

THE PERFECT BIBLE OR THE PERFECT VERSION?

(Shifting from the Original B-P Position)

The perfect Bible is acceptable in the Christian Church. We must have a perfect Bible. Our Bible is the infallible, inerrant Word of God. This is seen in the original copies of the Old and New Testament, written in Hebrew (OT) and Greek (NT) which is known as the Autographs. This has always been the Bible-Presbyterian position since its founding in 1950. The founding father of the B-P Church, Rev Timothy Tow, has taught us in the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) this wonderful truth.

“Men talk of ‘mistakes of Scripture.’ I thank God that I have never met any. Mistakes of translation there may be, for translators are men. But mistakes of the original word there never can be, for the God who spoke it is infallible, and so is every word he speaks, and in that confidence we find delight”

C. H. Spurgeon

Only the original copies of the OT and NT are the inspired Word of God. Throughout the centuries, God has, in His infinite wisdom kept for us the Word of God. The preservation of the Bible is an amazing truth. We have the Bible in our hands today. Bible translators have done an amazing job in producing for us the Word of God in its entirety. We have in our hands the perfect Word of God. We believe we have the perfect Bible, but not the perfect version!

A Perfect Version?

There seems to be a shift today in the B-P Church (certain B-P Church) that says that the perfect Bible has reference to the King James Version (KJV). Proponents of this view say that God has preserved for the English-speaking world, a perfect Bible in the KJV. Thus it is the perfect Bible to them. This version is like the original autographs, because they say that the Greek text, which was used for the English translation into KJV, is the “inspired” one. They have even gone as far as to say that every Bible translation must use the Greek text which produced the KJV. So if any Bible today that does not use this Greek text in the translations, these Bibles are considered corrupt versions/Bibles and they speak of another Jesus.

A Strange Teaching

This is a strange teaching. For more than 50 years the B-P Church has understood that the original Hebrew and Greek texts were the inspired Word of God. FEBC championed this truth. The founding father of the B-P Church taught his students this doctrine. Today everything has changed and we are told that the autographs have been preserved (in a photo-copied manner) for us in the Greek text which underlines the KJV. Where did this strange idea come from? Have the founding father and FEBC change their doctrine? It looks like it.

A Plea from B-P Pastors

Almost one and a half years ago, five B-P pastors: the late Rev (Dr) Burt Subramaniam, Rev Anthony Tan, Rev Tan Choon Seng, Rev Yap Beng Shin and myself met up with Rev Timothy Tow and Mrs Tow. Five of us pastors shared with Rev Tow our concern that FEBC was heading towards an extreme view (KJV-Only view). We asked him to stop certain people from advocating this view, and we expressed our fear to him that the B-P church is heading towards another split if nothing is being done to nip this problem in the bud.

Five of us pastors were all trained in FEBC. We have the highest respect for the principal, Rev Tow. We love FEBC. It was the college that gave us the fundamentals of the Christian faith. We do not wish to see the college take an extreme view and we do not wish to see another split in the B-P church.

We grew up with the Bible-Presbyterian Church. I was with Galilee BPC since 1960. Having been in the Synod of the BPC we have seen many problems and splits in our denomination and we do not wish to see another one taking place over a strange and unbiblical teaching.

We have done our part to express our feelings and to warn of an impending split, which may occur if nothing is done by the founding father of the B-P movement and the principal of FEBC over this extreme belief. We are seeing the effect of this strange teaching today.

God's Word with Us Today

Throughout the centuries, godly men have given the Christian church the Bible in their own language (German, English etc). Even before the KJV came into existence in 1611, there were many Bibles (translations) done for the common people to read. Don't tell me those people in the days of Luther and Tyndale never had the Bible until the KJV was printed? It is absurd.

Concerning the need to revise the KJV, even Charles Haddon Spurgeon, more than 150 years ago stated:

“It was a holy thing to translate the Scriptures into the mother tongue; he that shall effect a thorough revision of the present translation will deserve as high need of honour as the first translators. Despite the outcry of reverend doctors against any attempt at revision, it ought to be done.”

Today, many Bible translators are doing their best to produce for the church a readable Bible in the language of the common people. Many newer manuscripts have been discovered since the days of Erasmus who used the Greek text which underlines the KJV.

Language change! The KJV of 1611 can never be understood today therefore the KJV went through several changes to update the language. Its language is too difficult for the common people to appreciate and understand even in today's context. I have a problem understanding it too. I have used the KJV all my Christian life.

The literal, word for word translation of the KJV also has its setback. The meaning cannot be easily understood (see Ruth 2: 3; 3: 16). It becomes a burden to read the Bible instead. I am not suggesting that we replace the KJV for the B-P church or for our own church. There are many good Bible versions/translations other than the KJV only. It is not wrong for any Christian to consult these versions to get a clear translation or meaning. Reading the Bible must be a joy, not a burden.

There are many good Bible versions today, like the New King James Version (NKJV), New American Standard Bible (NASB), English Standard Version (ESV) etc. Why deprive God's people from reading the Bible if they don't like the KJV or if they do not understand it?

The Roman Catholic Church (RCC) in the days of the dark ages refused to let their church members read the Bible in other languages except in the Latin (Vulgate Bible). This is similar with what is happening in Christendom today with KJV-Only proponents.

Do not Judge Others

KJV-Only proponents tend to be judgmental of others who do not use the KJV only. One of their method is name-calling (neo-fundamental, neo-evangelical, liars etc.). They think they are the only ones with the truth (KJV Bible only). They can be merciless when it comes to dealing with those who do not take their view. Their obsession with the KJV Only will drive them to talk and write about this subject all year round. It seems that the KJV is to be defended even with their life.

This is strange that one should give his/her whole heart to a *version*. My greatest fear for such people is that they will become a KJV-Only cult.

The In-Fighting Must Stop

The B-P church can't go on like this. The in-fighting must stop or we will die. As it is, we have already split so many times from within. Now comes this strange idea. When will we ever be united again? When will we come together as we were in the heydays of the 70s, when the B-P Church was the fastest growing denomination in Singapore.

The name-calling must stop. The judgmental attitude must give way to brotherly love. John 13:34-35 “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

Heaven is not compartmentalized. There is no section for the KJV-Only people or the B-Ps only. You will find a Baptist there, and a Christian who uses a NKJV or a NASB etc.

“And be at peace among yourselves” (1 Thess. 5: 13)

*Rev Tan Eng Boo
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**The Constitution of
Grace Bible-Presbyterian Church**

Article 4. 2. 1

*“We believe in the divine, verbal and plenary inspiration of
Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent
inerrancy and infallibility, and, as the Word of God, the
Supreme and final authority in faith and life.”*