

# KEEPING GOD'S WORD

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— by W. G. Broadbent —

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The church at Philadelphia was commended of the Lord, in that He was able to say of it "thou hast kept my Word" (Rev. 3:8). He could not say this of Laodicea, for the very word "Laodicea" means "the people ruling". In Philadelphia all is done in accordance with the Word of God. The Scripture of Truth is law to that church. But in Laodicea it is what the people think and determine, rather than what God's Word requires.

This distinction divides the churches of New Zealand, and of every land.

## AN OLD TESTAMENT ANALOGY

In 2 Samuel 6 and 1 Chronicles 13 we have the account of David bringing the ark of God back from the land of the Philistines, first to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite, and later to Jerusalem.

The first stage of this journey was conducted wrongly and ended in judgment but the later part of the journey was rightly conducted in accordance with the law of God, and the end was blessing for all the people.

The law and commandments of God required that the ark should be moved and carried only by the appointed Levites who would carry it on staves, and that on no account should the ark itself be touched by any man. (See Numbers 18:3.) Instead, they carried it in a cart drawn by oxen and when Uzza put his hand on the ark to steady it. "for the oxen shook it", the Lord smote him.

## THE CAPTAINS AND THE LEADERS

David's mistake was simply this. He did not consult the Word of the Lord but instead he called in the captains and leaders of the people to advise him. In 1 Chronicles 13:1 the account of all that happened is prefaced by the words "And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader".

That was the root of the trouble that day, and it is the root of the trouble with most things today. Instead of ascertaining what the Word of God said, and says today, David then, and people generally today, consult with the captains and the leaders.

## A NEW CART

One result of the consultation with the captains and the leaders was to be up with the times and to use modern methods. So the ark was put on a new cart. They gave it mechanised transport and used the innovation of wheels and the massive power of the oxen. And today the captains and the leaders are all for new methods and ways and give any number of reasons why their ideas and methods are better than the old-time way. But when God has stated the means to be used, then they are only leading and advising to the confusion and loss of God's people when they propose otherwise.

A prime example of this is the way in which Billy Graham and his sub-captains lead the people of God towards ecumenism. Whereas the Word of God says "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14)", Graham advises to work in his campaigns with men who are modernists and who deny the deity of the Lord, and thousands of Christians follow that advice today. And now we have him openly saying that the Roman Catholics are part of the flock of God and that it is in order to work with them. In the issue of "Time" magazine for 30th October 1978 which features the inauguration of the new Pope, there is at page 54 (Pacific Edition) the following paragraph relating the association between the Pope and Billy Graham. After recording the Pope's statement of his expressed ecumenical expectations, "Time" says "That does not appear to be mere lip service. Just four days before Wojtyla's election, Protestant Billy Graham preached to an overflow audience at St. Anne's Roman Catholic church in Cracow - at the personal invitation of Cardinal Wojtyla —".

Billy Graham's new cart is thus now in the threshing floor of Roman Catholicism and let all God's people beware of assuming that God's service is rightly done in such a place when it does not condemn all that the Word of God condemns of the Mother of Harlots, its idolatry, Mariolatry, confessions, indulgences, absolutions, and teachings of Papal infallibility and of the Queen of Heaven; to name just a few!

And how clearly are Billy Graham and the Pope involved together! How blind the leaders must be who still follow Billy Graham! The oxen of that cart are stumbling.

## WHAT DOES THE WORD OF GOD SAY?

The captains and leaders of Christendom will consult to join the Pope and Billy Graham and Dr Coggan and the Jewish leaders in a travesty of religious union.

But the Word of God says "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities" (Rev. 18:4-5).

Billy's cart is now fully revealed. But any soldier of the cross of

Christ who knew his drill would have known long ago not to follow that course, for the soldier's elementary rules include this: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing" (2 Cor. 6:14-17).

