

AN EVIDENTIAL REVIEW OF THE VPP THEORY

By Lim Seng Hoo

The doctrine of Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) is a beloved doctrine held by fundamentalist Bible believing Christians and orthodox theologians. J. Oliver Buswell defined it thus: - “The entire Bible in its every word is the Word of God and “inerrant” in the original writings. This means that what the Bible says, when correctly understood grammatically and in its historic setting, is absolutely true in the sense that the meaning of every word is true.”¹ God gave us a Bible free from error in its original manuscripts (Autographs) and providentially preserved this through many generations of recopying without serious error, evidenced through thousands of reliable copies and fragments (apographs) surviving down to this day. In recent times, a theory has arisen that we have today a Perfect Bible not only in Autographs but also in apographs (copies). Its proponents call this the “doctrine” of “Verbal Plenary Preservation” (VPP), having as its primary postulate: -

That in the fullness of time (1611), God providentially guided the translators of the King James Bible (KJV) to restore a perfect set of apographa copy or text founded on the Hebrew OT Masoretic text and the Greek NT Textus Receptus, that is perfect and jot and tittle exact with the Original Infallible God-breathed Autographa.”

This VPP view however goes beyond the traditional conservative view of KJV fundamentalists, and it’s surfacing in 2002 at the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC), sadly resulted in not a small stir. It is with a burdened heart thus, that this writer began to undertake this independent research and review, made in accordance with the laws of evidence and the rules of scholarship. This work is not aimed at disparaging VPP theorists, but to put forth facts, reason and objective faith in purview; it is not aimed at individual persons but at the erroneous view; and it is written as speaking the truth in Christian charity (1John 4:7-21). I would state unequivocally at the outset: - 1) VPP proponents are not enemies but dear brothers in the Lord. They have brought problems upon themselves, not to say also to the Church, but we ought all the more to pray for them, 2) The KJV is the best English Bible available today, excellent in translation and founded on original language texts that are closest in reliability, far to be preferred over the adulterated Westcott & Hort texts used in modern versions, and 3) This humble effort is made to my best ability and in reverent fear towards God and as providing “things honest in the sight of all men” (Rom 12:17).

The outline of this review is as follows: -

Part I: The VPP Theoretical Basis Examined

Part II: Key Witnesses of F H A Scrivener, Dean John William Burgon and E F Hills

Part III: The Decisive Absence of a Purified “VPP” Text

Part IV: The Dean Burgon “Oath”

Summary of Review Findings and Concluding Comments

¹ J. Oliver Buswell, “A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion” 1994 Reprint by Christian Life Publishers Pte Ltd, Singapore, Volume 1 Page 186.

PART I – THE VPP THEORETICAL BASIS EXAMINED

The VPP theoretical basis is exemplified in Rev Dr Jeffrey Khoo's dissertation, "A Plea for a Perfect Bible" (The Burning Bush January 2003), which we shall start with. Dean John William Burgon would insist that every hypothesis is to be tested under rules of scholarship on the logic of *facts* as opposed to Dr Hort's shortcut theorizing without hard facts! He wrote, "In the ascertainment of the facts of the Sacred Texts, the laws of evidence must be strictly followed. In questions relating to the inspired Word, mere speculation and unreason have no place. ... According to the laws which regulate scientific conclusions, all the elements of proofs must be taken into consideration. Nothing deserves the name of science in which the calculation does not include all the phenomena. The base of the building must be conterminous with the facts."²

Results are not to be prejudged but unbiased evidence must be collected and objectively analysed. A positive set of evidence confirms the hypothesis; otherwise, a null hypothesis. Hypothesis that is well supported becomes theory, expanding the way for more research. When the theory gains wide acceptance, it becomes a law or doctrine. Based on this evidential approach, the VPP hypothesis has a very long way to go yet. Its postulate places a most onerous weight on its proponents. All it takes for a null hypothesis is a single tiny error in the Hebrew/Greek text underlying the KJV. A few examples of problems that have to be surmounted include: -

A. The Problem of Discrepancies

The footnote to 1 Chr 11:11 in the New Scofield Reference Bible states: -

"In copying manuscripts, mistakes in numbers sometimes occur. Many disagreements between numbers in Samuel and Kings, and those in Chronicles, are alleged. Actually, out of the approximately 150 instances of parallel numbers in those books, fewer than one-sixth disagree. In two cases a different number is given for the age of a king at his accession (cp. 2Chr 22:2 with 2Ki 8:26; and 2Chr 36:9 with 2Ki 24:8); in the other thirteen cases of this type, numbers agree. Certain disagreements are very small (cp. 1Chr 21:5, as to Judah, with 2Sam 24:9; 2Chr 2:17-18 with 1Ki 5:15-16; and 2Chr 8:18 with 1Ki 9:28). Sometimes the apparent discrepancy disappears on careful study (cp. 1Chr 21:25 with 2 Sam 24:24; 2Chr 3:4 with 1Ki 6:2). When numbers seem clearly to disagree, it is generally best to keep an open mind unless evidence is available on which to make a decision. God gave us a Bible free from error in the original manuscripts. In its preservation throughout many generations of recopying, He providentially kept it from serious error, although He permitted a few scribal mistakes. The small proportion of mistakes where there is disagreement testifies to the scrupulous care with which Bible manuscripts were copied. That there are some divergences should warn us to compare Scripture with Scripture and always to recognise the danger of overemphasizing any isolated passage."

The VPP theory evidently was unknown to the New Scofield KJV authors. Despite this, Dr Jeffrey Khoo takes up two examples that he cursorily suggests can be "harmonized" away: -

² The Revision Revised, pages 8, 9 and 485. The Traditional Text, Vol I, pages 13 and 205.

