

THE ANCIENT BAPTIST JOURNAL

PROMOTING BAPTIST PRINCIPLES
& BIBLICAL PREACHING



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www.ancientbaptist.com

EDITORS:

James Alter is pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Sidney, OH: www.gracebaptistsidney.com. **Dolton Robertson** is pastor of Liberty Baptist Church in Callahan, FL. They are co-authors of the book *Why Baptist?*, and co-founders of the Ancient Baptist Press. For more information please visit www.ancientbaptist.com

CONTRIBUTORS:

Michael D. Scott, Ph.D., is co-pastor of Charity Baptist Fellowship in Jonesboro, GA. He is also assistant editor of the Ancient Baptist Journal.

Jeff Faggart is pastor of Harvest Baptist Church in Rockwell, N.C. He is also the founder of the Baptist History Preservation Society. For more information please visit www.baptisthistorypreservation.com

Nathan Breinich: Layout and Assistant Editor

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SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF REV. DAVID BENEDICT, D.D.

BY HENRY C. GRAVES, A.M.

Many eminent men in different Christian countries have borne the name of Benedict. Of Latin and ecclesiastical origin, it is supposed to have been adopted as a proper name out of regard for some individuals distinguished in religion. The Benedicts of America do not, however, trace the line of their ancestry to any patron saints. "The bones of the good old ministers and deacons, who bore the name, would hardly lie quiet in their graves should any attempt of that kind be made."

The authentic history of the family begins with Thomas Benedict of Nottinghamshire, England, who was born in 1617. He was an only son, and the name, according to the tradition, had been confined to only sons in the family for more than a hundred years. In the spirit of his time, impatient of civil or ecclesiastical oppression, preferring voluntary exile rather than to endure the cruelties of the Stuarts and Lauds, Thomas Benedict came to New England in 1638. He resided for a time in the colony of Massachusetts Bay, then on Long Island, and afterwards became an influential man in the Connecticut colony.

David Benedict, of the sixth generation from “the first settler,” was born in Norwalk, Fairfield county, Connecticut, October 10, 1779. He was the eldest son of Thomas and Martha Scudder Benedict. His father, who served as a soldier in the war of the Revolution, was an enterprising farmer and a man of gentlemanly bearing. He removed from Norwalk to Saratoga county, New York, afterwards to New Lisbon, Otsego county, and in 1838 to Rhode Island, where he died, leaving a large family of children affectionately united to each other and revering the paternal name. The mother died in 1786, while her eldest son was a boy of six years of age. Her memory was to him ever grateful as that of a pious and devoted Christian woman, who did much even in his earliest years to mould his character and develop the principles of truth, virtue and piety which so distinguished him through his long life. Fourteen years were passed in the country home and amid the routine of farm life. The boy was early taught to work, and had only the ordinary advantages of education which a few months in each year and in a country school-house of the last century afforded. Christian influences, the pious order, the regular discipline and simple habits of a New England home, were the constant agencies giving form and strength to character and direction to mental and moral powers suited to whatever position might be occupied in mature years. At the age of fourteen he left home and was apprenticed to a shoemaker in the town of New Canaan, adjoining Norwalk. Here he remained for seven years and wrought well, until he won the deserved reputation of a skilled workman and master of his

trade. At the close of his apprenticeship he went to the city of New York, and was employed for one year as a journeyman in a large shoe establishment, when the opportunity was soon afforded him of entering into partnership with his employer in an extensive and profitable business. Much to the disappointment, however, of his expected partner, and at "much sacrifice in a worldly point of view" to himself, the young man determined upon a change of pursuit and to commence a new course of life. At a very early age he had a fondness for books. Historical books, such as were within his reach, were carefully read, and habits of mental culture and application were formed which appeared in all his subsequent history. In a brief autobiography he writes: "On a review of the limited space between my leaving the shoemaker's bench and graduating at college, the following things are to be observed: In the first place, my studies were commenced in a small way while on my bench, with a book on a shelf before me; in the next place, when I entered fully on my work I remembered a remark of the late Dr. Judson, whose room was next to mine in college, namely, that 'no man ever succeeds well in any enterprise unless his whole soul is in it'; again, I had two specific objects in view from the first, which were, the ministry and authorship; and finally, a kind and beneficent providence most evidently favored my laborious efforts."