God's work is not ascertained by the number of heads nor by the will of majorities subscribing to it. God's work is done at His command in the order and manner of His own directions. It is most usually the few and the otherwise despised whom God finds ready and willing to do what is of Himself.

### **THE JUDGMENT OF GOD IN SUCH MATTERS**

It is to be noted that God did not prevent the people from following the course set by the captains and leaders. He allowed them to bring the cart and the oxen and to put the ark thereon. The whole procession appeared to be going well, and David and all Israel played before God with all their might! They had the band out and showed a great deal of enthusiasm but God could not share or approve an enthusiasm which involved disobedience and disregard for His own directions. Later when His ordering was followed the Lord did approve and accept the enthusiasm and warmth of David and his people when the ark was finally brought up to Jerusalem. The change came at the threshing floor of Chidon. There are several scenes of divine intervention at threshing floors. Here the oxen stumbled. Something went wrong with the new cart and its team, for on the uneven ground the oxen "shook" the ark and Uzza put forth his hand to steady the ark. Now the Lord had been viewing the whole proceedings very differently from all the people, but He had not intervened, and the people were not aware of His displeasure. But the moment Uzza touched the ark, he died. Uzza did something in relation to the holy things of God which was contrary to all God's thoughts and commands and which passed the line where the Lord had to act.

At first David was displeased with God and he was afraid. For a man to be displeased with God only shows that he has a lot of confessing and adjusting to do. But to fear the Lord is a first step in the course of reclamation to the service of God and towards the path of the just.

Today it is the same. The crowds at the great high-pressure campaigns and in the popular movements and in the sensationalist churches and all the flotsam and jetsam of Christendom marshalled and paraded under the various banners and bands of the captains and leaders, all think they are doing fine and that God is with them. They think they are rich spiritually but know not that they are in God's sight "wretched

and miserable and poor and blind and naked” (Rev. 3:17). Like David and his people prior to the judgment on Uzza, they do not give the commandments and the Word of God a thought.

But God is watching and He has pleasure only in those who love Him enough to do His work the way He says. He still says “If ye love me, keep my commandments”.

In the main, the Lord, today, does not prevent people acting in the belief that they are pleasing Him when this is not so. They have His Word. What more could He do for them? He has explained His purpose, design and method and they disregard it, and instead they do what the captains and leaders say. The judgment He brings upon them is that His presence does not go with them for He will not accompany disobedient people acting in contravention of His explicit directions, provisions and teachings.

Sometimes direct judgment also follows as in the case of Uzza in the Old Testament and Ananias and Sapphira in the New Testament, but this is rare today as we approach the end of the days of grace. As is set forth in 2 Corinthians 5:10 and Romans 14:10 a judgment for Christians is shortly to be held at the judgment seat of Christ. This will be in heaven, immediately following the Rapture. And all who are not in Christ, and have been meddling in the holy things of God, will be left to a terrible judgment here in this earth as is portrayed in Chapters 17 and 18 of Revelation. The judgments portrayed in these two Chapters relate particularly to Roman Catholicism and those who in the End-age have been drawn into association with that system, and that is why this section of Scripture contains the very particular warning “Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord who judgeth her” (Rev. 18:4-8).

## **HOW HAS GOD INSTRUCTED US TO SERVE HIM?**

God’s work is done by an individual of His own equipping and directing, or by a local Church set up in accordance with clearly defined principles and form. He also recognises a Christian family as a unit being a part of the local Church. He honours the co-operation of brother with brother in His wide service but if within the sphere of the local church always in subjection to its order, work and witness. No other corporate body other than the local Church has scriptural approval and authority. The details of instruction for the service of the Master within these assigned limits are full and particular and every

case is covered within the orbit of the holy commands and the Lord, as they are set out in the Word of God.