2 Ki 8:26 (Ahaziah began to reign at 22) and 2 Chr 22:2 (Ahaziah began to reign at 42)

Dr Khoo says, “It is not improbable to reconcile this by explaining that prior to Ahaziah’s official reign at the age of 42, he might have co-reigned with his father at the age of 22”. Careful, contextual reading of Scripture would however show quite otherwise: -

- 1) Both 2 Ki 8 and 2 Chr 21 record that Ahaziah’s father, Jehoram, commenced reign at thirty-two for eight years and died at forty. Jehoram did not reign long enough to share a 20-year co-regency with his *youngest* son Ahaziah (Jehoahaz). If Ahaziah “assumed sole reign at forty-two when his father died”, he also had to be older than his father!
- 2) Both 2 Ki and 2 Chr accounts tell us that Ahaziah “reigned one year” and was killed of Jehu. Per 2 Ki, Ahaziah would have died at 23. He also did not reign nor live long enough to share a 20-year co-regency with his father.
- 3) Correlation of the regnal chronologies of the Kings of Judah and of Israel in the Bible would also preclude this co-regency. 2 Ki 9:29 tells us that Ahaziah began to reign in the eleventh year of King Joram of Israel, while 2 Ki 8:25 tells us it was in the twelfth year of Joram. It is possible that Ahaziah co-reigned one year with his father during the latter’s sickness recorded in 2 Chr 21:18, and not longer than this.
- 4) That no Hebrew Masoretic manuscript gives a variant reading here, as cited by Dr Khoo, seals in the null hypothesis. [NB: Some Septuagint and Syriac manuscripts give twenty-two years for 2Chron 22:2, the LXX having been translated from pre- 3rd Century BC Hebrew manuscripts, while the Masoretic scripts are dated 10th C AD. Dean Burgon holds the Syriac Peshitto (extant texts from 2nd C AD) as originating from none other than Antioch Syria and “mainly in agreement with the Traditional Text”³.]

2Sam 8:4 (700 horsemen) and 1Chron 18:4 (7,000 horsemen)

Dr Khoo says it may be that one counted them one-by-one and the other group-by-group. The obvious difficulty is that all the other numerals given in these texts are in concurrence – *one thousand chariots, twenty thousand footmen* and horses David reserved for *one hundred chariots* and his slaying of *twenty two thousand men* (Syrians). If 2Sam 8:4 counted horsemen in groups, why did it not also do the same for the chariots, footmen and slain men?

The logic problem in such an approach is that it necessitates the assumption that VPP is true before it is proven, i.e. it puts the cart before the horse. Such “harmonizing” would inflict harm to the principles of Bible exegesis because it creates large difficulties in reading and understanding God’s Word – one never knows when a number is a number or a group of numbers. This so-called “harmonisation” would give rise to 1) discord created as to all the other corresponding numerals in the above verses, 2) the way being opened for “spiritualising” non-literal, liberal interpretation of the Word of God.

³ The Traditional Text, Vol I, Chapter VI, pages 123 – 134, and in particular p 130.

But God's Word states, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." (2Cor 13:1, Deut 19:15) If the above verses therefore are at odds, they cannot be established; therefore one of them has to be correct and the other probably a scribal error!

Since it is normal that an army would have more footmen than horsemen, and more horsemen than chariots, seven thousand horsemen in 1Chron 18:4 would seem the more correct. (See also for example Solomon's 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen in 1Ki 10:26). When we research evidential sources older than the 10th Century AD Masoretic texts, we find this true! The Septuagint, with older extant textual copies dating back to the 2nd and 3rd Century AD, has 2Sam 8:4 exactly as 1Chron 18:4, "one thousand chariots, seven thousand horsemen and twenty thousand foot soldiers! And the Hebrew Dead Sea scrolls also, recently discovered and dating back to the time of Christ, confirm this reading!

To finally cap this, the KJV translators recognised the 2Sam 8:4 error of the Masoretic, which actually reads "one thousand seven hundred horsemen"! The word "*chariots*" is not in the Masoretic and thus italicised in the KJV. (The CUV and NASV are thus more faithful to the Masoretic than the KJV on this point). Confronted with the scribal error revealed by the parallel account of 1Chron 18, the KJV translators, without any Hebrew warrant available at the time, chose to deviate from the Masoretic and broke up the one thousand seven hundred into one thousand, to which they added the word "*chariots*" and left the balance seven hundred as horsemen, to reduce the discrepancy. Clearly they recognized the Masoretic scribal error and chose to correct its reading to the best of their judgement at the time.

B. The Problem of the Proof Texts Offered

VPP theorists offer as their proof texts: -

Ps 12:6-7: "*The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.*"

Matt 5:18: "*For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*" And Matt 24:35: "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*"

The above verses on careful reading however would entirely refute rather than substantiate VPP! Ps 12:6-7 when taken to mean the preservation of God's Word, contradicts the postulate that the apographs were only restored perfect during the 1611 translation of the KJV. "*From this generation forever*" must mean every single generation from David! (But please also see Appendix B). Matt 5:18 and 24:35 – when the earth passes away, all that it contains (including all apographs) shall also pass away! The references therefore cannot be to material apographs but rather, as the context would show, to the absolute authority and inviolable claims of God's Word upon us.

Ps 119:140: "*Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.*"

Was the psalmist's love of God's Word due to the purity of the apographs? And this Psalm, being written before the completion of Scripture canon, if VPP pureness (completeness, perfect to every jot and tittle) is meant, should have been the last book of the Bible.

Is not the purity here rather the *purifying effect of God's Word*, as illustrated through the entire Psalm as well as say in Ps 19:7-9, "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether." And in Heb 4:12, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

C. The Problem of the Analogies / Assumptions Used

Dr Khoo argues for VPP with indirect rhetorical analogies and assumptions: -

- 1) He suggests that Dean Burgon substituted the word "closest" for "perfect" in the Dean Burgon Society statement, "The Texts which are *closest* to the original autographs": to "counteract Westcott & Hort's views on the identity of the true text."

But, is it reasonable that a fighter-scholar of Dean Burgon's calibre would do this (the two words differ in plain meaning)? Why restrain his punches with a weak "closest" when he could have leveraged a death knell force of "perfect" against the corrupters of God's Word if he believed in a Perfect KJV apographa? Note also the plural "Texts" – did Burgon not rather have in mind the whole family of Traditional manuscripts (as we shall see) as together being closest to the Autographs, rather than just one script?

- 2) Dr Khoo interprets the term "virtual photocopy" in G I Williamson's commentary of the Westminster Confession, to mean "perfect, exact, equivalent."

The Oxford dictionary in contrast defines "virtual" as "*almost or nearly the thing described, but not completely*" and give as an example "virtual reality", "a system in which images that look like real objects are created by computer and appear to surround a person wearing special equipment." Moreover, Williamson himself is an advocate of the NKJV and not the KJV of the Bible.

- 3) Reasonable Faith versus Unreasonable Faith. When evidential facts contradict VPP, Dr Khoo appeals inconsistently to the "Logic of faith" while pleading ignorance with (blind) faith, "We do *not* know, we do not know but we believe, we believe!"

