

A Critique of God's Word in Our Hands: The Bible Preserved for Us

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INTRODUCTION

Books, but especially Christian theological works, are commentaries on the authors' biblical knowledge about and belief in divine revelation. *God's Word in Our Hands: The Bible Preserved for Us* (Greenville, SC: Ambassador Emerald International, 2003, 430 pp.) edited by James B. Williams is no exception. Although the title of this sequel to *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man (MOGMOM)* promises great assurance to the reader about Bible preservation, the book is a commentary on the writers, academicians, professors, etc., who ultimately deny the Scriptural teaching of the preservation of God's Words. The basic "message" of the book is that God has promised to preserve His message but not His Words, and therefore there is no single Bible in the English language (certainly not the KJV) that can make the exclusive claim of being the Word of God. But this should be no concern for fundamentalists, the book alleges, because Satan's attack upon the Bible (Gen. 3:1 ff.) is not in the texts, translations or through Textual Criticism. However, it would not be "fair" for this reviewer to critique the authors' "message" without looking at their "words."

God's Word in Our Hands (GWOH) is "*deja vu* all over again." The thesis, arguments, and historical evidence are basically the same as *MOGMOM*, with the additional pages being attributed to several *ad hoc* explanations of preservation passages. Since this reviewer publicly critiqued the *MOGMOM* book in *Sound Words from New England*, Vol. 1, Issue 2, Nov.-Dec., 2000, many of his criticisms may be leveled at this sequel. At the outset, however, it is refreshing that this sequel has on its cover an artist's rendering of a Hebrew text, albeit un-pointed, instead of the liberal *RSV* (blurred in the 3rd and 4th editions) that graced the four editions of the *MOGMOM* book. This new cover does not mean, however, that the authors warn about the apostasy of many of the architects of their textual theory. In fact, the editor Williams is quick to acknowledge that many non-Fundamentalists find the book profitable (p. vi), presumably because of this silence. He does make a disclaimer about any blanket endorsement of the textual researchers, but it is difficult to comprehend how unregenerate Bible critics can "benefit or advance" the discussion of truth (p. xii). After all, the Lord asked of the wicked through Asaph, "*What hast thou to do to declare my statutes...? seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee*" (Ps. 50:16-17). The book, with two editors, five additional committee members and contributors, four more contributors, and ten academicians representing ten Bible schools and seminaries (International Baptist College, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Calvary Baptist Theological Seminary, Pillsbury Baptist Bible College, Northland Baptist Bible College, Faith Baptist Bible College and Theological Seminary, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, Maranatha Baptist Bible College, Temple Baptist Seminary, and Bob Jones University), divides into three parts including The Faith of Our Fathers, The Transmission of the Word of God,

and The Effect of Preservation on the Faith, to show that God preserved His message but not His words.

In a pastiche of articles such as this, it is expected that different literary style and skill will be noticed. However, just as its predecessor (*MOGMOM*), the quality of proofreading in *GWOH* has allowed several spelling, grammatical, and format gaffes to escape notice. Mis-spellings occur throughout (Wrestling for Wrestring, p. 96; *ipsissima* for *ipsissima*, p. 193; Diety for Deity, p. 264; Athenasias for Athanasias, p. 395; steam for stream, p. 423), split infinitives intersperse the text (pp. xii, 208, 342, 370), grammatical errors appear (lets for let's, p. 269) and format gaffes happen ("Dr." in front of Paul W. Downey in the chapter title and no other author has this designation although several writers have earned doctorates, p. 365).

