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**“Bibliology” – A Study of the
Bible-God’s Word**

**The All Sufficient Scriptures,
Doug Post – Page 2**

**Living For And By The Word of God—
Psalm 119,
Paul Vaughn— Page 8**

**The Faith Once Delivered,
Travis Main—Page 14**

**How Not To Interpret The Bible,
Terry Hightower—Page 20**

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

1. HEAR THE WORD OF GOD
Romans 10:17; Matthew 7:24-27
2. BELIEVE THE WORD OF GOD
Hebrews 11:6; Mark 16:15-16
3. REPENT OF YOUR SINS
Acts 2:38; 17:30; Luke 13:3
4. CONFESS THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD
Matthew 10:32,33; Acts 8:36
5. BE BAPTIZED FOR THE REMISSION OF YOUR
SINS Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3-4
6. LIVE FAITHFULLY UNTO DEATH
Revelation 2:10

UPON THE ROCK is printed quarterly for the purpose of setting forth sound biblical material and evangelism. We strive to print articles that are informative for Christians and non-Christians. Please visit our website for old issues and extra copies of this issue, www.westsidecoc.net
Editor: Doug Post dpost@comcast.net

UPON THE ROCK

The Scriptures are all sufficient for conviction, conversion, and sanctification. In other words, God's Word is sufficient to save souls and keep souls saved. Unfortunately, this concept has come under attack in recent years by some brethren advocating that God's Word is not enough to keep the Christian saved. That the saint also requires a direct working of the Holy Spirit on his or her mind – a DIRECT supernatural infusion of miraculous power to produce the fruit of the Spirit, to DIRECTLY supply supernatural strength to overcome temptation and sin, and to make the Christian understand Scripture.

The first article in this issue shows us that God's Word, the Scriptures, make us complete just as the Holy Spirit, Himself, tells us. The Word, and only the Word sanctifies us (John 7:17). The following two articles, then, deal with the Wonder and Greatness of God's Word and the impact it has on the life of the child of God. Finally, we close with a review of the online *Grace Centered Magazine*. This review exposes "New Hermeneutic," and demonstrates how some in our brotherhood are launching an assault upon God's Word. DP

"THE ALL SUFFICIENT SCRIPTURES"

Doug Post

The Holy Spirit, Himself, tells us that the Scriptures make us complete and thoroughly equipped. They are all sufficient, "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim.3:16-17), that is absolutely comprehensive in scope. The Bible meets our every need. The word of His grace strengthens us (Acts 20:32) and the Scriptures comfort us (Rom.15:4). In a good and honest heart, the word of God (i.e., the –seed, the Gospel – Luke 8:11; Rom.1:16) produces fruit (i.e., fruit of the Spirit – Luke 8:15). The Holy Spirit, through Scripture, reveals Christ to mankind. Along with other providential actions operating in the world, it is specifically Scripture that makes us complete in procuring and maintain salvation. It is not the Bible and something directly affecting our personal will, either in motivation or in action. It is not Scripture plus a direct supernatural infusion from the Holy Spirit (illuminations, revelations, messages, promptings, prodding, and signs from God). This false, denominational concept circumvents the Scriptures – *the very source which the Holy Spirit says makes us complete*.

Psalm 19 is a miniature of Psalm 119. In the first six verses God reveals Himself in nature (i.e., General Revelation), but in verses seven

4. Hall, Bill. "How Shall We Worship|?" <http://www.gcm.ibelieve.com/content.asp?CID=118>

5. Hoover, Arlie J. *Don't You Believe It: Poking Holes In Faulty Logic*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1982.

Unfortunately in his other writings our ACU brother ends up himself in "proof" amounting finally to a

Direct Operation of the Spirit (i.e. existentialism). Still, this book would be good to add to GCM's

reading list if it might cause even one "grace-centered) person to come back to the one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.

6. Howard, V. E. *What Is The Church of Christ?* 3rd Rev. ed. Texarkana, TX: Howard, 1965.

7. Oden, Thomas C. *After Modernity...What?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990. While I certainly do not

uphold Methodism, I would still urge the reading of this volume by a liberal Methodist professor who

left postmodernism to "return" to "conservatism" for one to get a better grasp on our own liberals'

headlong rush into many of the same errors Oden realized and left.

8. Peatross, Fred. "The New Church." <http://www.gcm.ibelieve.com/content.asp?CID=123>

_____. *Tradition, Opinion, And Truth: The Emerging Church of Christ*. Recommended GCM

books for sale at: http://www.amazon.com/exed/obidos/tg/detail/-/059513916/ref=/lib_rd_next_4/104

9. Jackson, Wayne. "The Assault Upon Mark 16:16." *ChristianCourier.com* (January 27, 2003). Archives.

10. Sire, James W. *Scripture Twisting: 20 Ways the Cults Misread the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1980.

11. Wilson, Lee. "About Us." <http://www.gcm.ibelieve.com/content.asp?CID=17714>

12. Winkler, Wendell. *The Church Everybody Is Asking About*. Montgomery, AL: Winkler Publications, 1988.

13. Woodhouse, Paul. "The Direct Guidance of the Holy Spirit." <http://www.gcm.ibelieve.com/printcontent.asp?CID=171>

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Traditionally A Works Salvation? Yet, while recognizing verbal indicators and thus avoiding the above “rush to judgment”, faithful sisters and brothers have patently recognized and personally sung about salvation being “not by works” if such meant works of boasting or merit as in Romans 3:27-28. Liberals must assume we “traditionalists” have been unconscious when we heartily sang such verses as “Nothing can for sin atone, Nothing but the blood of Jesus, **Naught of good that I have done**, Nothing but the blood of Jesus” over the years! Or they imagine we have been too involved in “ritual” to even see the (alleged) contradiction between our singing and our teaching about “law and works.” Perhaps THEY were the ones who never understood such verses in their context, where it seems obvious that all that was meant by “nothing but the blood” was in contradistinction to any and all works of merit (i.e. “boasting”) on our part and had no reference to works of obedience taught elsewhere in Scripture. Such individuals might as well allege our people did not realize that in the hymn *Nearer, Still Nearer* the line “nothing I bring, naught as an offering to Jesus my king” applied strictly to meritorious works and not at all to their weekly offering (1 Cor. 16:1-2)! I think I know who is really being ignorant in this matter. [I would suggest that someone write a series of articles on our “songs of grace”! I am watching for several of our “work” songs to be rewritten by the grace-centered folks as in *I Want To Be A Gracer For The Lord, We'll Grace Til Jesus Comes*, and *Grace For The Night Is Coming*]. One thing for sure, teaching that our salvation and thus Christian fellowship is “strictly by grace” as do writers connected with *Grace-Centered Magazine* does not change damnable error into truth just because they are our brethren. Remember, the “sum of thy word is truth” (Ps. 119:160) breaks the back of ANY reductionist with or without a baptismal certificate in his hand.