But our faith is in the glorious Lord Jesus Christ, the Way, the *Truth* and the Life! This Faith does not contradict Reason; but when they arrive together at the seashore and Reason can go no further, they bid each other a fond farewell as Faith departs walking upon the waters into the far horizon beholding Him who is invisible. Thus if evidence is presented against the VPP hypothesis, one cannot plead faith against reason!

- 4) Dr Khoo sidesteps the clear evidence against VPP with the rhetorical, "When Science contradicts what the Bible says concerning origins, who are we going to believe?"

But Science never contradicts the Bible; only "science" falsely so-called does! When that happened in the case of Darwinism, God raised up Creation Scientists with irrefutable evidence to demolish the falsehood of evolutionists! If the VPP hypothesis

were true likewise, God would provide the irrefutable evidence. If not, the hypothesis is null and we would be best staying with the old, proven and trusted doctrine.

- 5) Dr Khoo argues that the KJV has God's signal stamp of approval to be singled out for bestowment of its' underlying VPP original language text, per Matt 7:17-20 because "it had been used by many missionaries as a basis for their translation work."

The truth is that in most other languages including Chinese, translation is not based on the KJV apographa. So as not to alienate our Chinese brethren, Dr Khoo say that the Chinese United Bible (CUV) is "the best, most faithful, most reliable, and most accurate Bible for the Chinese speaking people," just as the KJV is for the English speaking. He cited 15 verses (Matt 17:21, 18:11, 23:14, Mark 7:16, 9:44, 46, 11:26, 15:28, Luke 17:36, 23:17, John 5:4, Acts 8:37, 15:34, 24:7, 28:29) as being omitted from the NIV/Westcott & Hort but found in the CUV. However in fact, 13 are not in the CUV text but only in the margin (in brackets and smaller print preceded with "some old Mss contains ~"), while Mark 9:44 and 46 are omitted. Additionally, of the list of verses scissored out of the NIV cited in pp 82–86 of Dr Khoo's book, "Kept Pure in All Ages", most, such as Col 1:2, 14, 2:2, 11, 1Thess 1:1, 2 Thess 2:4, 1 Tim 2:7, 3:3, 4:12, 5:4, 16, 6:5, 7, 2 Tim 1:11, 1 Pet 1:22, 4:1, 14, 1John 4:3, 5:7, Rev 1:8, 11, 5:14, 11:1, 17, 15:2, 16:5, 14, 21:24 are not in the CUV.

To again bring home the point, the CUV for 2Sam 8:4 states 1,700 horsemen against the 700 horsemen of the KJV. Which one is most faithful, or "VPP" – the CUV or KJV? If all believers of various tongues were guided by the "common faith" (the E F Hills approach that Dr Khoo extends), would we not end up with numerous "VPP" texts for the different language Bibles, including some variants of Westcott & Hort? Would this not be self-contradictory and self-defeating?

D. The Problem of the Apographs and Texts

Another crucial difficulty for the VPP postulate is the apographa evidence: -

- 1) Of the thousands of extant apographa both OT and NT, no two are alike, which would mean in all probability that not even a single one is jot and tittle perfect!
- 2) Bible translation is not done from apographa but from edited texts derived from majority readings of available apographa. Since there are various texts: Erasmus (five different editions), Stephens, Beza, etc, it is hard to set forth one particularly as the perfect one!
- 3) The KJV was not translated jot and tittle from one existing edited text available in 1611. In terms of the NT, F H A Scrivener's reverse engineered TR post-dates the KJV translation by over two centuries. Scrivener started with Beza 1598, and edited in over 190 verse changes documented from other sources.
- 4) On the Masoretic OT Text, Hebrew (like English and other languages) underwent change over time so that the original ancient Hebrew of the Autographs was different from the Hebrew of the Masorettes, which would preclude jot and tittle reproduction.
- 5) The crucial and decisive absence of a "single purified text" is dealt with in Part III.

E. The Problem of A New “Doctrine”

Another grave problem for VPP proponents is the promotion of new “doctrine”.

- 1) This “doctrine” is new because it uniquely refers to the KJV underlying original language texts, and thus could only be held after 1611. Those living before 1611 could not have known that they had imperfect apographa that God would only fully restore jot and tittle perfect during the KJV translation through 57 select translators!
- 2) VPP is unknown in all major conservative Systematic Theology references. J Oliver Buswell on “variant readings that considerably surprised him at first” wrote, “This fact is not essentially different from the generally known fact that the common English translation of the Bible is not inerrant... We contend for the *inerrancy of the meaning* which the inspired writers intended to convey in their original manuscripts.” Even today, VPP is a very fresh theory held by a very small minority of proponents.
- 3) Tellingly, the KJV translators did not hold a VPP view. In their preface to the Reader, they wrote their “reason for setting diversity of senses in the margin, where there is great probability for each”. “It hath pleased God in his Divine Providence here and there to scatter words and sentences of that difficulty and doubtfulness, not in doctrinal points that concern salvation, (for in such it hath been vouched that the Scriptures are plain) but in matters of less moment, that fearfulness would better beseem us than confidence, and if we will resolve, to resolve upon modesty with S. *Augustine: It is better to make doubt of those things which are secret, than to strive about those things that are uncertain.*”

Finally, VPP theorists cap their appeal by arguing that without a perfect Bible, we cannot be certain of our salvation promised in the Bible, and that saving faith (the faith required to be saved) is also the same faith that would lead to the VPP view. But this is a dangerous view.

Did all that lived before 1611 lack saving faith or doubt their salvation? What about all who have not heard of VPP? Isn't the glorious gospel of Christ crucified, resurrected and ascended simple enough to save a little child as well as a thief dying on a cross! In every age, language and nation, “The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit” (Ps 34:18). The scribes and Pharisees, having the oracles of God, crucified our Saviour, while poor and unlearned sinners repented and believed unto eternal life! We thus should have great carefulness towards all new theology even as Charles Spurgeon rightly warned, “There is nothing new in theology except that which is false.”