GWOH is the outworking of a chain of events in American fundamentalism. Davey discusses "the fracturing of Fundamentalism over preservation" but fails to mention the culprit behind the fracturing (p. 193-194). The "bastion of fundamentalism" in Christian education, Bob Jones University, has employed Greek professors who have had an affinity for the Critical Text (CT) since the school's inception. This affinity turned into a love affair with the completed NASV in 1971, as BJU was one of the educational institutions to assist the Lockman Foundation's publication of this modern translation. By the middle 70's, BJU promoted the NASV as an alternative to the KJV. Through the years, BJU and many Bible schools influenced by them used the KJV in chapel and the classroom while denigrating the underlying Greek TR text. In the middle 90's, Pensacola Christian College exposed this "dirty little secret" of BJU in a series of videos, charging them with bringing the leaven of Textual Criticism into fundamentalism. This charge has brought a groundswell of concern on the part of fundamental Baptists pastors and parents as to where to send their "preacher boys" for theological education. The BJU-originated publications *MOGMOM*, *GWOH*, and Schneider and Tagiapetra's *Bible Preservation and the Providence of God (BPPG)* are efforts aimed at these rightfully concerned fundamental Baptists to say there is no difference between the NASV and the KJV and there is no concern for alarm. In fact, Williams implies that the preservation of the Scriptures is a non-essential (p. xix) even though he has edited two books about this doctrine. Hutcheson declares "some today are sidetracked from the proper battlefield and have busied themselves fighting their brethren over a particular translation" (p. 28). The coalition of ten schools wants to write voluminously about preservation but expects the KJV Only group to be quiet and non-disagreeable. This hypocrisy suggests the "academic agenda" that is elaborated on later in this review.

CONCERNS FOR FUNDAMENTALISTS

Neo-Orthodoxy Tendencies

Neo-orthodoxy developed out of liberalism after World War I as apostates began to redefine Biblically orthodox terms. One major area of redefining was with regard to the Bible. Neo-Orthodox theologians referred to the Word of God but did not identify it with the Scriptures. *GWOH* gives a new and un-Biblical definition to the expression "the Word of God," coming strikingly close to the claims of the old Neo-Orthodoxy. Neo-

Orthodoxy speaks of the Word of God as something other than the written Bible. One of the academicians, Samuel Schnaiter, has labored under cloud of the charge of Neo-Orthodoxy since 1983 when Charles Woodbridge labeled him thus. Although “Word of God” may mean the spoken or preached message of God, it ultimately refers to the inscripturated canonical Words of God, which definition *GWOH* rejects. The thesis of the *GWOH* is that God has preserved the Word of God, or “the message,” in the totality of manuscripts (pp. xxi-xxii). Harding bemoans that “serious departures from the preserved *message* in Scripture are occurring...” (p. 335). This suggests two Neo-Orthodox affirmations: God’s Word is the message and the message (God’s Word) is in, but not identical to, the Scripture. Furthermore, Downey asserts “God’s Word transcends written documents, even the physical universe, and will be completely and ultimately fulfilled if not one copy remains. The power and effectiveness and duration of the Word of God, and man’s responsibility to obey it, do not demand the presence or even the existence of any physical copy” (p. 376). These surmisings are not Biblical since the Lord identifies the inspired Word of God with the inscripturated canonical Words of God, stating, “*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words (remata), hath one that judgeth him: the word (logos) that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day*” (Jn. 12:48; cf. Rev. 20:12). The writers emphasize that not all of Christ’s Words or God’s Words are written down (p. 367). That is true. But that for which the mankind will be responsible are the preserved, written canonical Words of God (Mt. 24:35). Christ wrote some unknown Words in the sand (Jn. 8:6, 8), but man will not be held responsible for them at the judgment. Christ presumably said things in His teachings that were not written down (Jn. 21:25) and man won’t be accountable for those words. Believers will now be accountable for “*it is more blessed to give than to receive*” (Acts 20:35) only because Paul preached and Luke recorded this “*agrapha*” of the Lord. Man will not be held responsible for God’s spoken revelation other than the perfectly preserved and inscripturated canonical Scriptures.