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2. Baxter, Batsell Barrett. “Salvation By Faith, But Not By Faith Only.” *Introducing the Church of Christ*. Ed. John Waddey. Ft. Worth: Star Bible Publications, 1981.
3. Brownlow, Leroy. *Why I Am A Member of the Church of Christ*. Ft. Worth: Brownlow Publications, 1945.

through fourteen God reveals Himself through Scripture (i.e., Special Revelation), and it is in this particular passage where the all-sufficiency of Scripture is underscored. The God-breathed Word is called several names and is synonymous with, *the law of the Lord, the testimony of the Lord, the statutes of the Lord, the commandment of the Lord, the fear of the Lord, and the judgments, or ordinances of the Lord*. From this passage, there are at least ten things the Word of God can do for the individual: 1. It is complete in converting the soul (v.7) 2. It makes the simple, wise (v.7) 3. It causes the heart to rejoice (v.8) 4. It enlightens the eyes (v.8) 5. It causes one to fear and respect (v.9) 6. It offers completeness (9) 7. It warns or protects (v.11) 8. It offers great reward (v.11) 9. It purifies the heart (v.12) 10. It restrains one from sin and apostasy (v.13). The Scriptures are so comprehensive that when internalized and followed by one’s SELF they transform one’s life. It gives life to the inner man – the mind. It is sufficient for conversion, for transformation, for restoration, for spiritual birth and spiritual growth. The word can mold a soul into precisely what God desires. Coupled with one’s own personal belief and volition, the Word of God can take the naive, undiscerning, uninformed, and ignorant and give them wisdom to live a godly life. It is the only source for all that is finally necessary applying God's will to our lives in either becoming or remaining a faithful Christian.

The Bible is the place where we can go to find joy, relief, and happiness. Jeremiah, in the midst of tremendous stress and rejection, gave great testimony to the joy that comes through the Word of God saying, “**Thy words were found and I did eat them and Thy word was in me the joy and rejoicing of my heart**” (Jer.15:16). John writes, “**These things are written that your joy might be full**” (1 John 1:4). God gives testimony to the fact that His Word is the source and definition of joy. Even in our attempts to further understand “love” (agape), which we are commanded to have and express, we soon realize that even this kind of love is a result of one’s submission to the Word of God. John writes: **By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous** (1 John 5:2-3). Else-

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where we read: **And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him** (1 John 2:3-5). This kind of love is present as we keep the commandments of the Word of God. The process begins when the human mind processes and accepts the message of the Word, and based upon this information, elicits the rational and appropriate response (the height and depth) of love (agape). The human mind wills to express love (Mat.22.37) but, ultimately, love is the consequence of the Word of God. In fact, as a consequence, love actually submits to the authority of the Word of God.

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul said that the Spirit revealed the teaching of God to them. Paul described it this way, **“These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual”** (1 Cor.2:13). The wisdom of God did not originate from human sources. Rather, it came from God through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit inspired Paul (and others) to reveal the mind of God to the church at Corinth. God’s revelation of His will was written by Paul (in Scripture), and provided to the Corinthians. This body of wisdom, as found in Scripture, is so comprehensive, effective, and complete, that we can judge, appraise, and evaluate **all** things (2:15). We can comprehend every spiritual thing based upon the knowledge of the Word of God.

Paul concludes the matter saying, **“For who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ”** (2:16). Did you catch that? Do you understand the implications of what Paul is saying? **Paul says we have the “mind of Christ.”** What an amazing thought. In fact, it’s exhilarating because there are no insufficiencies with the mind of Christ, no limitations, and no weaknesses. There is nothing superior to the mind of Christ. The mind of Christ is complete and Paul says we have it. The inspired apostle made known the mind of Christ by revelation and we have the mind of Christ in Scripture. We have the mind of Christ when we abide in His Word, having it written

thers” (159).

REDUCTIONIST VERBAL INDICATORS

What About Only & Alone? Did you notice a “thread” running through the examples of reductionism cited above? “There are certain cue words you should watch for in spotting a case of reductionism. Be on your guard for words like ‘just,’ ‘only,’ ‘merely,’ and especially ‘nothing but’” (Hoover 26). If a brother promoted by GCM says: “It boils down to this, either God declares us righteous because we obey His law or He declares us righteous through faith ‘apart from law’” (Anonymous 3), we should be alert to a possible upcoming false reductionism. Of course, it is conceivable that the truth does boil down to something, but if the subject is a complex Bible issue then the odds are we are being invited to accept a conclusion before we have studied all the facts from God that bear on the issue. However they may have learned it, faithful brethren (e.g. Brownlow 103-105; Baxter 228-232; Howard 282-289; Winkler 117) have always “smelled a mouse” when they heard such cue words. Since the Scriptures identify several items which are said to save a person, upon hearing their denominational friends say salvation is by “Grace Alone”, by “Faith Only”, or by “nothing but the grace of God” they knew something was amiss. In a parallel way, they have always recognized the fallacy involved in alleging that the Bible teaches salvation is “not by works” if such meant ANY and ALL works, including those of obedience as in James 2:17, 24-26. When sectarians in bygone years made outlandish claims such as “Even if we had ONLY John 3:16 we’d know enough to be saved!” faithful Christians rightly took such as a charge against God Himself and His inspired and providentially preserved entire 66 book canon which includes other verses involving the subject of salvation! As usual, our Lord demonstrated to us the right way here by means of His Devil-routing statements that man should live **“by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” [and] “Again it is written”** (Mt. 4:4,7) where the little word **“again”** speaks volumes against Satan’s misuse of the Bible by means of selective citing and/or verse isolation. We simply must learn the comprehensive view (Ps. 139:17) of the Bible on any subject!

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meneutical texts which usually describe this fundamental error in words similar to denominationalist James W. Sire's delineation (whom we cite since we have detected an aversion to quotes from fellow N.T. Christians by these folks). Under the heading "Misreading No. 11: Selective Citing", Sire says: "Another misuse of evidence in argument comes when only a portion of the relevant texts is cited. You can 'prove' almost anything from the Bible if you are allowed to select verses or portions of verses *as if they told the whole story*" (80—emphasis TMH). When they subsequently leave out relevant facts of the gospel especially in regard to salvation it is only proper that we accuse them of oversimplification to the point of making the Scriptures appear to have contradictions! Those who have studied standard restoration history texts from 1850 to the 1930's realize that today's events are a virtual "replay" of brotherhood events from that time. As famed pop philosopher Yogi Berra used to say: "It's déjà vu all over again!" Just as "progressive brethren" from days gone by regarded themselves as the elite and enlightened group to take the "traditionalists" of their day onward and upward to the uncharted world of new theological wineskins, we are not left to doubt GCM's high regard for themselves: "As the churches of Christ move from the trenches of legalism into the marvelous freedoms of grace you'll begin to observe a change in the atmosphere; you'll see new freedoms that encourage the creative thinker, the pursuit of truth, the wholehearted seeker, and the learner and explorer, rather than the memorizer, repeater, and defender of old doctrinal formulations" (Peatross, *The New Church* 1). I am reminded just here of the Methodist Thomas Oden's clear warning: "Heresy does not come as a challenge from some source outside the church, but from within it, in which some dimension of Christian truth is overemphasized to the neglect of the balance and wholeness found in the delivered, consensually received apostolic-canonical tradition....One of the commonest definitions of heresy in the early church was "that which we have invented" in contrast to "that which we have received." Yet the mainstream of recent theology persists in thinking of its fundamental task as that of doctrinal innovation, modernization, and supposed improvement on the embarrassingly "dated" faith of our ancient...foremothers and forefa-