PART II – KEY WITNESSES OF SCRIVENER, BURGON & HILLS

VPP theorists often cite F H A Scrivener, John William Burgon (and his friend Edward Miller) and Dr E F Hills as key authorities to support their VPP proposition. A careful literature review is necessary to audit this – and this is arduous work though not to be compared to Dean Burgon’s labours in defense of the KJV against the Westcott-Hort revisionism. The essential publications that are required reading for clear evidential light on the true views of these key authorities cited, include: -

- 1) “The Revision Revised – A Refutation of Westcott and Hort’s False Greek Text and Theory,” 1881, by Dean John William Burgon. Re-published, Dean Burgon Society.
- 2) “The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels, Volume I”, 1896, by Dean John William Burgon, edited by Edward Miller, M.A posthumously after the Dean’s death. Re-published, Dean Burgon Society.
- 3) “The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels, Volume II”⁴, 1896, by Dean John William Burgon, edited by Edward Miller, M.A posthumously after the Dean’s death. Re-published, Dean Burgon Society.
- 4) “Inspiration and Interpretation: Seven Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford”, 1861 by Dean John William Burgon, re-published, Dean Burgon Society.
- 5) “The King James Version Defended” by Dr Edward F. Hill’s, Fourth Edition 1984, reprinted 1996, The Christian Research Press.

A. Prebendary F H A Scrivener

The importance of Prebendary Frederick H A Scrivener’s view lies in the identification of his Greek Edition of the TR/KJV by VPP theorists as either the VPP Text or very close to it. It is thus crucial to understand who Scrivener was and what his views were. Scrivener and Dean Burgon were mutual friends and admirers, calling each other *facile princeps* in textual criticism, and sharing similar⁵ though not exact views. Scrivener however served on the Revision Committee⁶ (where he and Dr Hort were the two textual experts), commissioned to revise the AV via “the removal of ‘PLAIN AND CLEAR ERRORS’ whether in the Greek Text originally adopted by the Translators, or in the Translation made from the same”. “Only necessary changes were to be made – to introduce as few alterations as possible into the Text of the AV”, and “they should indicate such alteration in the margin.”⁷

1. If Scrivener held to a Perfect KJV underlying Text, would he in good conscience have sat on the Revision Committee?
2. Moreover, Scrivener’s 1881 Greek Edition was a by-product of the Revision Committee! The RV alterations made were eventually too many for the margin, and Scrivener and Archdeacon Palmer, were assigned to compile these. Scrivener’s work resulted in, “The New Testament in the Original Greek, according to the Text followed in the Authorized

⁴ These two Traditional Text volumes, published in 1896 after the Dean’s home calling, were arranged, completed and edited by Edward Miller, M.A. and require careful distinguishing of the Dean’s writings from Miller’s completing notes. Vol I details Principles and Guiding Truths in Sacred Textual Criticism while Vol II discusses The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels.

⁵ The Revision Revised, pages 231 and 246.

⁶ The Revision Revised, pages 37, 231 and 502.

⁷ The Revision Revised, page 3.

Version, together with the Variations adopted in the Revised Version. Edited for the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press, 1881". This set forth for the first time "the Greek Text followed by the KJV Translators of 1611, i.e. Beza's NT of 1598 supplemented in above 190 places from other sources traced out in his Appendix. At the foot of each page, Scrivener shows what changes have been introduced into the Text by the Revisers of 1881." "Dr Palmer, taking the Text of Stephens (1550) as his basis, presents the Readings adopted by the Revisers of the AV and relegates the displaced Readings (1611) to the foot of each page."⁸

3. Like Dean Burgon, Scrivener defended the Received Text against the purposeful corruptions of Westcott & Hort, "pleading faithfully, - but he pleaded in vain."⁹ It is clear however that neither Scrivener nor Dean Burgon regarded the TR as perfect, let alone regard Scrivener's 1881 Greek edition as the Perfect, dynamically restored virtual photocopy of the Autographs¹⁰. In fact Dean Burgon had to defend Scrivener's 1881 publication, saying this "does not by any means represent his own views. The learned Prebendary merely edited the decision of the two-thirds majority of the Revisionists, -- *which were not his own.*"¹¹
4. Scrivener made other editions of manuscripts such as his "Full and Exact Collation of about Twenty Greek Manuscripts of the Gospels", "Exact Transcript of Codex Augiensis, & c., to which is added a full Collation of Fifty Manuscripts" and, "Collation of Codex Bezae (D)"¹².

B. Dean John William Burgon

Dean John William Burgon (1813 – 1888) is rightly regarded as the ablest KJV defender of all time, who stood up firmly against the Westcott and Hort revisionism, proving clearly and beyond doubt that the KJV apographa were far more reliable and to be preferred for retention. That he did not hold a VPP view (a term he never used) is however patently clear. His own dream endeavour was to revise the underlying KJV NT text closer towards the true Text! The copious notes he left behind included about 150 corrections in St. Matthew's Gospel alone."¹³ He also spent six months on 1Tim 3:16 alone and many more on "The last twelve verses of St Mark's Gospel". Proof of this is well documented in all the above listed publications: -

1. Burgon's statement that he was not against the Revision Instructions of the Convocation of the Southern Province but protested against the flouting of those instructions, and lamented the incredibly poor outcome of the ten years of efforts expended¹⁴.
2. Burgon took pains to say several times that the issue is not that the TR is infallible.

"Let no one at all events obscure the one question at issue, by asking, -- "Whether we consider the Textus Receptus infallible? We care nothing about it. Any Text would

⁸ The Revision Revised, footnote on pages 49, 50 and 126.

⁹ The Revision Revised, pages 106 and 231.

¹⁰ The Revision Revised, footnote 2 on page 246 wherein Burgon discusses the difficulties and strain on the attention of the works involved in Textual Criticism, leaving an *exact* collation for a later age.

¹¹ The Revision Revised, footnote 1 on page 246.

¹² The Revision Revised, footnote on page 238.

¹³ The Traditional Text, Vol I, page 5.