Man-Centered Anthropology

A strange and unhealthy anthropology permeates this volume. Biblical anthropology, or what the Scriptures say about man, teaches that all men are fallible and can contribute nothing to the truth without the Bible and the help of the Holy Spirit. Anthropology that focuses on the exaltation of man at the expense of truth is non-Biblical. This man-centered anthropology manifests itself in four examples. First, Williams continues his “hero worship” of the Anglican Bible critics Westcott and Hort. In *MOGMOM* he asserted they were in heaven, and in *GWOH* he denigrates those who criticize them as misrepresenting or misinterpreting their commentaries (p. xv). Williams’ lack of discernment concerning these English Romanists is disconcerting, and to such an extent, that Minnick apparently wants to distance himself from Westcott-Hort when he affirms, “the Westcott-Hort Testament is not the text of modern translations” (p. 273). Downey evinces this lack of spiritual discernment by arguing for the genuineness of the salvation of the Roman Catholic patristics Athanasias, Origen, and Augustine (p. 395). From reading the Gnostic ramblings of Origen and the Romish dogmas of Augustine, can anyone seriously consider them saved men? Although Athanasias

defended the deity of Christ, he nevertheless was part of the Roman Catholic Church leadership and complicit in their sacral society cacadoxy.

A second manifestation of strange anthropology is the incessant barrage of acrimonious vitriol upon fundamentalists, and fundamentalists only, who want to speak out against other translations including the NASV. It would seem that regular warnings against the apostasy of Metzger and Aland, who have gone on record advocating the possibility of reducing the NT canon, and against the drift of the Neo-Evangelicalism of Wallace, Carson and Erickson, would permeate *GWOH*. Instead, the authors seem to have difficulty constraining themselves as they charge fundamentalists with being vitriolic (p. 391). Williams chides, "Although there were those who had strong convictions about the matter, they did not convey the mean spiritedness and use the vitriolic language so often present today in discussions of translations" (p. xvii). Downey directs this verbal attack against fundamentalist Waite stating: "His outrage toward those who do not accept his theory of perfect preservation seems a bit overdone" (p. 393). Other examples may be observed throughout (cf. pp. 2, 28, 110, 272, 365, *et al*).

The third manifestation of faulty anthropology is the repeated plea for "healing" for "this needless division over translations" (p. xviii). Doctrine divides Christians, and when it does, those with Scriptural authority need to rebuke those who make errant statements about doctrine and expect forthcoming repentance (II Tim. 2:24-28). Professed Christians with doctrinal deviations do not need to be healed, they need to be rebuked with expected repentance or else marked and avoided (Rom. 16:17). This faulty anthropology as expressed in *GWOH* does not reflect the Biblical teaching of the fallibility of the believer, and therefore offers the invalid antidote of "healing."

The most predominate manifestation of un-Biblical anthropology is the exaltation of man and man's words. Two early sections in the book promote what man has to say about preservation. Hutcheson utilizes 34 pages and 68 footnotes, in his chapter "The Heritage of American Orthodoxy," to give what earlier and later fundamentalists have taught about preservation. He cites men from James Brooks to John Rice to demonstrate that fundamentalists have not countenanced the TR and Bible preservation view. For the historical record, Hutcheson overlooks men for his historic fundamentalist chart of comparison such as W. Aberhart, B. F. Dearmore, and B. M. Cedarholm as strong defenders of the preserved text position (p. 29-30). Conley's chapter entitled "The Voice of the Preachers" continues to exalt man's words about the Words of God. His inclusion of baptismal regenerationist Augustine as one of the "great preachers," exacerbates his faulty anthropology through this lack of orthodox discernment, even though he makes a disclaimer about Augustine's sermons "advocating prayers for the dead" (p. 72). When will the committee members of *GWOH* recognize that "trusted voices" of men are secondary and therefore inferior authorities concerning revelation? The catenae of names the authors have used indicates that Protestant fundamentalism was both ignorant of and imprecise about the Biblical doctrine of preservation of the Words of God.

