

writers appear to quote from the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, and they quote it as Scripture, and as carrying with it all of the authority of the Word of God. Second, we have a number of translations in our possession, some of which are more accurate and some less accurate, but all of which are the Word of God and all of which are characterized by the quality of "inspiredness." At the present time the three leading contenders for the title of the English "Textus Receptus" are the King James or Authorized Version, the New American Standard Bible, and the New International Version. Of course, I am speaking of favored versions among evangelicals, not among liberals, Roman Catholic, cultists, or Jews; and I am only speaking of English-language versions. There are many other English-language versions, including the Revised Standard Version, the New English Bible, the Living Bible, Today's English Version (better known as Good News for Modern Man), J. B. Phillips' translation, the Jerusalem Bible, and a host of others, including Douay, Goodspeed, Moffat, and the Confraternity Edition. To some degree, all of these versions retain the quality of "inspiredness." Nevertheless, I believe that a distinction should be made between essentially trustworthy translations and those which are essentially untrustworthy: the difference being that an essentially trustworthy translation is one which, with confidence, one could commend almost indiscriminately, and an essentially untrustworthy translation is one which one could not commend with confidence, or about which one would have strong reservations. Of course, the saving feature about this step is that there are many Christians who have a working proficiency in the original languages of Scripture, who can check the accuracy of any or all of these translations, and can perhaps even more closely approximate the meaning of the best-attested text of Scripture.

The sixth step in the transmission of God's Word is that of the interpretation of Scripture. Here we ask the question, "Can we approximate the God-intended meaning of Scripture sufficiently to be able to affirm that our understanding of the Word of God is correct?" If the answer to this question is no, then transmission has failed, and all of the previous steps are futile. If we cannot have correct understanding of the Word of God, then salvation itself becomes impossible, because saving faith involves knowledge of, assent to, and trust in the redemptive truths of Christ's incarnation, atonement, and resurrection. Because believers have been born again by the Spirit of God, they can understand the things of the Spirit of God (I Cor 2:14-15). Because believers have the anointing (the gift of spiritual enlightenment or understanding) of the indwelling Holy Spirit, they are able to perceive and discern truth (I John 2:20-21, 27). The Holy Spirit is both the infallible Author of Scripture and the infallible Interpreter of Scripture; and therefore believers can have a correct understanding of the Word of God.

Having said this, however, we recognize that among professing Christians there are presuppositionalists and evidentialists, young-earth creationists and old-universe creationists, dichotomists and trichotomists, Calvinists and Arminians, Baptists and paedobaptists, dispensationalists and covenant theology adherents, amillennialists, postmillennialists and