

## Book Review

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***From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man.***  
**By James B. Williams, Editor. Greenville, SC:**  
**Ambassador-Emerald International, 1999. 231 PP. \$14.99.**

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This recent volume entitled *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* is the product of James B. Williams and his eleven authors. These writers and their book appear to represent Bob Jones University and the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship. This inference is established by the connection of the authors to BJU and the endorsements by the leadership of the FBF. Williams states that his purpose is “to provide accurate, understandable information that will serve as a guide for laymen when selecting a translation” (p. 10). Although this may be a commendable goal and many may therefore read the book, it should be received with extreme caution for two reasons: first, it falls short of its stated goal; and second, it points toward a dangerous trend.

*From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* should be received with extreme caution in the first place because the book falls short of the editor's stated task. It does so due to the following eight factors.

To begin with, it is of questionable literary quality. There are glaring spelling, grammatical, and format gaffes. For instance, Westcott is regularly misspelled (e.g., pp. 172-178). Typos and misquotes (e.g., p. 3) and noun-verb disagreement (e.g., p. 170, footnote 2) appear, and font sizes vary (e.g., pp. 2-3). It appears that the rush to publish jeopardized the literary quality of the book. While some may excuse literary errors as inconsequential, they do reflect on the arguments raised by the writers. Careless literary preparation may suggest careless scholarship as well. More significant, though, are the seven additional factors that cause the book to fail in the editor's purpose.

For instance, a substantial reason for the book's failure is its curious approval of apostasy. The cover of the book pictures a copy of the Revised Standard Version. Since its publication in 1952, this version has been identified with apostate liberalism (p. 198) through the National Council of Churches because of its anti-supernatural renderings of Isaiah 7:14 and

II Timothy 3:16. Why would those purporting to advance fundamentalism use the liberal's version of the Bible on their cover? Furthermore, Williams accurately outlines the theological battles fundamentalists have had with liberals, neo-evangelicals and charismatics, yet the editor and authors, *in toto*, commend the textual works of liberals, neo-evangelicals and charismatics. They give absolutely no warning or condemnation about the men or their heresies (cf. footnote 5, p. 71). Is the uniting of fundamentalists with liberals in the text/translation issue a new way to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ?

**A** third factor for the book's failure is its misstatement of fact. Several authors declare that the variants between the modern texts/translations and the *Textus Receptus* (TR) and the Authorized Version are so small ("less than one page of my entire Testament" p. 86) that *no concern* should be taken (pp. 97, 183). The fact of the matter is that the Critical Text of Westcott-Hort differs from the TR, mostly by deletions, in 9,970 words out of 140,521, giving a total of 7% difference. In the 480-page edition of the Trinitarian Bible Society *Textus Receptus* this would amount to almost 34 pages, the equivalent of the final two books of the New Testament, Jude and Revelation. This certainly does not sound like "no cause for concern."

**F**urthermore, no fundamentalist would deny that the 93% common text is the very inspired and preserved wording of the *autographa*. What one does with the remaining 7% is the crux of the is a substantial reason for the book's failure is its curious approval of apostasy. Does one *receive* the preserved words of God as found in the Received Bible, or does one attempt to *restore/reconstruct* what God allegedly has not preserved?

**A**nother misstatement of fact is that Textual Criticism is a pure, objective, and untainted discipline. Shaylor states, "textual criticism, not to be confused with other types of criticism, is not a negative attitude toward the inspiration of the Bible. It is in reality an effort to assure us that we have the inspired Word of God" (p. 24, cf. p. 61). This statement is insensitive to historical fact and oblivious to Biblical teaching. Historically, Biblical Criticism as a movement (17-19<sup>th</sup> Century) and all its spawned criticisms (higher, lower [textual], form, literary, historical, etc.) are permeated with anti-supernatural, evolutionary rationalism. The tenets of Textual Criticism, such as the oldest is best and the shorter is probable, bespeak the evolutionary principle of simple to complex. The Received Text is not the product of evolution and conflation, whereas the Critical Text not only is the product of rationalism but also manifests textual "deflation." Man cannot restore what God allegedly has not chosen to preserve. Biblically, the Lord Jesus Christ promised to preserve all of His Words (*logoi*, Mt. 24:35) for every generation (Jn. 12:48). Assurance in God's having inspired and preserved His Words does not come through Textual Criticism but through "faith [which] cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). This is the historical faith of those of whom Jesus declared, "My sheep hear my voice" (Jn. 10:27).

**A** fourth factor for the book's failure is the extreme defense of fallible mortals such as Westcott and Hort. Williams assures the readers that "these men are now with the Lord" (p. 4). This is a gratuitous assumption that cannot possibly be proved and shows the "hero-worship" mentality of the Critical Text proponents (pp. 6, 212). The proponents of the Received Text

position do not, on their part, magnify the men involved. The originator of the Received Text is not Erasmus, Stephens, Beza, Burgon, Wilkinson, Hills, or Fuller, but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He it was Who promised to preserve all of His words perfectly and requires believers to receive them (Jn. 17:8, 20). He is the sovereign One alone worthy of exaltation, Who both promised verbal plenary preservation and used fallible men to do achieve it.