Williams echoes the committee members' fallacious anthropology by assuring his readership that "The translators of some of the most popular translations are reputed to be good, godly, and scholarly believers who would not purposely corrupt the Bible" (p. xvi). Hutcheson claims that R. A. Torrey's "credentials as a soulwinner are unimpeachable" (p. 25). The authors of *GWOH* would have Christians believe that the un-Biblical doctrine of good, godly scholars and soulwinners can be trusted absolutely whenever they

speak about the Bible. The student of the Bible should consider that a few years after the good, godly, scholarly and soul-winning Apostle Peter won thousands to Christ (Acts 2:14-41), Paul rebuked him for his hypocrisy concerning the truth (Gal. 2:11-14). Even the NT Apostles were fallible except in their inscripturated canonical sermons and writings. Man's restatement of Scripture must be judged with Scripture to determine its accuracy (I Cor. 14:29; cf Dt. 13:1-5). No man, not even a fundamentalist (living or dead), is infallible in his expression of Biblical truth, and such expressions must be scrutinized by the Bible (cf. Gal. 1:8; I Thess. 5:21). Paul's warning to Timothy should be seriously implemented by every Biblical fundamentalist: "*Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee*" (I Tim. 4:16).

The Buried Bible View

Shaylor initially states that God has preserved His written Word "in the totality" of manuscripts (p. xxi). But the authors contradict their major thesis throughout *GWOH*, suggesting they do not believe that which they cannot and have not proved. Minnick assures the reader that the significant variations between the TR and CT (in 25% of the NT) is only 1.19% (p. 271), whereas Downey concedes that there is a 7% deviation between the TR and the Westcott-Hort texts (p. 388). Again, Shaylor declares that "we can hold it [God's Word] in our hands" (p. 401), even though he quotes favorably Harding's belief that "we do not currently possess a Hebrew manuscript with that reading ["thirty"]" in I Sam. 13:1 (p. 414; cf. 361). Shaylor continues by stating "Perhaps in God's own time we will be allowed to discover that manuscript. Our confidence in the perfection of the *autographa* is not shaken by incomplete understating of how and where its wording is preserved" (p. 414). Shades of Neo-Orthodoxy; they hold to the "non-preserved preservation" view! The committee's affirmation of their position culminates in their declaration concerning Mt. 5:18: "Neither does this passage guarantee that all the words will be always available at all times" (p. 106). Preservation demands availability or the doctrine of preservation is meaningless. Downey asserts that the word "word" has been lost in the Hebrew text of Dt. 8:3 but recovered by and therefore preserved in the *LXX* translation (pp. 374-375). Finally, Shaylor concludes by stating "confusion arises when Christians assume that they can have the exact words of God in their language" (p. 406).

GWOH teaches the "Buried Bible" position. In effect, the committee and authors argue that we have the Word of God, but we do not have the Words of God because some Words are lost and need to be discovered through archaeological finds and restored through Textual Criticism. The Message is preserved but the Words of the Message are different (from 1.19% to 7% in the two competing texts) and missing but that does not affect the Message. The Bible is out there, but we are not sure where it is and when we will have all of it, but our responsibility is to dig it up through the sciences of archaeology and Text Criticism. The Christian may have great assurance that God has preserved His Buried Bible somewhere although it might not be available. This message is not spiritually appealing to Biblical Christians who believe the Lord Who has assured that His canonical Words will be available to every generation (Mt. 24:35; Jn. 12:48).