This new course of ministerial and literary life was entered upon deliberately and heartily, for its own sake, as the calling of God for him who was to pursue it. The last year of work in New York was passed in

DENOMINATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE DONATISTS

BY DAVID BENEDICT, D.D.

In the first place, although from the earliest times the foulest stigmas have rested on this people, when their true character is developed they may well compare with any evangelical people of this or of any age or denomination, so far as their morals and evangelical principles were concerned, all that has been published of them to the contrary notwithstanding.

My position as to the discussion of the question of the denominational affinities of the Donatists, when I engaged in their history, is stated in the early part of this work, where may also be seen the description of the unexpected development of facts which induced me to forego my non-committal position, so far as the baptistical affinities of this people were concerned. According to my knowledge, the Episcopalians and the Baptists are the only communities who have claimed the Donatists as denominational kindred. The Episcopal claim on the score of the Donatist diocese will be examined in treating of the nature of the

early dioceses at large. To the ordinary Baptist claim of agreement in baptism, and other matters of faith and practice, we now may add the rejection of infant baptism.

In this stage of this discussion it may be proper to notify the reader that not only the Donatists, but all others then, whether Catholics or dissenters, practiced immersion in baptism; and the practice also was prevalent with all parties of requiring faith before baptism. Augustine is the only exception I find in all the writings now under review. The early subjects of baptism will soon be described. The Trinity and the believer were two essential things with Optatus for a valid baptism.

NO INFANT BAPTISM IN PRIMITIVE TIMES, SAYS NEANDER
“Baptism,” says he, “was administered at first only to adults, as men were accustomed to conceive baptism and faith as strictly connected. We have all reason for not deriving infant baptism from apostolical institution, and the recognition of it which followed somewhat later as an apostolical tradition serves to confirm this hypothesis. In the last years of the second century, Tertulian appears as a zealous opponent of infant baptism, a proof that the practice had not as yet come to be regarded as an apostolical institution; for otherwise, he would hardly have ventured to express himself so strongly against it. But if the necessity of infant baptism was acknowledged in theory, it was still far from being uniformly recognized in practice. As the church of North Africa was the first to bring prominently into notice the necessity of infant baptism, so, in con-

nection with this, they also introduced the communion of infants.”¹

In the above quotations we have a general, and doubtless a correct, view of infant baptism in the early ages, as they are from one of the best church historians, who was himself very intimately connected with the system, being a member of the Lutheran church, the largest body of Protestant pedobaptists. But we should bear in mind that it is quite common for German theologians, both the orthodox and the liberals, to reject the doctrine of the apostolical origin of infant baptism.

**VARIOUS MATTERS PERTAINING TO INFANT BAPTISM, FROM
THE WRITINGS OF AUGUSTINE AGAINST THE DONATISTS**

The best historians trace the first baptism of infants to Africa. We have seen above that. Tertulian of Carthage was the first who opposed the practice. Nothing is said of it among the Donatists for almost a century from their origin, pro or con, when we read that Augustine, in his controversy with the Donatists on baptism, published some books concerning the baptism of little ones.

AUGUSTINE’S DESCRIPTION OF INFANT BAPTISM IN HIS TIME

The universal church, said he, holds that when little infants, are baptized, who certainly, not yet, can believe with the heart unto righteousness, and with the mouth make confession unto salvation, but otherwise, by weeping and squalling even when the baptismal mystery is solemnly per-

¹ Church History, Vol. I, pp. 311-312. Boston Ed.