¹⁴ The Revision Revised, page 3.

equally suit our present purposes – show the ‘old uncials’ perpetually at discord among themselves.”¹⁵

“In not a few particulars, the ‘Textus Receptus’ *does* call for Revision, certainly; although Revision on entirely different principles from those which are found to have prevailed in the Jerusalem Chamber. To mention a single instance: - When our LORD first sent forth His Twelve Apostles, it was certainly no part of His ministerial commission to them to ‘*raise the dead*’ (Matthew 10:8). This is easily demonstrable.”¹⁶

“Once for all, we request it may be clearly understood that we do not, by any means, claim perfection for the Received Text. We entertain no extravagant notions on this subject. Again and again we shall have occasion to point out (e.g. at page 107) that the *Textus Receptus* needs correction. We do but insist, (1) That it is an incomparably better text than that which either Lachmann, or Tischendorf, or Tregelles has produced: infinitely preferable to the ‘New Greek Text’ of the Revisionists. And, (2) That to be improved, the *Textus Receptus* will have to be revised on entirely different ‘principles’ from those which are just now in fashion. Men must begin by unlearning the German prejudices of the last fifty years; and address themselves, instead, to the stern logic of *facts*.”¹⁷

“I am not defending the ‘Textus Receptus’; I am simply stating the fact of its existence. That it is without authority to bind, nay, that it calls for skilful revision in every part, is freely admitted. I do not believe it to be absolutely identical with the true Traditional Text.”¹⁸

“But I would especially remind my readers of Bentley’s golden precept, that ‘The real text of the sacred writers does not now, since the originals have been so long lost, lie in any MS, or edition, but is dispersed in them all.’ This truth, which was evident to the powerful intellect of that great scholar, lies at the root of all sound Textual Criticism.”¹⁹

3. Dean Burgon desired a perfect Text but felt it best to leave things as they were: -

“We have shewn, that on the one hand, amidst the unprecedented advantages afforded by modern conditions of life for collecting all the evidence bearing upon the subject, the Traditional Text must be found, not in a mere transcript, but in a laborious revision of the Received Text; and that on the other hand it must, as far as we can judge, differ but slightly from the Text now generally in vogue, which has been generally received during the last two and a half centuries.”²⁰

“Yielding to no one in my desire to see the Greek of the New Testament judiciously revised, I freely avow that recent events have convinced me, and I suppose they have convinced the public also, that we have not among us the men to conduct such an undertaking. Better a thousand times in my judgement to leave things as they are, than to

¹⁵ The Revision Revised, page 17.

¹⁶ The Revision Revised, page 107 & 108. In the footnotes, he says, “Eusebius, Basil, Chrysostom, Jerome, Juvenius, omit the words. P.E. Pusey found them in no Syriac copy. But the conclusive evidence is supplied by the Manuscripts; not more than 1 out of 20 of which contains this clause.”

¹⁷ The Revision Revised, footnote on page 21.

¹⁸ The Traditional Text, Vol I, page 15.

¹⁹ The Traditional Text, Vol I, page 26.

²⁰ The Traditional Text, Vol II, page 1 – words of Edward Miller based on Burgon’s.

risk having the stamp of authority set upon such an unfortunate production as that which appeared on the 17th May 1881, and which claims at this instant to represent the combined learning of the Church.”²¹ (By clear implication also, Scrivener’s 1881 Greek text is not regarded as perfect!)

4. In discussing the ways in which errors are introduced in the copies, Dean Burgon wrote: -

“When I take into my hands an ancient copy of the Gospels, I expect that it will exhibit sundry inaccuracies and imperfections: and I am never disappointed in my expectations. The discovery however creates no uneasiness, so long as the phenomena evolved are of a certain kind and range within easily definable limits.”²² (He then goes on to list the types of causes of errors, both accidental as well as intentional.)

“It has been already shewn in the First Volume that the Art of Transcription on vellum did not reach perfection till after the lapse of many centuries in the life of the Church. Even in the minute elements of writing much uncertainty prevailed during a great number of successive ages. It by no means followed that, if a scribe possessed a correct auricular knowledge of the Text, he would therefore exhibit it correctly on parchment. Copies were largely disfigured with misspelt words. And vowels especially were interchanged; accordingly, such change became in many instances the cause of corruption, and is known in Textual Criticism under the name ‘Itacism.’²³

5. In the Traditional Text, Vol I, Edward Miller wrote,

“The leaders in the advocacy of this system have been Dr Scrivener in a modified degree, and especially Dean Burgon. First be it understood, that we do not advocate perfection in the Textus Receptus. We allow that here and there it requires revision. In the Text left behind by Dean Burgon, about 150 corrections have been suggested by him in St. Matthew’s Gospel alone. What we maintain is the TRADITIONAL TEXT. And we trace it back to the earliest ages of which there is any record.”²⁴

6. In the KJV Defended, Edward Hills wrote,

“Much, then, as we admire Burgon for his general orthodoxy and for his defense of the Traditional New Testament Text, we cannot follow him in his high Anglican emphasis or in his disregard for the Textus Receptus.”²⁵

²¹ The Traditional Text, Vol II, page 11.

²² The Traditional Text, Vol II, page 18.

²³ The Traditional Text, Vol II, page 56 – words of Edward Miller based on Burgon’s.

²⁴ The Traditional Text, Vol I, page 5.

²⁵ The King James Defended, page 192.

C. Dr Edward Frederick Hills

Dr Edward F Hills (1912 – 1981) was born and lived about one century after Dean Burgon, after the Revised Version had already become popularised. He was a strong KJV Defender who nearly suggests the basis for the VPP theory, although stopping short himself of actually saying it. In his book “The King James Version Defended”, rich quotations of Scripture make for an enjoyable read. The book itself noted that Dr Hills was not well followed because he published his own works. He also was eccentric in his pre-suppositions and ethno-centricity (for example, avowing that the Sun rotates around the earth, affirming that America must strongly re-arm to save Christians from persecution, and that the English language is signally blessed for the proclamation of the gospel). In spite of his strong views, Dr Hills nevertheless did not go as far as to proclaim a VPP Bible nor used the term: -

1. Theodore P. Letis right at the preface (p viii) of “The King James Version Defended” states, “Finally, it must be stated that Hills did not hold to an uncritical, perfectionist view of the TR as some have assumed (Believing Bible Study 2d. ed. p. 83); nor did he advocate with absolute certainty the genuineness of the *Johannine Comma* (KJV Defended p. 106), because in his experience, this was the only way to be assured of “maximum certainty” (KJV Defended pp. 224-225) versus the results of a purely naturalistic approach to the text of the New Testament.”

2. On Erasmus’ five different editions of the TR, Dr Hills stated (rather tentatively), “Erasmus was influenced by this common faith and probably shared it, and God used it providentially to guide Erasmus in his editorial labours on the *Textus Receptus*.”²⁶

Qn: If there is such a thing as being “guided by the common faith” and if Erasmus was thus guided, for which of his editions was he thus guided? If he had been guided only in his fifth attempt, why not in earlier attempts? If in all his attempts, why keep making changes? What if he had attempted a sixth edition! And despite all this “guiding by the common faith”, Erasmus still is not the final identified VPP text of VPP proponents!