Ad Hoc Exegesis

God's Word in Our Hands: The Bible Preserved for Us purports to be a book about the Biblical doctrine of preservation as the subtitle suggests. At least two chapter titles and contents continue this promising theme: "What the Bible Really Says," and "What the Preservation Issue Has Taught Us." Yet, the authors are not interested in what the Bible says as much as what others say about the Bible, which in turn influences what the authors think the Bible says. The committee of *GWOH* admits that there is "implicit teaching regarding the preservation of the Word of God" (p. 83) while Davey rightly condemns Glenny for refusing to argue for "an explicit verse" which teaches preservation (p. 207). Since the authors of *GWOH* base their doctrine only on implicit teaching of the Bible, and implicit means something not clearly stated, it follows that they are arguing dogmatically for an unclear teaching in the Bible. This unclear teaching is perpetuated by the scores of scholars who quote one another. In fact, *GWOH* is about what past and present Bible critics have said about the Bible, and the authors admit that their real thesis is not the explicit teaching of the Bible about Bible preservation. In this 430 page volume, the committee states: "Obviously there are dozens of other passages cited by various advocates of the King James Only position that we have not addressed. Space would not permit a thorough exegesis of all of them. Such an exhaustive treatment would require an independent volume on the subject" (p. 117). They have space to cite hundreds of quotations from commentators, scholars, critics, preachers and historical fundamentalists, who support their Buried Bible position, but purposely very little space for meaningful Hebrew and Greek exegesis, and then that exegesis being *ad hoc*.

Only two sections in *GWOH* give extensive coverage of preservation passages (pp. 83-111 and 368-377). It appears that the authors scrambled to find commentators who were as imprecise and inaccurate as they in their exposition. The authors of *GWOH*, many who are capable of the exegesis of the Hebrew and Greek, give token explanations of significant passages. The chapter by the Editorial Committee entitled "What the Bible Really Says about Its Preservation" is extremely disappointing. First, 52 of the 63 endnotes in this chapter give the commentaries of others on passages such as Ps. 12:6-7; Ps. 119:89; Ps. 119:152; Isa. 40:8; I Pet. 1:23-25; and Mt. 5:18 (cf. pp. 111-117). The greatest problem with citing past and present scholars, including ex-member of the executive committee of the Dean Burgon Society Thomas Cassidy, is that they pass on what their predecessors taught *ad infinitum* so that no fresh exegesis is forthcoming. A case in point is Ps. 12:6-7. The committee, authors, and academicians are not aware that their token argument of the supposed gender discordance rule has been rejected by the fresh exegesis of Scripture itself. In trying to argue against the word "them" (masculine plural) having "words" (feminine plural) as the natural antecedent on the basis of gender discordance, the contributors have fallen into their own linguistic snare. It is common in Hebrew poetry for feminine nouns to take on masculine pronouns. The writer of Ps. 119, who deals with the Words of the Lord, accepted gender discordance as good Hebrew grammar with four outstanding examples in verses 111, 129, 152, and 167. Ps. 119:152 is one of the passages that *GWOH* rejects as teaching the preservation of the Lord's testimonies or "written words" forever (95). But according to the authors of *GWOH*, their Hebrew rule of good linguistics in Ps. 12:5-7, would not allow "them" (masculine plural) to refer to "testimonies" (feminine plural) in Ps. 119:152. Instead, the antecedent

of “them” must go back to the nearest word that is masculine plural, which in this case would be those who “*follow after mischief*” (Ps. 119:150). This of course is ludicrous. The two linguistic obstacles *GWOH* has to overcome to make Ps. 12:6-7 refer to the preservation of the poor and needy are the proximity rule of nearest antecedent and the rule of accepted gender discordance. However, they have not and can not overcome these linguistic obstacles which guard the truth, and so the exegetical interpretation of Ps. 12:6-7 stands that God has promised the perfect preservation of His Words for every generation from the time of their inscripturation forward.