in our own minds (John 8:32; cf. Heb.8:10). There is nothing more complete than having the mind of Christ and knowing that Scripture makes us complete (2 Tim.3:17). Do we need anything else in addition to this? Those suggesting that Christians need something in addition to Scripture, like a direct operation of the Spirit and/or an infusion of immediate supernatural power into our minds, are implying that the blessing of having the mind of Christ is not enough (i.e., "insufficient"). The implication is that the mind of Christ is incomplete and not nearly enough (especially for the elite liberals among us!). Evidently, it's not enough for them to reject the Word of God, the very power that offers salvation and all its attendant blessings (2 Tim.3:16-17; Rom.1:16-17; Ja.1:21; 1 Pet.1:22-25; Luke 8:11, 15; etc.), they are now implicitly rejecting the mind of Christ as well.

Of course, many liberals and/or "direct operationists" do, indeed, despise the fact that the Scriptures make Christians "complete and thoroughly equipped." They argue that Paul had in mind in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 the Old Testament Scriptures ONLY. However, like Martin Luther, they are guilty of adding this word "only." Paul uses the phrase "**Sacred Writings**" (2 Tim.3:15), and in the next verse he uses the phrase "**All Scripture.**" Therefore, Scripture and Sacred writings are the same thing, and things equal to the same are equal to each other. These "Sacred Writings" or "Scripture" must include both Old and New Testaments. To underscore this fact, Peter declares all of Paul's writings to be "**Scripture**" (2 Pet.3:15-16), and this would include First Timothy. Furthermore, Scripture is the final basis by which we determine spiritual Truth because it is "**profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work**" (2 Tim.3:16-17, NKJ). Peter says God has provided us with "**all things that pertain to life and godliness**" (2 Pet.1:3). Therefore, everything pertaining to our spiritual life is provided for us through Scripture, though there certainly are (as mentioned earlier) other indirect influences that can be involved in the total picture of human circumstances.

Again, while General or Natural Revelation is involved, the Special

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Revelation of the Scriptures make us complete. The word “complete” translates the Greek word *artios* meaning “perfect, complete, adequate, or fitted.” The phrase “thoroughly equipped” translates the Greek word *exartizó* meaning “to finish out, equip fully, to be thoroughly equipped, and to be accomplished.” Paul describes the “**man of God**” (human being) as being made “complete” (literally “fitted out”) or “thoroughly equipped” or “furnished.” It carries the idea of finality, absoluteness, and totality. By repeating the use of the same root word, Paul is emphasizing that the “**man of God**” is literally “fitted” and “fitted out.” In modern parlance we might say that a person is made “completely, complete,” and if one is made complete, and thoroughly so, then there is absolutely nothing to add that will make this person “more” complete. Too, Paul is saying that the Scriptures (the Word of God) are the cause of why the “**man of God**” is made “**complete, thoroughly equipped.**” In the context, the Holy Spirit, Himself, teaches us what the work of the Word of God truly is: to make mankind complete and furnished completely. The Scriptures accomplish this when coupled with private volition, not a direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon one’s mind/heart.

Paul makes a similar case in 2 Corinthians 3:5 – “**Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.**” Our sufficiency is not from human wisdom. Our sufficiency is not merely from human resources. Our sufficiency is from God. Just what does “our sufficiency” mean? It means that the capability of living life in God’s Word, in order to please Him, is from God. How do we get this sufficiency from God? Our Lord has provided us a resource to turn and refer to, and that resource is of a Divine nature. This is the point Paul makes in the context of 2 Corinthians 3. In this chapter, Paul is contrasting the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. In verse six he calls the Old Testament “**the letter,**” which “**kills,**” and contrasts that with the New Testament which he calls “**the Spirit,**” that “**gives life.**” He calls the Old Testament “**the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones**” (v.7), and the New Testament “**the ministry of the Spirit**” (v.8). Again, he calls the Old Testament “**the ministry of condemnation**” and the New Testament “**the ministry of righteousness**” (V.9). The context contin-

ble to us today by (dare I say it?) **IMPLICATION.** Though I have no real hope that even one in a thousand from the “Grace Movement” will understand it, I will still explain: “Things are bound upon us today, not because any human inferred it, but because God implied it in the Bible!” When they claim our deductions are in effect by the power of Beelzebub they need to tell us exactly how *their* sons cast them out of (i.e. deduce them from) Scripture (Mt. 12:27; Rom. 2:21)! [For a detailed explanation and more see the two volumes I edited entitled *Rightly Dividing The Word* on General and Special Hermeneutics in 1990 and 1991 my own chapters in other volumes].

REDUCTIONISM & Déjà VU

You are probably old enough by now to realize that just as the universe is rich and varied so that it cannot be properly “boiled down” to one statement about it with any real accuracy of description, just so with the Bible (Ps. 119:160). [I am, of course, assuming that you did NOT attend any schools connected with our brethren like ACU, Lipscomb, or Pepperdine]. *Reductionism* is a logical/philosophical term which involves oversimplification whereby we commit the “reductive fallacy” by stopping with a one-level description when there are in fact many levels to be described, and which are not (as is often assumed) contradictory. “We err greatly when we “reduce” a complex entity to only one of its aspects as, for example, one world-renowned atheist did when he described himself as only “a collection of water, calcium, and organic molecules called Carl Sagan” (Hoover 27). I might err by similarly thinking my wife Vicki is “nothing but a spare rib” (Gen.2:22)! Looking at Doug Post I might say “Man is just an animal”, but even our esteemed editor is something more than that (though most of us have a hard time figuring out exactly what that is)! Last year Doug committed this fallacy in front of a true American patriot by saying: “The American flag is *only* a piece of cloth” and she beat him up! Unfortunately, our great God is going to do more than that to those who (ignoring the superiority of TRUTH) falsely reduce the gospel of Jesus Christ in order to obtain what they perceive as the issue of paramount, over-riding importance: UNITY AMONG BELIEVERS.

Our Gracist-centered siblings apparently have never read basic her-

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tempt from his own private case to thereby paint us all as being involved in his lack of understanding should be recognized as erroneous by virtue of the **Inductive Fallacy** whereby the sample of himself (and maybe a few cronies) is too small for such a wide brush. While Fred was apparently sleeping or daydreaming from “attention disorder deficit” or maybe spiritually dyslexic, many others in the Lord’s one body (which he believes to be a mere culturally-produced phenomenon) were busy learning the BIBLE BALANCE between Christ’s grace, works, law, and love. Although I couldn’t find it in a bulletin from his childhood days, I am just sure that somewhere one reported: “We are proud of little Freddy Peatross—he *fell awake* twice during the sermon last Lord’s Day and was here for Bible class two whole times this month to boot!”