3. In his section on “The KJV – The Providentially Appointed English Bible”, Dr Hills stated, “Do we believing Bible Students “worship” the KJV? Do we regard it as inspired...? We have often been accused of such excessive veneration for the KJV, but these accusations are false.... In regard to Bible versions, then, we follow the example of the Apostles and the other inspired New Testament writers. Just as they recognised the Septuagint as the providentially appointed translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek, so we recognise the KJV and the other great historic translations of the Holy Scriptures as providentially approved. Hence we receive the KJV as the providentially appointed English Bible. Admittedly this venerable version is not absolutely perfect, but it is trustworthy. No Bible-believing Christian who relies upon it will ever be led astray.”²⁷

4. Dr Hills noted that the preservation of God’s Word was providential rather than miraculous. What could such a statement mean other than that the pureness of God’s Word as preserved in the Traditional Text/TR is not jot and tittle duplication in the VPP sense (for would not that have to be miraculous)?

²⁶ The King James Defended, page 197.

²⁷ The King James Defended, pages 229 – 230.

PART III – THE DECISIVE ABSENCE OF A PURIFIED TEXT

If the VPP hypothesis is correct, there must be a VPP text that its proponents should be able to show or point out to us. On page 5 of “A Plea for a Perfect Bible”, Dr Khoo asked, “If there exists a perfect TR, then which of the many editions of the TR is perfect? From this, he argued all the way down to “The present edition of the *Textus Receptus* underlying the English Authorized Version of 1611 follows the text of Beza’s 1598 edition as the primary authority, and corresponds with ‘The New Testament in the Original Greek according to the text followed in the Authorized Version,’ edited by F H A Scrivener.” This should be none other than Scrivener’s 1881 edition cited by the Trinitarian Society as having above 190 changes from Beza’s 1598²⁸.

But we have seen in Part IIA that Scrivener himself would not regard his text, undertaken as part of the RV Commission to document all changes made from the KJV to the RV underlying texts, as VPP.

On another time, Dr Khoo said that Scrivener’s TR is only extremely close to the VPP text, which is none other than E F Hill’s “The Reformation Text”! However it is clear that such a text did not exist, for if it did, there would have been many copies already published – it would have been the talk of the Millennium and all Bible scholars would know it, use it, scrutinize it and study it, resulting in its infallibility being clearly known and proven, or otherwise! But Burgon, living two centuries after the KJV translation did not know of such a text! Moreover both he and Dr Hills would have argued that God would not allow such a text to be hidden in some monastery or in a bottle, but would ensure its wide accessible public use in the churches! Poor Scrivener also who spend great efforts and years reconstructing the Greek TR underlying the KJV from Beza and other sources!

When the above were pointed out, Dr Khoo admitted and conceded that there is “**no single purified text**” but indefatigably still insisted on VPP. But plainly and crucially, this is a concession completely fatal to the entire VPP postulate! “No single purified text” equals “No VPP” text – the two terms are by definition synonymous! Without a single purified text that is perfect and pure, jot and tittle exact to the Autographs, you have no VPP text. This is where in fact all the theorizing has to start, with the VPP proponents first presenting the VPP text for all to see, examine and scrutinize. So long as they have not done this and remain unable to do so, the VPP hypothesis is a non-starter.

Thoughts: Would not this make the “VPP text”, less existent and/or “more intangible” than the Autographs! Without a single purified text, would not the KJV translators have to be inspired in their textual criticism, in order to have arrived at the perfect underlying text?

²⁸ Other publications of Scrivener’s TR underlying the KJV were subsequently published, one in 1884 and another in 1888, sans the comparison with the RV.

PART IV – THE ORIGINAL DEAN BURGON “OATH”

Dr Jeffrey Khoo makes a final last “VPP” defense – he admits and concedes that “Dean Burgon did not hold to a single purified or perfect TR” but felt that “he nevertheless unequivocally affirmed he had an existing infallible and inerrant Bible by that Dean Burgon Oath: *I believe the Bible to be ...*”. This Oath as adopted by FEBC reads, “*The Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God, not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of Him that sitteth upon the throne, faultless, unerring, supreme.*”

Dr Khoo’s basis is that the present tense “is” must refer to apographa, as the Autographs in his mind no longer existed. If this is right, it would detract from Dean Burgon as that great logical and able defender of the KJV, making him appear inconsistent and at variance with his own clear testimonies seen in Part II B. Happily however, this can be easily disproved: -

- 1) If Burgon had wanted to express the Autographs, could his statement have been, “The Bible was ...”? Clearly not, for isn’t God’s Word eternal, forever settled in heaven and shall never pass away! This being the case, isn’t the “is” here not obviously the present simple that refers to a permanent continuous state only true of the Autographs!
- 2) The Dean’s statement from which the above oath is derived, is not found in the Dean’s “The Revision Revised” or in “The Traditional Text Vol I and II,” on Textual Criticism in refutation of the Westcott and Hort’s Revisions of 1881. Rather, these words are from “Inspiration and Interpretation: Seven Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford”, in 1861 (twenty years before the problems of 1881). To be precise, they are found on page 89 at the ending of Chapter III entitled “Inspiration of Scripture – Gospel Difficulties. – The Word of God Infallible. – Other Sciences Subordinate to Theological Science.” This sermon dealt with Inspiration (not Textual Criticism)!

This would corroborate that the “Bible” here refers to the Original *Inspired* VPI Autographs. In addition, 1) the use of the present continuous tense, 2) the double use of “utterance” (God-breathed) of the Most High, and 3) the description of its faultlessness, altogether can only point to the VPI Autograph Bible! For can one speak of any particular apographa in this manner or ascribe to it “faultless, unerring, supreme”? That the Dean did not hold a perfectionist view of the TR/KJV seals in this identification! Moreover the oath reads, “The Bible is ...”, and not, “The KJV Bible is ...”

- 3) If the above still does not convince our VPP brethren, the entire statement is: -

“This Day’s Sermon has had for its object to remind you, that the BIBLE is none other than *the voice of Him that sitteth upon the Throne!* Every Book of it, – every Chapter of it, – every Verse of it, – every word of it, – every syllable of it, – (where are we to stop?) – every letter of it – is the direct utterance of the Most High! – Πᾶσα γραφή θεόπνευστος. “Well spake the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of” the many blessed Men who wrote it. – The Bible is none other than the *Word of God:* not some part of it, more, some part of it, less; but all alike, the utterance of Him who sitteth upon the Throne; – absolute, – faultless, – unerring, – supreme!”