### **THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE**

There can be no argument about this. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: **That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works**" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The Devil's subtle call of the end age is the same call he gave to Eve in the first days in the Garden of Eden. He said to her "Hath God said?" He raised a doubt about the veracity of the commandments of the Lord. When Eve told the Serpent that God had said "ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die", the Evil One replied, "Ye shall not surely die". He proceeded deceitfully and subtly to tell Eve of the apparent or alleged advantages of contravening the Word of God, and he then allowed the woman's own lusts and pride of life to achieve his end, for she took of the fruit and did eat when she saw the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise (See Gen. 3:1-6).

Today the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, casts it up this way. He says "Hath God said?" How do you know? Why, there are scores of versions and texts of Scripture and they are all different in thousands of words and expressions. You just can't tell, nowadays, what it was God said when He inspired the first writers to write His Word, because all those first copies have been lost". Then he makes subtle suggestions concerning many things, from Pentecostalism and ecumenism to materialism and the whole gamut of end-age religious and pseudo-religious fantasies and foibles and he is then quite safe to leave the foolish and duped of this age to run riot in their own way, selling themselves to their lusts and pride.

And so they say "Ah well, we don't know what the exact Word of God is but at least we know God loves us, and love is greater than anything so we just cannot worry about truth". And so every man and woman does what is right in his or her own eyes and the commandment is side-stepped, in this the Laodicean age of false values and of lukewarmness for the Lord and His Word.

### **THE DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINE PRESERVATION OF THE WORD OF GOD**

The answer to all the subtlety of the attack on the Scripture is that the Word of God not only claims for itself authenticity but preservation in its entirety even to jots and tittles and for all time. And judgments are pronounced on all who dare to take from, change or add to the precise form of the words of the Scriptures of God.

If God cannot honour His promise to preserve His Word, then His very claim that it is true and authentic is already meaningless.

And of course the church and its men of God have a charge to "hold fast the form of sound words", which Paul told Timothy, he had

heard of him, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Then Paul says "that good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us" (See 2 Tim. 1:13-14). The expression "the form" of sound words is important and underlines that not just the meaning and import of the words, but that their textual and technical relationship within the frame of the divine oracles is ordered of God and is to be cherished, regarded, preserved, kept and held fast, and this so that it may be acted on by the people of God, who will understand its message by reference to the very form of the words.

### **THREE PROPOSITIONS:—**

1. The God who is maintaining all the vast universe in perfect order is able to preserve and maintain His own Word which He has committed to writing.
  2. God's Name is involved in that His Word must be inerrant and similarly that He must preserve what is inerrant or it is no longer inerrant and would be valueless and useless if it once lost its inerrancy.
  3. God's Word is magnified above all His Name, therefore His Name requires the inerrancy and preservation of His Word.
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1. "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name" (Psa. 138:2).
  2. "The law of the Lord is perfect" (Psa. 19:7).
  3. "Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever" (Psa. 119:152).  
"Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away" (Luke 21:33).

### **SPIRITUAL RECOGNITION OF GOD'S WORD**

In the period before Christ, the Jews were privileged to have committed to them the oracles of God to keep and preserve (See Rom. 3:2), and over the years the pure Word of God became recognised in distinction from all other writings and the canon of the Old Testament Scriptures was fully established by the time of Christ and He accepted it fully and referred to it on many occasions.

Similarly during the period of the "early fathers" in the first centuries A.D. the books of the New Testament became established and accepted by the early Church and set apart from all other writings. Thus the Bible became known for what it is, "that which is perfect", God's inerrant Word, His testimony, founded for ever.

Similarly again when the invention of printing made the mass reproduction of God's Word possible, God's men of that era over a period were able to discern the true Word of God from the main streams of hand-written texts which had been meticulously copied and handed down, by the Jews as to the Old Testament and as to the New Testament by the Greek-speaking Spirit-led churches of the Eastern Mediterranean

area. What is known as the Textus Receptus (or the Received Text) became a settled and accepted text from which all the major translations were made into the various vernacular languages including English. And of course the English translation which has satisfied the people of God in English-speaking lands ever since is the so-called "Authorised Version" which after its introduction completely replaced in general acceptance all previous English translations.