CENI? You need to understand that the liberal “gracist” has concluded there is “small choice in rotten apples” among the various religious bodies across the world, including the churches of Christ which are regarded by them as derived from mere human sources. Only in a very general way do they now believe that Christian unity is even possible, with Direct Statement-Example-Implication (regularly mislabeled by them as CENI–Command-Example-Necessary Inference) being viewed by them as the old, tired, and worn-out FAILED methodology toward the accomplishment of bringing believers into harmony with God and one another. Several of them now openly add the letter “S” to CENI to represent another major error whereby they allege that the Silence of the Bible is NOT prohibitory! Writers actually would have us to leave our alleged “shame-and-fear-based hermeneutic” to accept more of a “forward-reaching mentality” served up by them as in “Hunter, don’t you want a new fur coat?” They somehow fail to see that it was really the failure by some to *consistently use* this hermeneutical procedure which was the real source of division, strife, and lack of Bible unity, whether from liberalism or anti-ism. Such folks have had a terrible time getting rid of our Old Hermeneutic since it is impossible to do so (as many of us have demonstrated!) while still using the Bible at all with any current application to anyone now living. Since Scripture was written in direct statements only to OTHERS in Bible times, it is therefore only applica-

ues into chapter four. Paul now calls the New Covenant “**this ministry**” (4:1), “**the word of God**” and “**the truth**” (4:2). Ultimately, Paul defines the New Covenant as “**our gospel**” (4:3) or simply “**the gospel**” (4:4). Therefore, what does this entire context mean? Just this! Paul says “**our sufficiency**” is from God, and then explains that *our sufficiency comes only through the New Covenant, the gospel of Jesus Christ – the word of God*.

Again, Paul writes: “**Above all taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench ALL the fiery darts of the wicked one**” (Eph. 6:16, DP). Paul also tells us that our faith comes from the word of God (Rom.10:17). Therefore, our faith, produced by the Word of God, quenches **ALL** the fiery darts from Satan. “**All means All,**” and there is, therefore, no “fiery dart” from Satan that the Word of God does not have the ability to “quench” since our faith derives from the Word of God. There are no “leftover” darts requiring a direct supernatural “extinguisher” to quench. The Word of God, producing our faith, defeats anything and everything Satan hurls at us, which makes the (alleged) need for a direct operation of the Holy Spirit redundant and useless.

CONCLUSION

In the long ago, the Spirit through Isaiah proclaimed: “**To the law and to the testimony**” (Isa.8:20). These words ought to be the marching orders for every faithful child of God today. God’s people are encouraged to go to the Scriptures to satisfy their minds, rather than relying upon the mystical false doctrines of men, including the wishful thinking of a direct operation of the Holy Spirit. The “direct operationists” among us today are actually guilty of rejecting the comprehensive nature and work of Scripture by relegating the powerful work of God’s Word to minority status. God Almighty elevated His word to lofty heights and so must we. The Psalmist wrote: “**I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast MAGNIFIED THY WORD above all thy name**” (Psa.138:2, DP). God raised His Word to such a high status because just as God cannot be fully known apart from His Word all spiritual Truth cannot be known apart from His Word.

A remarkable thought to meditate on is that Scripture uses the

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terms “God” and “Scripture” interchangeably. Consider Paul’s words in Galatians: **“And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed”** (Gal.3:8). The Scripture says **“all nations be blessed.”** However, in the book of Genesis we learn that it was God who said those words (Gen.12:2). In the context, God is equated with Scripture. The power of God and the power of His word cannot be separated.

LIVING FOR AND BY THE WORD OF GOD - Psalm 119

Paul Vaughn

The faithful child of God has an enduring love for God and His Word. It is by God’s Word that the Christian is enabled to survive the troubles of life. It is by God’s Word that man is able to find true wisdom. It is by God’s Word that encouragement is really available. It is God’s Word that is indispensable to those seeking to live each day for the Lord. One of the great chapters in the Bible, which embodies a great love for God and His Word, is Psalm 119. It is a chapter about walking, living, and meditating intently and at length about the distinct features of the Words of Life. Psalm 119 teaches the student of the Scriptures the importance of loving God and His Word. It exhibits an attitude of thankfulness and it is a source of spiritual solace and perseverance. This great Psalm is a treatise about trusting God in everyday life. For every situation in life God has revealed His will. All one has to do is seek the answer. It is written, **“Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You!” (Psalm 119:11).** No one is ever justified in not obeying God. Therefore, it necessary to know God’s will and store it up in the heart. In seeking to please God one can attain true happiness. Jesus taught that happiness comes from having an intense appetite to know righteousness. **“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled” (Matthew 5:6).** Yet, multitudes go without spiritual food depriving themselves of the blessings God has to offer, because they have no desire to lay the Words of Life in their heart so they do not sin against God.

Opinion, and Truth: The Emerging Church of Christ, GCM’s own Fred Peatross makes a typical statement:

“In the early years of my Christian walk I was influenced and convinced that Christianity was a rule-bound spirituality that emphasized external conformity rather than an inner change of heart. **[Now brethren, do you really remember it this way? I remember an emphasis on the external and the internal and the literature of the day backs me up!—TMH].** Keeping the party’s elaborate system of rules was the evidence of my spirituality. As I grew older in the faith I became aware of my desire to do more. I had been cleansed of my sins and saved by grace, **[Great admission for a ‘gracist’ !—TMH]** but I still felt bad, as if I needed to do something more. I felt no matter what I did or accomplished, it wasn’t good enough. As I look back, I now realize that this was my first encounter with the inherited legalism **[so such can STILL save people by grace while being wrong about law, works, and grace?—TMH]** of the church in which I grew up. I continued to study the scriptures and as I did I began to see new truths. Many of my conclusions didn’t parrot the traditional interpretations of the church of Christ. **[Keep in mind that liberals NEVER ‘parrot’ (even when quoting from their own grace-centered teachers!) anybody except back when they were moss-backed no-grace ‘traditionalists’ –TMH]** I soon realized that this legalistic Christian community I was converted in wasn’t a safe place to share my doctrinal thoughts” (4). **[Fred was no doubt afraid a knowledgeable Bible-thumping old-fashioned ‘Pharisee’ would falsify his new-found errors just like they did denominationalists, so Fred wisely chose to ‘stay out of the kitchen’ for fear of the heat!—TMH].”**