ATHEISM IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

BY J. R. GRAVES, LL.D.

*“God shall send them strong delusion.”
II Thessalonians 2:11*

Reason, as well as revelation, teaches that men may hold opinions which may endanger their eternal salvation. Men are not in masses hypocrites. There is too much labour in hypocrisy. It requires too much study—too much thought to preserve the character—to keep the cloak around so carefully that those about us may not discover our deformity. So the masses of mankind are not hypocrites, and the least of all so in religion. They are governed by their principles, or rather their opinions, since opinions are their principles.

Men, as a general rule, act according to their principles or opinions, what they believe, or are willing to believe. And since we are governed by our opinions, it is but just that we should be tried for our opinions. We may hold one solitary opinion that will ruin the soul. Nor

will it avail, at our final trial, how successfully we may have entertained it. It is by the truth alone that we can be saved.

If sincerity were sufficient at the bar of final audit, God would be indifferent to both truth and error. Let us not deceive ourselves, God will not be mocked. What we sow we shall reap; for our beliefs, our opinions, we shall all be condemned or acquitted. The doctrine of the text is most clear. That God gives up the sinner, the incorrigible impenitent one to whom has been offered the plan of salvation again and again, with whom the Holy Spirit has striven until they have known their duty clearly, forcibly and repeatedly. Such an one, God teaches us, He gives over to some strong delusion, to believe a lie, that his damnation might be evident to all. God will be glorified in the sinner. If not in his life, in his death, if not in his salvation in his damnation. Pharaoh—

Each sinner before me is in imminent danger of being given over of God to some delusion—to believe some lie; and doubtless some one whom I address has been already. If so, for him or her the Sun of Righteousness hath forever set. From his stand no mortal or immortal can move him—nothing but the wind and storm of the last day. For such we have no hopes. 'Tis for the barks that are approaching the reef that we would fire the signal of warning and rear the friendly beacon light. You who are still impenitent are in danger because you answer the character of the text. You refuse to hear the truth, to entertain and embrace and obey it, you have no pleasure in the truth, but are having all your pleasure in sin and unrighteousness. Is it not so? Are you taking pleasure in

serving God? No, but in doing the will and pleasure of Satan!

I have come in God's name, as your friend, to tell you in plainness and affection that His Holy Spirit will not always strive; His patience will ere long be exhausted; the Holy Spirit long insulted shall take his everlasting flight,

“And Jesus on the eternal throne no longer intercede.”

Then will you be left to your own devices, to follow the inclinations of your own wicked heart, to believe some lie, and to be the victim of some delusion that is most pleasing to your own impenitent heart — until, so far as concerns yourself, you might as well, and for the sake of others around you far better, be in hell. Your ultimate damnation would be as sure as though the gloom of a thousand midnights were this hour rolling its murky folds between your soul and the throne of mercy and of God. It is my object to discuss and expose some of the popular delusions by which souls are lost.

Infidelity. The delusion that we shall notice tonight is that of atheism, or infidelity. Infidelity consists in rejecting the Bible as a divine revelation and consequently the whole plan of salvation which it contains; consequently the infidel, in the rejection of all revealed religion, rests his eternal happiness upon the prospect of eternal annihilation! Upon the mere chance that his absurdities may prove realities! What a system is that in which he boasts and which he labours to promulgate in society! It destroys the unity and benevolence of the Godhead; veils his moral attributes in darkness, destroys all distinction between virtue and

DISTINCTIVE BAPTIST PRINCIPLES

BY B. H. CARROLL, D.D.