SUMMARY OF REVIEW FINDINGS

The VPP theory must either be absolutely true, in which case we ought to wholeheartedly embrace it, or false, in which case we ought to entirely reject it. It cannot be both. If true, all not just some, of the evidence would be found in support of it. If false, all the evidence would be against it. It would not be part here and part there.

- 1) Our detailed analysis and examination of the VPP theoretical basis: its arguments, assumptions and rhetoric, found no true support for the VPP hypothesis.
- 2) Our literature research to determine the true views and positions of key authorities put forward by VPP proponents, are documented and referenced. All the testimonies were found negative to the VPP hypothesis.
- 3) The foremost fundamental issue is the “VPP text” itself. The first step of any VPP hypothesis should be a presentation of this text for public examination and review. Our VPP brethren had not done and remain unable to do this, and have even conceded that there is “no single purified text”. This makes the entire hypothesis a non-starter.
- 4) The last VPP defence based on claims that the “Dean Burgon Oath” refers to a Perfect Apographa Bible is on fuller review, a clear reference to the Autographs.

All the evidences are unanimously and unequivocally for a null VPP hypothesis.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The VPP theory is not as much about a Perfect Bible as it is KJV fundamentalism gone extreme. Whereas Ruckmanism reckons the KJV’s English translation as inspired, VPP ism requires an inspired KJV textual criticism. VPP ism also requires postulating English as the singly blessed language of the Gospel, forgetting that “there is no respect of persons with God” (Rom 2:11), Who gave the original Autographs in Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek and provided reliable translations in thousands of languages.

The VPP faith proposition is predicated not on true Biblical faith but on a misplaced faith. Objective faith is always based on the clear revelation of God, such in God’s call of Abraham out of Haran and into Canaan. Misplaced faith is when men act on their idealism when God had not spoken. Without doubt, Almighty God could easily have given us VPP Apographa as well as made the Autographs indestructible, but the evidence is that He did not! In His higher Sovereign Wisdom, God perhaps did not wish man to make objects of worship out of His Word. “The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (2 Cor 3:6). We ought not to trust our own theories for Wisdom is vindicated in her children (Prov 3:5, Luke 7:35, 1 Cor 1:24, 25).

Buswell was right to say, “We contend for the *inerrancy of the meaning*” rather than specific words. God’s Word was given not before but after the Babel dispersion, and to reach all tongues and nations, meanings rather than words have to be paramount. In two VPP-cited examples – the Ten Commandments and Jeremiah’s letter written by Baruch, this truth is made clear. That Moses broke the Ten Commandments tablets showed that God did not design the Autographs physically indestructible. Comparison of the Ten Commandments at its giving in Exodus 20:1-17, and at its recount forty years later in Deut 5:6-21, also shows

various word disparities, without however any loss to its primary meanings. For Jeremiah's roll burned by King Jehoiakim, God's instructions were to write again all the former words that were in the first roll, not exactly but "there were added besides unto them many like words" (Jer 36:1-4, 27-32). Clearly it is the meanings; the like words rather than the exact jot and tittles that God's Spirit wants us to receive, in humility and by His aid.

May Almighty God help us to focus on Himself, the Author of the Word and on His blessed Son, the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world, even our Lord Jesus Christ, the Perfect Incarnate Word who speaks with Authority! May we be Christians first, theologians second; and learn to love one another as our Lord commanded! Let no man choose against facts and truth for personal preference or advantage resulting in heresy and divisions in His Church (Tit 3:10). This we earnestly pray, in Jesus' precious Name and for His sake! Amen.

Brother Lim Seng Hoo, 24 September 2003

APPENDIX A – ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

A. How God’s Word Is Preserved Till Eternity?

Based on the problem areas noted, the odds against the VPP hypothesis are extremely great! If so, one could then ask in what way God has kept His promise to preserve His pure words from “this generation for ever”?

- 1) To begin with, God’s Word has **built-in checks** through its multiple accounts as seen in the “discrepancy” examples above. God not only gave us 2Chron 22:2 but also gave 2Kings 8:26 to help us arrive at the true ascension age of Ahaziah. He gave not only 2Sam 8:4 but also 1Chron 18:4 to help us arrive at the true number of horsemen.
- 2) We also have **multiple manuscript evidence**, manifold times more than the numbers of surviving manuscripts of any secular document in history. By careful textual comparison, we can arrive at a reading of His Word that is very reliable.
- 3) In the age after Pentecost, God’s Holy Spirit indwells His people in a fuller way, shall **write His law in our hearts and conscience** (Jer 31:33-34, Eze 11:19-20, 36:26-27, 2Cor 3:3, Heb 8:10-11, 10:16).
- 4) The **heavenly original** is kept forever in the Ark of his Testament in the Temple of God in heaven (Rev 11:19)!

B. An Experiment

In concluding the above review, suppose we carry out an experiment by asking seven erudite persons to copy out the Epistle of Jude (just 25 verses) with pen and paper under scribal rules, i.e. no rubbing or writing over and not making even a mistake of punctuation. All would be surprised how hard it is to avoid errors even when writing without specific time pressure. (The scribes were extremely careful but had to meet the demand for copies of God’s Word.) If the copies were collected, errors would likely be found in all cases but not in the same place or form (although certain types of errors may tend to be more common). By carefully comparing these copies without reference to a Bible, one should be able to derive an edited Text of the original Bible, (provided no new errors are made in the process).

Now supposing we have not seven manuscripts but fifty or one hundred! How much more difficult to edit although much more reliable! Now imagine that we did not just copy Jude but the entire Bible with well over 30,000 verses! Even with 60 editors, we would be hard pressed.

We next carry out a second experiment. All seven are asked to make a second copy out of their first copy, without referring to the Bible. The first copy is then destroyed and all seven are asked to make a third copy from their second copy, and this can go on. We then perform our textual editing of these nth generation copies (or from a library of various generations) to derive the original Jude. This time, it would be less straightforward. How many such iteration would have taken place (over 2,600 years) from the Autographs of the Pentateuch to the Masoretic apographs! Is it not already a miracle of preservation that we have the absolutely sound, reliable and trustworthy KJV Bible that we have? Whether we have all the original jots and tittles or not, every key meanings and salvation doctrines are entirely preserved!

APPENDIX B – PS 12:6-7 CONSIDERED

(An answer to: “Did God Promise to Preserve His Words?: Interpreting Psalm 12:6-7” by Rev Quek Suan Yew, The Burning Bush, July 2004).