I hereby nominate Fred as “Psychoanalyst of the Brotherhood” for extrapolating his own ignorance upon the rest of the family of God! Fred goes beyond these remarks to accuse brethren of “judging” instead of giving love and support, that “the unwritten creed” determined faithfulness and unfaithfulness, and that “shame-based, perfectionist” theology forced him to keep secrets out of fear of their judgment. You can count on this: Leftists never admit to “judging” or having “unwritten creeds” so, my brother, it’s up to YOU to show them how they do so! One day one of them, having lost his loving and controlled temperament, was literally screaming at me at the top of his voice about how he simply could not stand my “dogmatism”. I asked him if HE was being dogmatic about my (alleged) dogmatism and then he finally managed to bring his voice under control down to a weak whisper and said: “I guess I am.” Fred Peatross’ crass at-

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Biblical Silence? The repeated mention of and arguments involving the “silence of the Scriptures” is no accident as is shown to be a watershed issue by their also selling John C. Brown’s volume *Beyond The Silence: The Role Of Silence in Determining Authority*. I saw no offering of materials by faithful brethren such as George F. Beals’ *How Implication Binds and Silence Forbids* falsifying this central tool involved in their attempt to do away with the Old Hermeneutic. In addition to good chapters written in lecture-ship books and numerous articles available in magazines and journals, I would recommend that the reader study very closely such passages as 1 Corinthians 4:6 esp.ASV; 7:14; Acts 15:24; 2:42; Colossians 3:17; Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19; Hebrews 8:5; 2 Timothy 1:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:2. By the way, it is much better to use the truly accurate 1 Peter 4:11 from God’s Word instead of the manmade and imprecise slogan: “We speak where the Bible speaks, and we are silent where it is silent.” There really is no area of life where the Bible is “silent” since it speaks to all areas either (1) specifically (i.e. explicitly) or (2) by principle (generically) as it claims to do in 1 Timothy 3:16-17. So away, brethren, with such foolish and unbiblical statements as “We do lots of things for which we have no authority for—see our church building, microphone, and songbooks” which serves as a springboard to error by Gracists. **No, we have generic authority** for such things as good exegetes in our churches have always taught. Remember that the New Testament does not specifically condemn mechanical instruments in worship to God any more than it explicitly condemns snorting cocaine, but it does condemn both generically (i.e. by implication from biblical principles).

A New Hermeneutic

Until proven otherwise, I would have to say that I believe most of the individuals writing in GCM regard their former selves (and those of us who still oppose their present doctrine on grace, law, works and love) as lacking in true grace, legalistic, and unloving in that earlier time in their lives when they, too, were taught to demand Bible authority for the component parts making up their belief and practice of Christianity. In *Tradition*,

LIVING FOR AND BY THE WORD OF GOD IS A DAILY WALK

“Blessed are the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the LORD!” (Psalm 119:1). God demands that man have a daily walk with Him. Enoch exhibited this characteristic. He walked with God by faith: **“And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him” (Genesis 5:24).** **“By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, ‘and was not found, because God had taken him’; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God” (Hebrews 11:5).** The only way to walk with God is by faith. Everyone who walks with God trusts completely in His way for mankind. It is written, **“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).** There are no exceptions, to please God one must have faith. No one can draw near to God unless he believes that He has complete power and that He rewards those who seek Him. Enoch had this type of faith. The path to travel is not uncertain. It is the path that is illuminated by the precepts, statutes, testimonies, and the judgments of the Lord. The writer of Psalm 119 understood the importance of walking with God daily. It should be the goal of every soul to walk daily with the Lord.

LIVING FOR AND BY THE WORD OF GOD IS THE WAY OF PERFECT VISION

The psalmist understood that blindness to God’s way is unacceptable and never pleasing to the Lord. Jesus condemned the scribes and the Pharisees for their spiritual blindness to the way of God. It is written, **“Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch” (Matthew 15:14).** The religious leaders of the Jews were blind to truth, suffering from self-infected blindness and the impact of their ignorance to the way of righteousness was fatal to all who followed their pathway of sin. Those who lead and those who followed found comfort in the sin of the traditions of men and the error of self-imposed religion. The wisdom of obtaining perfect vision to see the wonderful statutes and precepts of the law of God must be the goal of the righteous man. The psalmist understood the need to see the totality of wisdom in the words of life. It is written, **“Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law” (Psalm 119:18).** But, what is the proc-

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ess that takes place to open one's eyes to see the world of blessing found only in God's Word? The best answer is a Biblical answer to the question. First, it is not done in a miraculous way today in the Christian age. To be able to see the wonderful things of God will take effort on the part the child of God. Paul said, **"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15)**. Study, meditation, and prayer is the process one must go through to see the light of salvation. God has stored up great bounties in His Word, yet most are blind to the blessings deposited in the wonderful Words of Life. Those blind to the truth are legion, Jesus saw an attitude of self induced blindness among the Jews and condemned it. **"Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand" (Matthew 13:13)**. Living for God and by His Word is the way of perfect vision. The key is, can you see it?

LIVING FOR GOD AND BY HIS WORD IS THE WAY OF HOPE

Hope is a wonderful word. The psalmist understood that hope in God and His Word is the only safe way for man. **"You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your word" (Psalm 119:114)**. The Lord is the place of safety, the shelter in the seasons of storms. In facing the agony of suffering, the Lord is the safe place to be anchored. In overcoming the firestorm of temptations that Satan hurls there is a place of safety, the Lord. In the Lord there is hope. His Word teaches us to look to Him for protection from the dangers of life, to seek His mercy and comfort. **"Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, On those who hope in His mercy, To deliver their soul from death, And to keep them alive in famine" (Psalm 33:18-19)**. David said, **"The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1)**. Christians can have the same hope as David, if they chose to trust the Lord as David did. Hope brings comfort to the soul and zestfulness to life. The presence of hope will enable one to go through some of the most difficult things of life in a world of sorrow and pain. Everyone has had to face suffering, either in our self or a loved one. Hope is the anchor to keep us on the path of light leading

the Lord's church, too. Therefore, this present article is not intended to be a comprehensive review of the myriad sophomoric errors put out in connection with GCM, including their own gross: (1) misunderstanding (putting it in the best light) or (2) perversion (putting it in the worst light) about what "traditionalists" have taught about God's grace. Instead, I intend to show certain principal points or fatal flaws in Gracist-Centered thinking deemed particularly noteworthy in view of the pressure of "so much error, so little space." A comprehensive review of GCM would be akin to trying to "herd cats."