The authors seek to explain away the doctrine of the preservation of the Words of God in the other aforementioned preservation passages. This hermeneutic practice is based on sophomoric exegesis girded up with straw men arguments and ad hoc explanations. In explaining Mt. 4:4, Downey calls a “theory” the orthodox expression: “God’s justice demands complete availability of every word for which mankind is accountable” (p. 374), in spite of the teaching of Mt. 4:4 and Jn. 12:48. Never once does Downey refer to the perfect tense verb “it is written” (*gegraptai γεγραπται*) which demands that Moses’ book of Deuteronomy, along with the rest of the Torah, had been and still was written in Christ’s day. He bolsters his rejection of the Lord’s bibliology with the straw man argument of denying that Christ was “promising the perpetuity of a manuscript” (p. 375). The advocates for the TR/KJV position defend the preservation of His Words, not manuscripts. He argues that the Hebrew word for “word” was lost but recovered in the LXX, undermining what the Lord said about the preservation of every consonant (jot) and vowel (tittle) of every Hebrew word of Scripture (Mt. 5:18). Although Davey understands the truth that the Bible must have the last say about itself by stating “all arguments about Scripture and which concern Scripture must—in some respect—rest on exegetical and theological data” (p. 208), *GWOH* for the most part ignores the application of this Biblical necessity.

Unproved Assumptions

The authors of *GWOH* are guilty of perpetuating several unproved assumptions as fact. These include the fallacious assumption that Christ and the Apostles used the LXX (p. 342, 360, 414), that Textual Criticism is a beneficial tool, and that different words in different Greek texts do not affect doctrine. The New Testament teaches explicitly that the Lord Jesus Christ used only the preserved Hebrew text, and that He and His apostles never had the Biblical, theological, or practical necessity to use the LXX for evangelizing the Gentiles. The lines of Biblical argument which are normally ignored include the Lord’s usage of *gegraptai* for the Hebrew text (Mt. 4:4; Lk. 4:4), His reference to Hebrew Jots and Tittles (Mt. 5:18), and His reference to the three-fold division of the Hebrew *Tanak* (Torah, Prophets, and Writings) in several passages (Lk. 11:50-51; 24:27, 44). Alleged quotes by the Lord and the Apostles from the OT are usually not *verbatim*, and history cannot prove that there was a pre-Christian LXX nor disprove a post-Christian LXX. The Lord gave inspired targums, or explanatory commentary, on the OT Scripture, producing inspired elaboration on OT texts (cf. Lk. 4:17-19). As far as the Gentile evangelism necessity, the Lord Jesus utilized the Hebrew OT for Jews (e.g., Mt. 5-7) and His authoritative Greek words for Gentiles (Mt. 15:21 ff.). Likewise, the Apostles used the Hebrew OT in evangelizing the Jews, and Greek NT words for the

Gentiles (cf. Acts 13-21). On the day of Pentecost, the Lord used tongues to evangelize various people groups (Acts 2:1 ff.).

Gephart expresses the committee's unproved assumption for "The Need for Textual Criticism" (p. 165-166). He declares that "text criticism is mandated" but he does not give a Biblical authority. Somehow, Timothy ministered at Ephesus without a Pauline course in Text Criticism (cf. I Tim. 6:3-5). Instead, textual critics (p. 164-165) and historical evidence mandate the use of Textual Criticism. Since Textual Criticism works for secular literature, "reverent textual criticism" must work "to recover the exact form of words and phrases used in the original" (p. 166). Gephart fails to define historically Textual Criticism and uses it anachronistically for Erasmus and the KJV translators. In contrast to this unproved assumption for the need of Textual Criticism, the Lord promised to preserve all of His Words for every generation to recognize and receive by faith. (Ps. 12:6-7; Jn. 12:48; 17:8, 20). Textual Criticism will never recover what the Lord supposedly chose not to preserve, and has thus far manifested this lack of recovery, and if Textual Critics would ever claim the final restoration of the Lord's text, how would anyone know authoritatively?

A third unproved assumption is that different words in texts and translations do not mean different doctrine. Minnick's chapter on "How Much Difference Do the Differences Make?" (pp. 229-277) is a blatant example. After a series of charts and analysis, Minnick confidently maintains that even though "only a small percentage of variants affect understanding significantly" (p. 270), "not a single variant in any way alters what Christians believe and practice" (p. 271). Yet, how does he know, since the Bible warns about changes through textual and canonical tampering which began to occur in the first century (II Pet. 3:16; II Thess. 2:2; cf. also Dt. 12:32; 13:1-5; Rev. 22:18-19). To prove the worthlessness of his whole chapter, all this reviewer would have to do is add or subtract two words, "no" and "not," to Minnick's concluding arguments on pages 271-272, and thereby change his position to say exactly the opposite of what he wants to say (2 words out of 497 words or .004 difference!).