*“A declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us.”
Luke 1:1*

*“It was needful for me... to exhort you that ye should earnestly
contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.”
Jude 3*

The distinctive principles of the Baptists are those doctrines or practices which distinguish us from other Christian denominations. It is held by some that no doctrine or practice should be classified as *distinctive* which has at any time been shared, in whole or in part, by any other denomination. But this limited sense of the word *distinctive* is too narrow for ordinary speech or common sense. For example: The Greek church and the Baptists both practice immersion, but their doctrine of baptism is widely different from ours. Authority, subject, and design all enter as much into the validity of this ordinance as the act itself. More than mere immersion is necessary to constitute New Testament bap-

tism. Again, the Congregationalists agree with Baptists in the form of church government, but their doctrine of the church is widely different from ours. Yet again, the statement of Chillingworth, “The Bible, and the Bible alone, the religion of Protestants,” is widely different from the Baptist principle, “The New Testament, the only law of Christianity.”

Moreover, this entire subject has an *historic* aspect, which may not be ignored. There has been great progress in Baptist principles since the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Throughout the Protestant world there has been steady approximation by nearly all other denominations to many Baptist principles, very materially narrowing the once broad margin dividing us from other people. So that the distinctive in *history* is much more marked than the distinctive of the present day. Notable among the Baptist doctrines towards which there has been this steady approximations are “Freedom of Conscience” and “Separation of Church and State.” It is one of the best established facts of history that Protestants equally with Romanists once held to the unchristian and horrible maxim: “Whose is the government—his is the religion.” Geneva, Germany, Holland, Old England and New England shared it with Italy, Spain and France, as Baptists found to their cost. While, therefore, the most recent approximations towards our principles are warmly welcomed, and while the hope of still greater approximation is fondly cherished, we are not thereby stopped from entrance into the domain of history in discussing distinctive principles. Before coming to affirmative statements, allow me to clear away the brush obstructing a fair view by

DISTINCTIVE BAPTIST PRINCIPLES

disclaiming as *distinctive* the only two doctrines which in the world's estimation constitute the sum of our distinctive principles:

(1) *Immersion is Baptism*

Immersion is not disclaimed as a Baptist doctrine, but it is disclaimed as a distinctive tenet. Think of it. For the first thirteen hundred years all Christendom held this belief. Even to-day other Christian denominations, aggregating nearly one hundred million people, believe and practice it as the only baptism. How, then, can it be our most distinguishing tenet? If, indeed, it be distinctive of our people, it is the least distinctive and the least important of all our principles. In this discussion it will not even be named as a distinctive principle.

(2) *Baptism is Essential to Salvation*

So far from being distinctive, this is not now and never has been a Baptist doctrine. More than all other people do they repudiate it. Indeed, on the contrary, the Baptists are the only people in the world who hold its exact opposite: *Salvation is essential to baptism*.

On these premises and disclaimers we may now announce in order the distinctive Baptist principles:

I. THE NEW TESTAMENT—THE LAW OF CHRISTIANITY

Doubtless many of my fellow-Christians of other denominations may be disposed to smile at the announcement of this as a distinctive Baptist principle. But let us not smile too soon. Patiently await the development of the thought. To expand the statement: All the New Testament is the

SHUBAL STEARNS MEMORIAL



MARKER PLACED BY THE BAPTIST HISTORY
PRESERVATION SOCIETY - MAY 13, 2005

THE INSCRIPTION READS AS FOLLOWS:

SHUBAL STEARNS

Shubal Stearns was born January 28, 1706 in Boston, Massachusetts. He was the son of Shubal and Rebecca Larriford Stearns. While a youth, his family moved to Tolland, Connecticut. He married Sarah Johnston March 6, 1727. Stearns was converted under the ministry of George Whitefield, and in 1745, became minister of a “new light” church. A care-

ful study of the scriptures led Stearns to embrace Baptist principles and, in 1751, he was baptized by Wait Palmer. Stearns was ordained to the gospel ministry at Tolland, May 20, 1751 by Wait Palmer and Joshua Morse.