A Radical Agenda. If you think these folks will leave quietly, think again! They are a cyberspace community dedicated to spreading the word about their (false) view of grace, law, works, and love. Their list of writers reads like a Who's Who of Liberal Top Guns: Rubel Shelly, Joe Beam, Max Lucado, John Clayton, and many more. Not content to merely teach error themselves, GCM lists a page of other links which help you spot where this "addictive accommodation" to innovation (Oden 26) is going. To merely read a few GCM article titles (and/or connected names of the brotherhood personalities that go with their radical agenda) is eye-opening: "Five Acts Of Worship?", "They Changed Church," "Who Are The Heretics?", "The Spirit Of Toleration," Behold The Sectarian Pattern," "The New Church," "Have I Fallen From Grace," "Precision Obedience And The Technical God," "The Quest For The Pattern," "James: Lived Out Of Grace," "Freeing Women To Serve," "Check-list Religion," "What, A Coincidence?" (teaching "miracles" happen today), "Fuzzy Conservative Thinking," "Divorce And Remarriage: Must We Divide Over It?", "Uninvited Worship," "Does God Want A Restoration Movement?", "What Is Grace-Centeredness?", "The Law Of Silence," "Traditional Proof Texts For Works Based Salvation," "The "Argument From Silence And Precedent," "Branding Our Brothers." Get their drift? One article should thrill the heart of Mac Deaver himself: "The Direct Guidance Of The Holy Spirit." These people seem to "get direct divine illumination" too, like Mac and his followers, but apparently the Spirit is not going in the same direction on most doctrines with them—other than this one!

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rate name would be *DISGrace-Centered Magazine*]. In reading it, one can see how an electronic media can provide a way to circumvent pesky elders and faithful gospel preachers with page after page of material which, if believed, will destroy Christ's beautiful bride (1 Cor. 11:2). I cannot think of a device of Satan more potent than this covert way to bring in damning wolves (i.e. false brethren) to a weak or unsuspecting flock than to do it more or less secretly (Gal. 2:4) by internet computer, since elders and/or evangelists cannot constantly be aware as to who is reading such an electronic paper never seen out on the coffee table. Oden was right when he said: "Christianity has perennially been challenged to respond to hostile disputants from without. But the political regimes and tyrannies of mind and spirit from without have often been more manageable than the disavowal of faith from within our own household, enunciated in high-sounding terms by those who understand themselves to be doing us some huge favor" (169).

In addition to this, some GCM writers choose to remain anonymous, as did one writer who wrote a huge piece entitled: "Are Unbaptized Believers Lost?" to which he answered negatively by way of repeating numerous sectarian quibbles against the essentiality of baptism for the remission of sins. As Wayne Jackson noted: "The first line of the piece revealed the contemptuous disposition of its clandestine author: 'Can salvation be found anywhere other than the bottom of a baptistery?'" (1). What could be more serious than this? Yet GCM editor Lee Wilson called this article "a remarkable study on baptism" and then asked: "Are we naïve to think that unity might actually be achieved by such a study? Perhaps, but we believe that God expects us to make that effort" (About Us 1). With such brethren, Truth is secondary to Unity. In fact, God's Bible Truth even runs a poor second to the *attempt* (i.e. "effort") to gain unity (at the expense of God's truth) with our dear editor as his statement reveals. **[Despite clear sympathy toward the article, to their credit, GCM finally made available a well-done refutation by a faithful, "non-change agent" brother who answered their call for a response—please don't miss it!]**. To set out answers to all of GCM's "in-house" error would require a lifetime, whereas we must continue to also carry the gospel to those still outside

to God, even when giving up is so easy. The absence of hope leaves one in the darkness of woe and the sadness of pain. Yet, God's Word is there to give hope, if we will only look to it.

LIVING FOR AND BY THE WORD OF GOD HELPS ONE CONVERT AFFLICTIONS INTO BENEFITS

In everyone's life there is an ample supply of hardships and afflictions. The writer of Psalm 119 understood that afflictions can be converted into benefits by looking to the Scriptures. It is written, **"It is good for me that I have been afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes" (Psalm 119:71)**. Often the afflictions and calamities bring to life a hardened heart and bitter spirit, turning peace and joy into anguish. One of the characters in the Old Testament that overcame the afflictions of life was Joseph. He was sold into slavery by his brothers (Genesis 37:12-36). In Egypt, Joseph was put into prison (Genesis 39:1-23). Yet, during all the hardships and afflictions Joseph remained faithful in his trust to God. Before his death, Joseph declared to his brothers an unaltered faith in God, **"but as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive" (Genesis 50:20)**. Joseph turned afflictions into benefits.

Afflictions and suffering are always near and often they are accompanied by an attitude of surrender and distress. Life is a struggle at times but during these hardships one can whine, complain, and exhibit bitter emotions. The faithful child of God can turn those struggles into a positive event by never giving up the fight. Paul exhibited this type of attitude for all to learn endurance during afflictions. Just before his death he spoke words of victory not defeatism. **"For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:6-8)**. Learning from afflictions and growing close to God is a major step to spiritual maturity. The spiritually immature always blame others for their hardships and many blame God. The psalmist did not view life as the spiritually im-

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mature. He was willing to learn and grow close to God through afflictions. Today, all of us can turn calamities into benefits by trusting in the Lord and His Word.

LIVING FOR AND BY THE WORD OF GOD WILL BRING TEARS

An attitude of mourning bitterly over the lost souls will come to those who live for and by the Word of God. **“Rivers of water run down from my eyes, Because men do not keep Your law” (Psalm 119:136).** Ezekiel wrote that God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, **“For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,’ says the Lord GOD. ‘Therefore turn and live!” (Ezekiel 18:32). “Say to them: ‘As I live,’ says the Lord GOD, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?” (Ezekiel 33:11).** The godly man has deep sorrow and pain for those who have rejected God’s way of salvation. He understands that their future is one of pain and anguish because they do not keep the law of God. The godly live for and by the Word of God and prays that everyone else would have the same attitude toward God. Love for the lost was the motivation behind God giving His Son for sins of men. **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).** Should not Christians love the lost so much that they will go out of their way to teach the Gospel of Christ?

The wicked have eyes of joy for sin and eyes of indifference toward Christ. They are careless with their soul, delighting in sin, and mocking at Christianity not realizing their bleak future without Christ. There is no hope for all who live without the Lord. Truly that is something to shed tears over. If more Christians would shed tears over the lost, more would be zealous in carrying out the Great Commission. **“And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:15-16).** Sorrowfully, it is the view of this writer that Christians shed more tears over a sad movie than lost souls.

LIVING FOR AND BY THE WORD OF GOD MEANS TEACHING THAT WORD TO THE LOST

doctrine coming down the interstate from Denominationalism and its mother—**Secular Humanism.** Truth and the place of the mind (i.e. correct reasoning) must once again be given their rightful place because without them we will all end up like *Grace-Centered Magazine*—not knowing any more about God’s grace in a comprehensive sense than a jack-rabbit knows about ping-pong. This of necessity involves Hermeneutics or the proper principles and procedures involved in interpreting the biblical text. Lest the reader think I am being too harsh here, let him take note that I do not take lightly some of the overt references and implications about faithful brethren (including myself) found in this online journal, including wild, inaccurate claims regarding old-time, pioneer preachers of yesteryear. This includes the many psychological suggestions as to why we believe as we do, with some implied by even their recommended reading list like John Fischer’s book *12 Steps For the Recovering Pharisee (Like Myself)*. Subtle, huh? Despite reading many comments against “labeling” one finds sprinkled throughout GCM articles and Discussion Board remarks containing label after label in reference to those regarded by them as “traditionalists” or “dogmatists.” So long as they are accurate, I like labels, but when one *mislabeled* sound, faithful Christians as do these disgruntled, irritated people-on-a-mission, rest assured they are “walking on the fightin’ side of me.” You ask if I am irritated with these folks? YES! Brother or sister, if what this crowd is doing to the church of our precious Lord does not stir up righteous indignation in your heart (Mk. 3:5), what would? They have distorted Bible truth regarding God’s grace and are offering multitudinous interpretive deviations as Peter described their forefathers long ago: **“which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (2 Pet. 3:16).** Doctrine twisting can land them and any of us who believe it in Gehenna!