Uncertain "Certainty"

Williams bemoans the fact "that such large numbers of Americans have lost that confidence in the Bible as the inerrant Word of God" (p. xi). He fails to give the primary reason for this loss of confidence among Americans, which is the multiplication of translations, including the NASV. When options occur and there is no absolute authority, uncertainty arises. *GWOH* argues that the final authority for the best translation American fundamental Christians should use should be fundamentalist leaders and their "totality of manuscripts" view. Harding presents this position of "certainty" (p. 336 ff.) based on the totality of manuscripts view (p. 343), which leads to uncertainty since no one knows which words are the final absolute authority. This uncertain "certainty" position of Harding and company is in contrast with what Solomon told his understudy: "*Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, That I might make thee know the **certainty of the words of truth**; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?*" (Prov. 22:20-21).

Academic Agenda

Since this book represents at least ten Bible colleges and seminaries (p. iv), there seems to be an academic agenda behind *GWOH*. All of these schools would claim to be in the mainstream of historic fundamentalism and consequently need the support of fundamental churches and parents to send their fundamental “preacher boys” to them for theological education. This of course puts the contributors of *GWOH* in an awkward and unenviable position. Most fundamental churches in America, especially independent Baptist churches, still believe in and preach and teach from the KJV. This coalition of ten schools must convince these pastors and parents that the NASV is a viable option to the KJV, that their professors are orthodox even if they teach from the NASV, that there is really no difference between the NASV and the KJV, that they should not listen to the KJV Only “nay-sayers,” and that their preacher boys will be indoctrinated in “the science of textual criticism” and ultimately reject their respective pastors’ and parents’ KJV Only “mentality.”

While dealing with academia, this reviewer noticed several unusual expressions. There seems to be an inference that some of the writers have a loose understanding of what inspired means or to what it refers (p. 3). The terms “balanced” and “orthodox” permeate this volume and are defined from their perspective as referring to *GWOH*’s unproved view of preservation (p. 3). Furthermore, the committee asserts that the “third heaven” is “the eternal abode of God” (p. 92) but Solomon states “*the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee [God]*” (I Kings 8:27).

Denial of the Means of Preservation

The contributors of *GWOH* perpetuate the mantra that God has not revealed “how” He would preserve His Words (p. xix). The Bible is clear that Israel was the means for preserving the OT (Rom. 3:2) and the NT churches were the means for preserving the OT and NT (Mt. 28:19-20). The authors of *GWOH* have a faulty bibliology because they have a faulty ecclesiology. They hold to the Protestant universal church reforming the Roman Catholic Church (pp. xiii-xiv) which was a “good movement gone bad.” They maintain that the Church, “the body of believers called ‘the church’” (p. xiii), must restore (through scholars using Textual Criticism) the Word of God. Their Platonic catholicity (p. 376) in ecclesiology drives their neo-catholic rationalism so that they must have historical proof to believe the doctrine of verbal preservation (cf. Jn. 20:29). Paul Downey chides the KJV Only advocates saying, “The Christian faith has never been a blind fideism, but has always relied on both the revelation of God and empirical evidence” (p. 393). But another Paul says “*(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)*” (II Cor. 5:7).

The Bible teaches that the local, NT immersionist (Baptist) churches must receive and preserve the Words of God. With all deference to lifetime missionary J. B. Williams, the reviewer is amazed that Williams does not understand “the main purpose for the church’s existence” (p. xiv; cf. p. 40); he thinks it is merely soul winning. All four Gospels and Acts give the purpose of the Lord’s churches and that is the Great Commission which includes evangelism, baptizing, and instructing to observe or “preserve” the Lord’s commandments (Mt. 28:19-20). The church, the one with bishops and deacons, and which immerses converts, is the pillar and ground of the truth (I Tim.