In obedience to the heavenly call, Stearns left New England in 1754, and eventually settled at Sandy Creek. Here, he faithfully executed the great and extensive work to which he was called. He was the first pastor of the Sandy Creek Baptist Church and founder of the Sandy Creek Baptist Association. In appearance, Stearns was a little man. His character was indisputably good as a man, a Christian, and a preacher. He possessed sound judgment and organizational abilities. His eyes were penetrating, and his voice musical and strong. His preaching was managed in such a manner as to make soft impressions upon the heart, fetch tears from the eyes, and shake the nerves of his hearers.

Baptist historian, William Cathcart said of Stearns:

He was eloquent, wise, humble, pathetic, full of faith, and wholly consecrated to God, and few men ever enjoyed more of the Spirit's presence in the closet and in preaching the gospel. He was undoubtedly one of the greatest ministers that ever presented Jesus to perishing multitudes, and one of the most successful soul-winners that ever unfurled the banner of calvary.

Shubal Stearns died November 20, 1771 and is buried in the Sandy Creek Cemetery. For sixteen years, this "little" man was used by God to stir America. He is now a "giant" of the faith. To God be the glory.

*"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament;
and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."*

Daniel 12:3

THE BIBLE THE WORD OF GOD

BY J. B. GAMBRELL, D.D.

In this discussion it is assumed that there is a God. The Bible assumes that at the very outstart. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." It is my task in this paper to advance such considerations to prove that the Bible is the Word of God, as will convince the reasonable, not the obstinate and perverse. The Bible is meant for the humble truth seeker, not the skeptic. The word Bible means book. Of the making of books there is no end; but there is one book, which, by the testings of the ages, has come to hold such a prominent place in the thinking of the most intelligent peoples of the earth, that, by consent, it is called THE BOOK, or Bible. It is, in fact, sixty-six separate writings, compiled into one volume. These writings were produced by many persons who lived in widely separated times. It is affirmed they were inspired by Deity, so that the one Book has but one Author, and that Author God.

In our thinking on this momentous question, we must begin with a concrete fact. We have the Bible. Where did this Book come from? There is a true answer to satisfy the honest mind, not the carping mind. It is a very old book. It has a history such as no other book has. It deals with the beginnings of the human race and comes down through many centuries. Never was there a book so opposed, derided and hated of men; nor one so loved and revered and obeyed.

Countless numbers of the purest, best and wisest men have accepted the Bible as the Word of God. Those who have studied it most have believed most that it came from God. Men of the highest intelligence have so firmly believed in the divine origin of the Bible, that they have taken it to be the guide of their lives. Many have been so convinced that they have willingly died rather than give it up. God approaches his creatures on the plane of human reasonableness. How is it that the most learned, the wisest, the best men of earth have believed the Bible came from God if it is not so? To a reasonable mind this fact is strongly persuasive.

It is noteworthy that the Bible everywhere assumes that God is its author. "Hear the Word of the Lord," "God spake by the prophets," and on and on. This claim harmonizes with the content of the book; its high and holy purposes; its tone of absolute sincerity and truth. It never has been possible to give to pretense and falsehood, either the substance or the tone of truth. Nor has it been possible ever in the history of the race to key falsehood to high moral purposes. The Bible claims to come from God. That claim is true, or else the book inculcating the highest

BYE-PATHS IN BAPTIST HISTORY

BY J. JACKSON GOADBY

SMYTH AND THE GENERAL BAPTISTS¹

Although, as we have seen, there were a few General Baptist churches in existence as early as the days of Henry the Eighth, the modern General Baptists rightly regard John Smyth as the father and founder of their denomination. They trace their history rather to his efforts, and to the labours of those who were his immediate successors, than to the churches at Eythorne or Booking. A brief story of his life will, therefore, not be out of place in these sketches.