Raising Up Their Supreme “God”—UNITY:

While Creating A Magazine of DIS-GRACE Towards First Principles

Instead of official denominational “study documents” opening the door to heresy, some among us are quite effectively accomplishing the same thing through this slick, subversive online journal. **[A more accu-**

the path of righteousness.

**HOW NOT TO INTERPRET THE BIBLE:
GRACE-CENTERED MAGAZINE**

Terry M. Hightower

THE CHURCH UNDER SEIGE:

**WHAT THE “NEW GRACIST” INTERPRETERS HAVE IN MIND
FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN**

A hunter was pointing his rifle at a bear when the bear calls out: “Can’t we dialogue over this like two intelligent beings created by the same God? No need to be so militant!” Whereupon the hunter lowers his gun and asks: “What do you want to talk over?” to which the bear replies: “Unity—why do you want to shoot me?” The hunter grunts: “Simple, I want a fur coat.” The bear, smiling, responded: “All I want is a good breakfast.” So they sat down real close together to “work out” an agreement. After a while the bear rose to his feet—all alone. They had reached a compromise and were now united. The bear had secured his breakfast, and the hunter was inside a fur coat! Leftist members of the church who seem to always try to “loose” where God has bound remind us of this approach to unity among believers. Beloved, I beg you not to be taken in by the liberal “bears” waiting in the woods all around us. Once you know it’s a bear don’t just point your gospel sword (Eph. 6:17), USE IT! If you are unaware of how much ground the “New Gracists” have gained, what you read here may shock you. I pray that for the love of Christ’s kingdom you will discover just who these folks are, what they want, why they want it, and how they intend to get it, so that with God’s providential help you will be helped to formulate a sound and reasoned response (1 Thes.5:21) to false interpretational philosophy.

JACKRABBITS & PING-PONG, LABELS & PHARRISEEISM

Subjectivism and false (i.e. unbiblical) piety have apparently conspired to make some of our brethren’s personal experience the sum total of their faith. Generally speaking, we no longer are predominantly “a people of the Book” which causes a tendency for us to fall prey to every false

Christianity is a religion that grows by Christians teaching the wonderful Words of life. The writer of Psalm 119 loved God and His commandments, precepts, testimonies, and statutes. He meditated on those marvelous Words of life. But, he did not stop at meditating or reading those fantastic precepts of life, he had to sing about them and state positively with confidence the righteousness of God. **“My tongue shall speak of Your word, For all Your commandments are righteousness” (Psalm 119:172).**

Christians must resolve in their hearts to boldly teach the good news about Christ to the world. Jesus commands all of His disciples to reach out to those needing salvation. **“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen” (Matthew 28:19-20).** There is no room in God’s family, the church for halfhearted and cowardly Christians who are filled with fear and apprehension about to teaching the Gospel to the lost. The commandments of the Lord are righteous, enabling all to be able to live in a special way with God. The testimonies of the Lord are the standard for living because their very essence is righteousness. The man of God will not only live by and for the Word of God, but also will proclaim it boldly at every opportunity.

CONCLUSION

There are many lessons in Psalm 119. Perhaps the most important is that the writer of Psalm 119 loved God and His Word with all of his heart. That is one lesson that all Christians need to learn The Word of God should be more valuable than the material riches of the world. **“I rejoice at Your word As one who finds great treasure. I hate and abhor lying, But I love Your law” (Psalm 119:162).** Love for God obligates Christians to hate all wickedness and love righteousness.

The Faith Once Delivered

Travis Main

Thanks to the efforts of men like Brad Harrub PhD., who warmly embrace demonstrating science as perfectly validating the Bible, my son has developed an energetic desire to study science. Science has many men of great learning. However, many scientists today promote theories, such as evolution, which fly in the face of already established scientific laws. Because of such error, the theories ought to be rejected, even though men of great title or reputation believe in them. Scientific laws are identified as laws because they do not falter, they are always true. Many people hold the Bible to be an unfaltering law unto their lives. They hold the Bible to be truth, not fiction. The Bible is rejected as law by some based on claims of man's supposed corruption of its origin, collection, preservation, and completion. Do such claims have any validity? The Bible is very specific regarding its origin. The passage 2 Timothy 3:16 reads: ***All scripture is given by inspiration of God...*** In its original Koine Greek, *“by inspiration of God”* literally means *“God breathed”*. Furthermore, 2 Peter 1:20-21 states: ***“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”*** None of the writers (approximately 40 men over approximately 1500 years) claimed the words to be of their own origin, but singularly of God. As a whole, scripture demonstrates the Bible's claim that God is responsible for the origin of scripture, not men. These verses do not, however, demonstrate whether or not the scriptures are infallible. More of the Bible must be considered. **Deuteronomy 32:4** and **I John 1:5-8** establish God does not sin. **Titus 1:2** states *“God cannot lie”*. **Psalms 18:30** and **19:7** declare what God does is perfect. **John 17:17** proclaims *“[God's] word is truth”*. Examining the scriptures presented thus far, the individual must conclude that if the Bible's origin is from God, then at its beginning it was perfect and, therefore, infallible. If it is found with fault, then it cannot be from the God of the Bible and must be rejected. Now that an origin has been established, the question of the collection of the scriptures must be raised. Many of those who are ignorant

to heaven. With Him, he took away the captivity of sin from man. Jesus promised the coming of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 1:8**) and as mentioned, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost. However, the Ephesians text as well as the Corinthian text mentions the end of the miraculous. The end would come with the unity of the faith and the knowledge of Jesus by which man could be *“perfect”*. The perfection would eliminate man from ignorantly following sin. **Jude 3** speaks of the *“Faith once delivered”*. The faith is the gospel. The faith is the knowledge of Jesus which provided everything necessary for life and Godliness in **2 Peter 1:2-3**. The Gospel is called the perfect law of liberty in James 1:25. I Peter 2:2 establishes that the Gospel enables growth to maturity which was mentioned in both I Corinthians and Ephesians 4. **2 Timothy 3:16-17**, speaking of the *“God Breathed”* scriptures, also states the application of the Faith produces men who are *“perfect”*. They become complete, mature, as the Word of God is. When this occurs, the end result is as stated in I Corinthians 13 – Love.