3:15). It is the exclusive role of the Lord's candlesticks to work with Him to preserve His Words for future generations (Rev. 22:7-10; cf. also Dan. 12:4, 9). Those outside the Lord's churches have no privilege and no authority to be involved in preserving God's Words (cf. Rev. 2:1 ff.). In understanding and perpetuating "all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27), scholars who do not have NT church authority are no match for the shepherds of the Lord's flocks and for His sheep (I Jn. 2:20, 27), who hear the Lord's voice (Jn. 10:27).

CONCLUSION

What the Bible Teaches

The Bible teaches the following truths which *GWOH* mainly rejects, ignores or distorts:

1. God's Words are preserved in Heaven (cf. Ps. 119:89; Dan. 10:21, 11:2 ff.; Amos 1:1; Micah 1:1; Jn. 17:8; Rev. 1:1).
2. God's Words were inspired perfectly in the autographs (II Tim. 3:16-18; II Pet. 1:21).
3. The Lord promised to preserve these inspired Words for each subsequent generation (Ps. 12:6-7; Mt. 24:35).
4. He used the Jews to preserve the OT Scriptures (Rom. 3:2) and the NT candlesticks to preserve the OT and NT Scriptures (Mt. 28:19-20; Rev. 22:7-10).
5. NT churches are to recognize, receive and preserve the Lord's Words (Jn. 17:8, 20; I Thess. 2:13) while rejecting wrested Words (II Pet. 3:16) and forged canons (II Thess. 2:2) offered by Satan (Gen. 3:1 ff.; cf. Dt. 13:1-5). These same churches have recognized the KJV as the Words of God in the English language and have rejected at the same time modern versions, including the NASV, as embracing Gnostic laced readings in both text and translation.
6. The Lord has given His explicit Words of revelation to man in order that man may be able to demonstrate his stewardship with all of God's Words at his respective judgment (Jn. 12:48; Rev. 20:12).
7. The Lord Jesus Christ expects man to receive by faith His revelation and produce accurate translations based on the Received Bible movement which originated with Him (Jn. 17:8, 20; Rom. 16:25-26; cf. Neh. 8:8).

Final Thoughts

1. It is apparent that the Biblical doctrine of the preservation of the Words of the Lord Jesus Christ has not been enunciated or elucidated Biblically by many Christian theologians of the past whose writings are extant.
2. Twentieth century historical fundamentalism, for the most part, has failed to study the Scriptures for Christ-honoring bibliology. It is apparent that historic fundamentalism, in doctrine and/or practice, is not necessarily the same as Biblical NT Christianity.
3. In spite of this recent spate of books purporting to espouse "Bible preservation," great confusion has arisen, and therefore fundamental Baptist pastors and parents who uphold the KJV need to study the Scriptures for their defense of the TR and KJV.

4. These same pastors and parents are the target of Critical Text Bible schools who want to change their individual and collective position on Bible texts and translations. The next generation of “preacher boys” is at stake.
5. The Bible says Christians should have all of the Words of God available in their own hands. *GWOH* says the Bible does not say this and that Christians should not expect to have God’s Words in their hands or to think that this really matters anyway.
6. The Christian in his local NT church with the Words of God and the indwelling Holy Spirit has all authority, privilege and responsibility to reject the best of man’s reasoning (e.g., *GWOH*) and receive all of the Lord’s Words.
7. The Lord has inspired His *autographa* (II Tim. 3:16-17), promised to preserve all of His Words (Ps. 12:6-7), and commanded believers to make accurate translations (Mt. 28:19-20) based on the Received Bible mindset (Jn. 17:8, 20), which movement He began (cf. Acts 2:41, 8:14, 11:1, 17:11; I Thess. 2:13). The fulfillment of these truths in the English language is the King James Version.