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**A** fifth factor causing the failure of *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* to achieve its purposes is the unbiblical nature of the major premise of the Westcott-Hort position. The very title of the book suggests that God gave His concepts to man so man could translate His concepts into translations. Fundamentalists have rejected the liberal Conceptual Inspiration View of Scripture and presently defend Verbal Plenary Inspiration. It is very difficult to understand why fundamentalists resist the Biblical and theological teaching of the Verbal Plenary Preservation View and yet default to the dangerous Conceptual Preservation View. Westcott and Hort wanted to restore the 4<sup>th</sup> Century text, based on Catholic (B) and Egyptian (papyri) MSS, arguing that there was no textual tampering and utilizing inapplicable Genealogies, assumed Text-types, and the supposed Lucianic Rescension to dispose of the *Textus Receptus*. The goal of modern Textual Criticism is to restore or reconstruct the Biblical text (p. 106) that God apparently chose not to preserve. The liberals' humanistic approach seems obvious, but why do some fundamentalists fail to see that the Lord does not need man's help? It is strange indeed for fundamentalists to countenance liberal views, either deliberately or by default.

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**A** sixth factor for failure is the book's acrimonious spirit not towards liberals, modernists, neo-evangelicals, or charismatics, but towards other fundamentalists. The very attitude Pickering denounces in his Preface runs rampant throughout the essays. He bemoans that some KJV proponents have practiced "vilification of character, personal attacks, and a generally unchristian spirit." He assures the reader that "the authors of this work have presented their information objectively and without attacks on the character of their opponents" (p. ix). But such is not the case. The author who betrays the most glaring example of an acrimonious spirit is Williams the editor. He deliberately lumps all that use the KJV into one of the five categories of King James Version Onlyism concocted by James White (who is no expert in the field of bibliology). Williams labels all of these who are lumped together (where do fundamentalists of his stripe fit in?) as extreme (pp. 2-3). Without any evident distinction, Williams attacks representatives from the various categories of the whole spectrum as "misguided" "mis-informers," whose heresies are a "cancerous sore" (p. 7). The book thus gives evidence of a double standard.

**H**ypocrisy is the seventh factor for the book's failure. Both Minnick and Gephart argue that the text/translation issue may be a "rabbit trail." They argue that no one should be beating their drums for or against the KJV but rather be preaching Christ. Gephart questions the worth of the issue, asking, "can we afford to spend so much time on this issue?" (p. 218; cf. 97-98). Is not

their hypocrisy apparent that they can spend time and money writing this 231-page book, using twelve authors and the input of eight academicians, and yet the defenders of the KJV have no right to do the same? They evidently feel that the time spent to produce their book is well spent, but time spent by their opponents is ill spent. Such an attitude is partisan hypocrisy. It shows a Catholic-like lordliness of silencing the opposition and has no place among fundamental Baptists.

**T**he eighth and final factor for the book's failure is the unscriptural call for unity at the expense of doctrine (pp. xii, 2, 98). Since verbal plenary preservation is a teaching of Scripture (Psm. 12:6,7; 119:111, 160; Lk. 21:33, *et al*), it is a doctrine. Those who hold to differing doctrinal views concerning preservation or any other doctrine cannot and should not unite. Paul taught the Thessalonians to separate from those who held to a different eschatological doctrine and its resultant practice (II Thess. 3:6, 14). Should not fundamentalists follow this Pauline principle with regard to all biblical doctrines? Theological compromise is far worse than the lack of unity.

**T**his dangerous call to compromise for the sake of unity is the second reason that *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* should be received with extreme caution. Historically, Bible-believing people have not hesitated to part from those taking a differing view of biblical doctrine. Now, however, the reader is being told that this issue, doctrinally significant though it may be, is nothing to separate over. Unity is more important. This is certainly an alarming trend among those who would call themselves fundamentalists.

**I**n contrast to the opinion of the book's contributors, God has revealed both His intention to preserve perfectly all of His words for every generation and His means of doing so through the local churches (Mt. 4:4; 5:17 and Mt. 28:20; I Tim. 3:15, respectively). Liberals hold to Dynamic Inspiration. This leads to Dynamic Preservation, as manifested in the Critical Text, translated with Dynamic Equivalence to produce the Modern Versions. Historic fundamentalists hold to Verbal Plenary Inspiration which demands Verbal Plenary Preservation, manifested in the *Textus Receptus*, and translated with Formal Equivalence to produce the KJV. Strangely and dangerously, neo-fundamentalists hold mixed views regarding Verbal Plenary Inspiration, Dynamic Preservation, the Critical Text, Dynamic Equivalence, and Modern Versions (**see chart below**). This mixed and fluid position moves in only one direction: away from fundamentalism and into liberalism. For one to take the initial step into this moving stream, either deliberately or by default, may lead to drowning in the ocean of apostasy.

**T**he Lord Jesus Christ has required believers of all ages to receive His preserved words (Jn. 17:8, 20; Acts 2:41; 8:14; 11:1; 17:11; I Thess. 1:6; 2:13). Since man cannot restore what God allegedly has not preserved, it is folly for fundamentalists to embrace any of the modern translations. Fundamentalists must return to the centuries-old confidence of God's people in the Traditional Text. They must not be swept away with the relatively recent, rationalistic theories of Westcott, Hort, and others. Fundamentalists must realize that we have the Lord's preserved words in the received texts of the Bible (Masoretic text and *Textus Receptus*). May Christians believe that *the WORDS OF GOD have been given to the HEART OF MAN*.

# Comparison of Textual Views

	<i>Inspiration</i>	<i>Preservation</i>	<i>Text</i>	<i>Translation Technique</i>	<i>Version</i>
<b><i>Historic Fundamentalists</i></b>	Verbal, Plenary	Verbal, Plenary	TR	Formal Equivalence	Authorized Version AV
<b><i>New Evangelicals/ New Fundamentalists</i></b>	Verbal, Plenary	Dynamic	CT	Dynamic Equivalence	Modern (conservative) NASV, NIV
<b><i>Liberals</i></b>	Dynamic (Conceptual)	Dynamic	CT	Dynamic Equivalence	Modern (liberal) RSV