We are able to deduce from **Ephesians 4** and the supporting passages that the term *“perfect”* is the full presentation of the Bible. The *“perfect”* has come. That full presentation of scripture came once the writing and confirmation of the book of Revelation was written. With it, man no longer needed the miraculous. Man no longer needed revelation. Man no longer needed the direct influence of the Holy Spirit. In his hands was the ability to know the Son of God such that he would no longer stumble as a child. Modern claims of revelation and inspiration have only resulted in two things: restating what scripture already has said or contradicting what scripture has said. If it is simply a restatement, it is not the miraculous. If it is contradiction, it is not truth and therefore must be rejected. Understanding the origin, collection, preservation, and completion of scripture is vitally important for those who would seek to trust the Bible. It is either all man needs to be complete or it must be rejected. The Bible has stood the test of ages. It has been proven over and over. It has been tried scientifically, historically, geographically, morally, and still it rings true every time. This is why Christians hold it as a *“law”* for their life. It is the *“faith once delivered”* which stands on its own, guiding men in

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prophecy. Further examining the claims of continued revelation, the words of the apostle Paul must be read. In I Corinthians 13:8-13, he speaks the following inspired words:

Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

In these verses there are unmistakable statements that the miraculous will end. Tied to this understanding is the maturity of man. Also noted is the coming of the “perfect” which is not immediately understandable from the given verses. However, it can be observed that the coming of the “perfect” is what brings about the end of the miraculous and results in the maturity of man. Finally, note that through all of this, love abides. To bring further light on the time frame and the text, consider Ephesians 4:8-16:

“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

In this passage, Jesus is pictured as having ascended from earth

in the scriptures have proclaimed them to have been gathered together, centuries after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. They declare that the scriptures are a product of councils of the Roman Catholic Church. While Jesus was upon the earth he declared: ***“These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me”*** (Luke 24:44).

Jesus’ Words are verification that the Old Testament scriptures of the time were known by Him. As Messiah of the world and Deity, He did not raise a single word against the recognized canon of scriptures of that time. Manuscripts for the 39 books of the Old Testament canon have been found dating prior to Jesus. Moreover, lists of all 27 books of the New Testament have an earlier dating in the 3rd century. All New Testament manuscripts have also been found dating long before any so called canonization of the Roman Catholic Church in the 4th century. It is quite apparent that the collection of the Bible canon was not conceived by an official body of men, but a collection of the body of the Churches of Christ handed down by the prophets and apostles. In fact, the writings of the post apostolic fathers practically quote all of New Testament scripture on their own long before the arrival of Catholicism. Some may question, “what about the apocryphal books”? Beyond the 66 books of the current canon of scripture which agree one with the other, the apocrypha have been rejected widely for discrepancy with the Bible, including errors in history, geography, self-professed lack of inspiration, writing style, and a host of other reasons. They simply cannot stand the “proofing” which is required to be “law” and therefore absolute truth. Man tried to push his way into the canon, but man cannot know the thoughts of God, save God providing the knowledge (**1 Corinthians 2:11**). God is not a God of Chaos (**1 Corinthians 14:33**). He declares men understand His Word (**Ephesians 3:4**), but how could men understand the Word of God if it were not presented complete? God has provided all that is needed for life and Godliness according to the knowledge of Jesus Christ (**2 Peter 1:2-3**). The gospel was taught in complete (**Acts 20:27**) and it was proclaimed throughout all creation (**Colossians**

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1:23). God's Word will not be destroyed (**Isaiah 40:8**). The folks of the early centuries were quite prepared to defend and "proof" the truth as they received it from the apostles and indeed they embraced the canon as delivered. If the current collection of the canon of God isn't found lacking in instruction or in error, it cannot be rejected.

Due to the age of the gospel, concern has been expressed over its preservation. Since the formation of the original manuscripts, have the scriptures become corrupt? Is the truth there, but buried in widespread copying errors? What about the multiple translations and versions of the Bible, are they not proof of discrepancy? How can anyone know what is truth with such variance? Certainly there are a great deal of translations and versions of the Bible. The wide majority of the world's population has a translation or version of the Bible written in their primary language, but not all these writings are equal or sound. A vast sea of dynamic and paraphrase Bibles has corrupted feeble, undisciplined minds. Not even the more sound literal translations should be accepted without a critical eye. The blessing that safeguards these issues is the ability of man to go directly to the original languages of the Bible (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Koine Greek) and verify the words and reading of the text. But the critic declares these manuscripts are not the original text. They are only manuscript copies. How can they be viewed as accurate preservations of the gospel message?

In regard to the Old Testament, due to the testimony of Jesus, if the Bible is true, there is no reason to doubt the manuscripts of His time. There are not a large number of Old Testament manuscripts in existence. The reason for this situation is directly tied to the practice of the Jews destroying the manuscripts if an error was made in the creation of them. Therefore, up to recent times, the only copy man had of the Old Testament was the Masoretic Texts of 980 AD. However, with the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls, text dating from before the life of Christ substantiated the validity of the Masoretic text. The manuscripts were almost completely identical and the differences were found not to be doctrinal but penmanship or spelling errors. Further substantiation of the Old Testament is made with the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint, made in the

3rd century B.C.), the Talmud, Targum, and other minor manuscripts. Thus, the Old Testament text man has today can safely be trusted to be that of the time of Jesus.

In regard to the New Testament, for verification of its preservation, there exists over 5000 Greek manuscripts. In other languages there are over 4000 additional manuscripts verifying the New Testament. Yet, the validation does not end there. Outside manuscripts including quotations of the New Testament are in the tens of thousands. Because of the mass amount of data, scientifically speaking, the probability of missing or inaccurate text is essentially non-existent. The greatest harm today being done to the text of the Bible is the creation of non word-for-word texts (literal) which cause confusion about the doctrinal message of scripture. However, the original text of the Bible is certainly preserved, widely available, and provable. If it were not an accurate preservation, all that man would need to do is demonstrate where the Bible is incomplete or in error, and then of necessity it would have to be rejected.

The final examination of this article will focus on the completion of inspired scripture. Has God provided additional revelation beyond the time frame of the Old and New Testaments resulting in an incomplete Bible? Jesus, the prophets, and the apostles provided what man currently has in the form of the Bible through the inspiration of God. However, Catholics, Mormons, Jehovah's witnesses, Charismatics, and others believe that God still directly interacts with man providing further information for their lives. If revelation continues today, then the scriptures are not complete, the Bible is not all that is needed for life and Godliness, and the Bible is not perfect or true.

Looking at the day of Pentecost in **Acts 2**, the Holy Spirit was poured out as Joel and the prophet Isaiah had prophesied. The miraculous was given to men. The Apostles from that point on had the ability to lay hands on others to impart the miraculous (**Acts 19:1-6**). However, the miraculous could not be passed on by others (**8:14-19**). Consequently, it is logical to conclude that the miraculous would die out with the last person living who the apostles had laid hands upon. At the latest miracles would last until the second century. There would be no more revelation or