And for about three hundred years the Authorized Version was everywhere accepted and acted upon by the people of God in all English-speaking countries. The Authorized Version is the Word of God in the English language still.

## **THE MODERN VERSIONS**

All the modern versions stem from Greek texts other than the Textus Receptus. Two modernist professors, Doctors Westcott and Hort, were those mainly responsible for the production of the first variant Greek Text. These men brought into use texts which came from streams of texts other than those which were the basis of the Textus Receptus and in particular they laid special importance on two texts which had been lost within the Roman Catholic system of the dark ages — and these are texts which show clear signs of having been tampered with and revised and which have no known history of spiritual and godly origin or keeping, such as did the texts from which the Textus Receptus comes. The process employed in selecting the Greek form of words from the various texts was a purely mechanical one and the selection was not based on any spiritual appreciation of the mind and heart of God but rather on the professors' own rationalistic and modernistic approach to God's Word.

The first English version so based on the erroneous premises of Westcott and Hort was the so-called "Revised Version" of 1881 and it produced over 5000 changes from the Authorised Version. Overwhelmingly the changes favour the modernistic views of the textual revisionists.

But now of recent years dozens of modern versions have appeared — all based on the same spurious texts — and most of them the work of acknowledged modernists and many from men who deny the precious vital truths of the doctrine of Christ, — denying His deity, resurrection and saving power. God does not ever trust His Word to the handling and keeping of such men.

## **TODAY'S CHOICE**

There is the Authorised Version which has long proved itself to fulfil the spiritual expectations of God's people.

And there are the other versions, all based on texts which are to say the least, of dubious authority and value. Referring to 2 Timothy 4:3, the time has come "when they will not endure sound doctrine, but

after their own lusts” have they “heaped to themselves teachers having itching ears”, and thus the spate of modern Bibles.

Thus it is that the call goes out again, in these last days of the Church on the earth, to discern the true from the false — to say clearly which is God’s Word, and to distinguish it from all other writings, as was done when the Old Testament canon was settled; as the early Christian Church did when the canon of the New Testament was settled, and as spiritual men of God did when the Textus Receptus and our English Authorised Version were settled and accepted. The call is to distinguish God’s Word from man’s thoughts and words, and to stand against the Satanic assault of the last days, which seeks to obscure the true Word of God and to blunt its cutting edge in the hands of the servants of Christ.

We in our local church choose the tried and true, the only Bible with the real power of God, which alone can divide asunder soul and spirit, the joints and marrow, “and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). Do choose with us the Bible which has not lost its point! But which is sharp in the heart of the King’s enemies. To so choose is surely to “keep” God’s Word.

A local church which permits unchallenged the reading and propagating of the modern Bibles of men and Satan, is clearly not keeping the Word of God. It has lost its salt and seasoning, and is in Laodicean weakness and spiritual poverty, floundering in sentimentalism and in spiritual vanity. And where the Word of God is concerned, is not that vanity, also profanity?

To “keep” the Word of God is obviously first and foremost to recognise, keep and hold dear, the true Bible. But then surely we should be prepared to obey it and act on it. No matter what the captains or leaders say, let us do fearlessly what God says. To “keep” God’s Word, is to read it, heed it, and to do it. It is to honour it and perform it. Away with all that has no authority in the Word of God! But let us faithfully follow in the Spirit, the form of the sound words of His precepts, that we may demonstrate and prove to our loved Lord that we do love Him, by understanding and appreciating His heart and desire in giving us God-breathed words and explicit directions and commandments, and by doing them precisely and willingly and joyously to His pleasing.

God grant that when the Lord comes He will be able to say of many local churches in many lands, “thou hast kept My Word”.

“Deal bountifully with thy servant that I may live and keep thy Word” (Psa. 119:17). “I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts” (Psa. 119:63).

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