rationalism. The revivers have borrowed it to help them revise their bible.** They have used the tool sparingly, but they have taught others to use it, who we less gentle. With a Variorum Bible [having notes by various editors or commentators including variant readings from manuscripts or earlier editions] and good eyesight, **even an ignorant man can revise his bible for himself; and soon there will be no Bible to revise.** In the first days of Protestantism private judgement fixed what the Scripture meant; **now textual criticism settles what**

scriptures says; and shortly 'higher criticism' will reject text and meaning alike. What has happened in Germany will happen in England.

. . . But perhaps the most surprising change of all is John 5:39. It is no longer "Search the Scriptures," but "Ye search;" and **thus Protestantism has lost the very cause of its being**. It has also been robbed of its only proof of Bible inspiration by the correct rendering of II Tim. 3:16, "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable," [this is the corrupt reading of the RV]. The old transitional [King James reading] appears in the margin, a minority of the translators apparently adhering to it." (135-136)

- "Lastly, we come to the most serious of all--viz., the passages the Revisers have thought proper to leave out altogether. So far it has been a question of translation and of names, but **here the vital integrity of sacred scripture is affected. By the sole authority of textual criticism these men have dared to vote away some forty verses of the inspired word**. The Eunuch's Baptismal Profession of Faith is gone; the Angel of the Pool of Bethesda has vanished; but the Angel of Agony remains--till the next Revision. The Heavenly Witnesses [I John 5:7] have departed, and no marginal note mourns their loss. **The last twelve verses of St. Mark are detached from the rest of the gospel, as if ready for removal as soon as Dean Burgon dies**. The account of the woman taken in adultery is placed in brackets, awaiting excision. Many other passages have a mark set against them in the margin to show that, like forest trees, they are shortly destined for the critic's ax. Who can tell when the destruction will cease? **What have the offending verses done that textual critics should tear them from their home of centuries in the shire of God's temple? The sole offence of many is that the careless copyist of some old uncial ms. skipped over them**. . . The Angel of Bethesda may have cured "the sick, the blind, the halt and the withered," but **modern science** has no need of his services, for it has proved, without identifying the site, that the spring was intermittent and the water chalybeate. But our intelligent critics forgot to get rid of the paralytic, whom the Lord cured, and as long as he remains in the text his words will convict them of folly." (140)
- "We have spoken of the admissions, the peculiarities, and the **omissions of the newly Revised Version**. It only remains to express our **deep anxiety as to its effect** upon the religious mind of England and Scotland. It cannot but give a severe shock to those who have been brought up in the strictest sect of Protestantism. **Their fundamental doctrine of verbal inspiration is undermined**. The land of John Knox will mourn its dying Calvinism. The prophets of Bible religion will find no sure word from the Lord in the new Gospel. But assuredly the Broad Church will widen their tents yet more, **and rejoice in the liberty wherewith textual criticism has made them free**. Already one of their great oracles, himself a Reviser, has declared that Inspiration: "**It is not in a part but in the whole, not in a particular passage but in the general tendency and drift of the complete words**." And he teaches a new way to convert the working-classes from their unbelief. "The real way," he says, "**To reclaim them is for the church frankly to admit that the documents on which they base their claims to attention are not to be accepted in blind obedience, but are to be tested and sifted and tried by all the methods that patience and learning can bring to bear**." Then Heaven help the poor

working man if his sole hope of salvation lies in the new Gospel of Textual Criticism! But what will those think who, outside the Catholic Church, still retain the old Catholic ideas about Church and Scripture? How bitter to them must be the sight of their Anglican Bishops sitting with Methodists, Baptists, and Unitarians to improve the English Bible according to modern ideas of Progressive Biblical Criticism! Who gave these men authority over the written Word of God? It was not Parliament, or Privy Council, but the Church of England acting through Convocation. To whom do they look for the necessary sanction and approval of their work, but to public opinion? One thing at least is certain, **The Catholic Church will gain by the new revision, both directly and indirectly. Directly, because old errors are removed from the translation; indirectly, because the “BIBLE-ONLY” principle is proved to be false. It is not now at length too evident that scripture is powerless without the church as the witness to its inspiration, the safeguard of its integrity, and the exponent of its meaning.” And it will now be clear to all men which is the true church, the real Mother to whom the Bible of right belongs. Nor will it need Solomon’s wisdom to see that the so-called church which heartlessly gives up the helpless child to be cut in pieces by textual critics cannot be the true mother.**” (143-144)

- In other words, the Revision will be the end of Protestantism. The Richard Simons of the world will have accomplished their purpose.
- In his 1892 publication *The Bible: What It Is and Is Not*, Joseph Wood stated the following:
 - **The Revised Version is of great doctrinal significance.** It tends to break down the rigidity of orthodoxy, and it justifies that Liberal Christianity which we, in this place, hold and teach. We, at any rate, have every reason to be grateful for the help which the Revised Version gives us to a better understanding of the work of Christ and his Apostles. We who know the fatal force and fascination of words, and have learnt to realize the immense and inconceivable mistakes which have been made by nearly all English churches through the deficiencies and mistakes of the Authorized Version, welcome with the deepest thankfulness the Bible which the revisers have placed in our hands, as bringing before the English reader for the first time the true sense of inspired writers.” (Wood, 46)
- Also in 1882, *The Gospel Standard* ran a story that was very critical of the RV:
 - “All who believe in inspiration have admitted it to be the authority (KJB); but now-a-days men are aiding the infidel, by undermining the certainty of God’s Word with questions as to its genuineness. We consider the omission of words, clauses, and whole verses, and marginal notes in the Revised Version to accomplish no other purpose.” (Allen)
- The *Universalist Quarterly and General Review* stated the following in part in Volume 21 from 1884:

- “In fact, any new version is contested by that ultra conservative spirit that will not brook any interference with “God’s word.” But no English version is God's word. The Greek original comes nearest to that. It is an irreverent reverence that invests any version with such sanctity as to repel any attempt at communion with the divine original for the purpose of bringing a more accurate report to men. It is to make a fetish of a book, and perpetuate mistakes.” (Hanson, 471)
- Fredric Edwards’ 1885 address on The Revised Old Testament is fascinating to consider:
 - “the inspiration that is now believed in is the inspiration not of words but of men. As long as the old theory was held, the value of textual criticism was underrated. In a general sense the words were believed to be inspired, but nobody seemed to attach much importance to the study and investigation of the words themselves. Manuscripts were neglected, comparisons were not instituted, evidence was not weighed, and the words were left to take care of themselves. With the progress of the change I have referred to, another marked change has come. No sooner did we get to believe in inspired men, than importance began to attach itself to the words of these inspired men. An impetus was given to textual criticism such as it never before had. . . I believe I only represent the feelings of most present, when I express thankfulness that after fifteen years of honest, consecrated labour, the Authorized Version has been revised. . . It is well known that the text which the authorized represented was a very imperfect representative of the text which a wide and extensive comparison of Greek manuscripts would force us to adopt. In fact, the *Textus Receptus* failed through no fault but rather through the misfortune of its framers. They did not, it is true, use all the aids in the shape of manuscripts that they might have done, and even those they did use were not very carefully edited. It must not however be forgotten that multitudes of manuscripts are now known and classified, the existence of which was then unthought of, and the oldest and most valuable of the existing manuscripts were then unknown.” (Edwards, 8-11)
 - “Of this I am growing more and more certain every day, that as regards this as well as everything else, the Liberalism of to-day will be the Conservatism of to-morrow, and as for the Conservatism of to-day, it will be utterly forgotten and ignored in the future, which is near, and we who may have upheld it, will be the first to wonder at ourselves that our eyes were not sooner opened to its narrowness and incompleteness.” (Edwards, 27-28)
- In this quotation from Herman Joseph Hueser’s 1895 publication *Chapters of Bible Study*, we see the completion of the train of thought initiated by Richard Simon nearly 200 years earlier in the 1600s:
 - “Besides these changes, which must be a shock to many an English Protestant who has accustomed himself by long reading of the Bible to believe in verbal inspiration, there are a number of omissions in the New Revised Text which in all amount to about 40 entire verses. It appears, then, that the King James Bible of some years ago has not been as most Protestants of necessity claimed for it—the pure, authentic, unadulterated Word of God.

And if not, what guarantee have we that the promiscuous body of recent translators, however learned, **withal not inspired, have given us that pure, authentic, unadulterated Word of God? . . . So far Protestant revisions have done Catholics a service in removing by successive corrections one error after another from the "reformed" Bible, thus demonstrating the correctness of the old Vulgate; but they have also led Protestants to reflect seriously, and to realize that the "Bible only" principle is proved to be false and dangerous. They must see that the Scripture is powerless without the Church as the witness to its inspiration, the safeguard of its integrity, and the exponent of its meaning.**" (Heuser, 122, 131)

- The Revised Version which was supposed to make God's word clearer and more assessable sowed the seeds of doubt and confusion.
- It is commonly repeated that modern versions are supposed to make God's word more clear and understandable. If this were so, should we not be witnessing the greatest research in Pauline truth the church has yet seen, given the proliferation of modern versions in our midst?
- Leland Ryken, author of *The Legacy of the King James Bible*, chronicles the following results of the ascendancy of modern versions.
 - "First, we have lost a common English Bible in both the church and the culture at large. It is an incalculable loss. On numerous fronts, life was greatly simplified when virtually everyone agreed on what was meant by the "the Bible." Conversely, many things became problematic when that agreement ceased, and some things were permanently lost.

Second, the authority of the Bible went into eclipse when we lost a common Bible. . . It is a fact that the English Bible is no longer accepted as an authoritative book in the public spheres . . . religion, education, law, politics, and the arts. Even when modern literary authors refer to the Bible, they usually do so in a manner that challenges the intended meanings of the biblical authors.

Third, biblical illiteracy has accompanied the decline of the King James Bible. This is widely acknowledged. When a colleague in my own department learned that I was writing a book on the King James Bible and its legacy, she volunteered the observation that after the King James Bible gave way to a proliferation of modern translations, even Christian students became inept at seeing biblical references in literature. . .

Claims by modern translators and Bible scholars that the Christian public is fortunate to have been delivered from the archaisms and occasional inaccuracies of the KJV turn out to be hollow. If Bible knowledge in our day has declined across the board, where is the alleged gain from modern translations? The very proliferation of translations has discouraged the Christian public from seeking to know what the Bible actually says. . .

What has been lost? A common English Bible, a nearly universal reverence for the Bible as an authoritative book, and biblical literacy. Finally, we have lost the affective and literary power of the King James Bible. . ." (Ryken, 230)

- In the name of scholarship, Protestants have allowed their Paper Pope to be Pilfered. They embraced the rationalistic suppositions of their opponents and have caused their entire enterprise to suffer damage. Protestant influence has dwindled since they allowed their own backbone of their movement to be called into the question.

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