PS 12:6-7 GOD’S PROMISE TO PRESERVE HIS PEOPLE

“The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.”

Proponents of the Perfect KJB-VPP (“King James Bible-Verbal Plenary Preservation”) view interpret Ps 12:6-7 as a promise of preservation of God’s words, rather than of God’s people; the commonly held view among conservative theologians down the ages. John Calvin in his “Commentary on the Psalms of David” held that Ps 12:7 referred to the saints. The Westminster Divines in their “Annotations of the Bible”, 1645 also held likewise, and omitted this as a proof text in the Westminster Confession of Faith, 1646, Chapter 1 Sect VIII on the Bible. The Matthew Henry Commentary, 1706, the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary, 1866, et al says this verse refers to the preservation of the saints.

In Charles H Spurgeon’s colossal “Treasury of David”, 1869, he says verse 7 refers to the saint, *“In life many a saint ...; preserved for ever from the generation that stigmatised him...”* Spurgeon included a voluminous “Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings” section - a verse by verse compilation of notes and quotations of numerous other commentators to explain points of difficulty - stating in the Preface that his “friend and amanuensis Mr John L. Keys, most diligently aided me in investigations at the British Museum, Dr. Williams’s Library, and other treasuries of theological lore. With his help I have ransacked books by the hundred ... Readers little know how great labour the finding of but one pertinent extract may involve; labour certainly I have not spared...” For Ps 12:7, he gives no entry in this section, indicative that commentators are mostly agreed.

The great Bible expositor G Campbell Morgan (“Notes on the PSALMS”, 1947), was perhaps among the first to differ. He says, *“The “them” here refers to the words. There is no promise made of widespread revival or renewal. It is the salvation of a remnant and the preservation of His own words which Jehovah promises.”* His Bible text however is “the American Standard Version of the Revised Bible”.

Here are key reasons why I believe the Reformers and Puritans were right that Ps 12:7 refers to the preservation of the godly saint: -

1. Theme of the Psalms

Psalm 1 provides the theme of the entire Book of Psalms: - “Blessed is the godly man, who shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, whose leaf also shall not wither; whereas the ungodly are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away... The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”

On arriving at Psalm 12 however, an anguished cry rings out, “HELP, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth! The faithful fail from among the children of men!” David, fleeing for his life, had heard the report that Saul had slain 85 priests of the Lord in one day and smote the city of Nob (1Sam 22:17-19). As he makes his anguished prayer of

complaint, the Lord's answer comes, (verse 5) "Now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him." At these words from the mouth of Jehovah, David gratefully responds (verse 6) in humble magnificence, "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." For David, God's words meant full release in the perfect assurance that God shall intervene and shall preserve him and every of His saints "from this generation for ever."

2. The Hebrew grammar

In the Hebrew, "Keep them" is *masculine plural*. "Preserve him" is *masculine singular*, i.e. "Preserve him" rather than "them", as explained in the KJB margin. "The words of the Lord" however is *feminine plural*.

Basic grammar rules dictate that this verse refers to people and not to "the words". Rev Quek cites one Hebrew Grammarian, Gesenius, as authority for possible gender rule exceptions, "Through a weakening in the distinction of gender ... masculine suffixes (especially in the plural) are not infrequently used to refer to feminine substantives." Rev Quek then adds, "*Besides Psalm 12:7*, here are a few other examples from the OT where this occurs..." This could mislead some readers to think that Gesenius applied a gender rule exception to Ps 12:7. However: -

- a) Gesenius did not apply the exception to Ps 12:7 and the onus is on Rev Quek to offer clear proof that a gender rule exception could directly apply here to this verse.
- b) The difficulty for Rev Quek's view is that in this verse, not one but two "gender rule exceptions" would be required! David, moved by the Holy Spirit, repeated the masculine term (so that there is a strengthening, not a weakening in the distinction of gender!) as if say that no one should misinterpret that God's people are here the object!
- c) A final implausibility for Rev Quek's view is that the numerical rule also must be broken! David, moved by the Spirit, changed the second time from the masculine plural to the masculine singular, "him"! This clearly refers to a person, and in no way can refer to the plural "the words"!

Taking a step back then, as reasonable thinkers would, we ought to ask, "Would the Holy Spirit, writing through the sweet psalmist David, set out to confuse His people with clouded grammar?" If God meant "the words", it would be a simple thing for David to use the feminine plural. God's Word is always simple and clear (complicated only in the hearts of rebellious, unyielding sinners) for He is not the author of confusion (1Cor 14:33)!

In summary then, "Keep 'them'" refers to God's people: the godly man and the faithful of verse 1 and the poor and the needy of verse 5 (masculine, plural). And "Preserve 'him'" means preserve every one of them! None of them is lost (John 17:12). The Hebrew, "Keep" is *shamar* - "to hedge about, guard, to protect, attend to, to preserve, to save." "Preserve" is *nâtsar* - "to guard, to protect, to hide."

3. Verse 6, the Adjunctive Response to Verse 5

We have seen above that verse 6 is the adjunctive response to verse 5. God speaks and says, "I will arise!" David gratefully responds, "Thy words are *pure words*."

Unlike men's words that are oft impure and unreliable, God's words are one hundred percent pure, sure and reliable! God's words are *pure words* of justice, mercy and faith (Mt 23:23, Rom 10:17)! Sufficient for His crying saints that God has said, "I will arise"! (See for example also Ps 3:4, 4:1, 5:2, 7:1, 10:1, 11:1, etc...) He has promised and will assuredly be with us unto the ends of the earth, and shall never, never fail us!

The KJB cross references to "*pure words*" are Ps 18:30 (or also 2Sam 22:31, which "David spake in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies") and Prov 30:5 "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him." God's pure words as pertaining to us, always speaks of His goodness to us, in delivering us, shielding us, and preserving us until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory (Eph 1:14).

4. Scripture Cross References of Verse 7 "Keep & Preserve"

Continuing to let Scripture explain Scripture, the cross references to verse 7 given in the "Treasury of Scripture Knowledge," *all* indicate the preservation of His saints: -

Ps 16:1 Michtam of David. Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.

Ps 37:28 For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

Ps 121:8 The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

Ps 145:20 The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.

Deut 33:3 Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words.

1 Sam 2:9 He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.

1 Pet 1:5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Jude 1:1 Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:

How encouraging and wonderful that God our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, have made all these wonderful promises to preserve us, His saints and His people!

The passage cannot be used to support the Perfect KJV-VPP view.