Among the hundreds in England who felt the weight of the oppressive ecclesiastical laws of the Stuarts was John Smyth, the Vicar of Gainsborough. Puritan rather than Anglican, Smyth was yet ready to enter the lists against the Brownists, who were numerous in that part of the country. His defence of the use of the Lord's Prayer earned for him the praise of Bishop Hall. By degrees, however, Smyth became dissatis-

¹ Editor's Note: This article is chapter 3 from J. Jackson Goadby's *Bye-Paths in Baptist History*, (London: Elliot Stock, 1871).

fied with the discipline and ceremonies of the Established Church, and held a dispute on the subject with Mr. Hildersham and other divines. Further enquiries followed. His former doubts were confirmed; and, like an honest man, Smyth gave up his benefice, and all the social and ecclesiastical advantages of his position. Such was the general opinion of his integrity and his gifts, that he was at once invited to become the pastor of one of the Brownist churches in Lincolnshire. Robinson, the father of the English Independents, and Clifton, were co-pastors of another Brownist church in the same region. Owing to repeated harass from the High Court of Commission, Smyth, Robinson, Clifton, and their respective flocks, decided to seek in Holland the liberty they could not obtain at home. Accordingly, in 1606, the voluntary exiles started for Amsterdam, Smyth acting as the leader. He was Robinson's "guide," "general," and oracle," according to Bishop Hall; and Ephraim Pagitt, in his scurrilous book, *Heresiography*, describes Smyth as one of the grandees of the separation."

Once in Amsterdam, Smyth and his fellow exiles joined the English Church, of which Johnson was the pastor, and Ainsworth the teacher. Free to pursue his religious enquiries unmolested, Smyth now devoted himself to a diligent study of the sacred Scriptures. New light broke in upon his mind, of which he was not slow to speak. The New Testament churches, with their simple order and discipline, seemed strangely unlike the half Jewish society at Amsterdam, with which he was united. He felt, moreover, that he could no longer hold the doc-

trines of personal election and reprobation. His faith was also shaken in some other points “assuredly believed among” the Amsterdam Separatists. He had ceased to be a Calvinist, and had become an Arminian. Much talk arose about these changes in his opinions. Meanwhile, Smyth adopted new views on the subject of baptism.

The last question came up in reviewing his dissent from the Establishment. He and his Brownist friends had rejected the ordination of the State Church, but they still retained her baptism. Smyth now made the subject his special study, and was speedily led to adopt believers’ baptism as alone consistent with New Testament teaching. With his usual frankness he openly and zealously advocated his new opinions.

This was more than the charity of his associates could bear. Arminianism was bad enough; but believers’ baptism was worse; at least so thought Robinson, Clifton, and others. Smyth, and those who sympathised in his opinions, were cut off from the church. A bitter controversy broke out; and his former friends presently showed that though they had themselves fled from persecution, they had not yet learnt the true nature of Christian liberty. Freedom meant, thinking as they thought; and when once Smyth boldly announced his difference of opinion, they placed him beyond the pale of charity. He was charged with “murdering the souls of babes and sucklings, by depriving them of the visible seals of salvation.” Every kind of reproach and abuse were heaped upon the man whom all had once held in loving esteem. He was declared to be “of wolfish nature,” “a brute beast,” and one whom God

HE OPENED THE BOOK, HE CLOSED THE BOOK: JESUS, ISAIAH, AND THE PANORAMIC VIEW OF THE BIBLE - PART II

By MICHAEL D. SCOTT, PH.D.

The celebration¹ of the four-hundredth anniversary of the King James Bible has occasioned commemorative Bibles, articles, conferences, and documentaries. The motives behind such jubilation are suspect at best. In their latest Bible catalog, Christian Book Distributors states:

In the four centuries since the KJV was first published, many other translations have appeared in print, including the Revised Standard Version, the New International Version, the English Standard Version, and *The Message*. Yet the KJV remains the most influential English edition. Why? **The accuracy of its text and the incomparable beauty of its language** powerfully communicate God's timeless message in a way that touches hearts and changes lives.

We invite you to join us in celebrating the 400th anniversary of the publication of the 1611 King James Version by **enjoying this majestic rendition of God's Word.**²

1611 King James Bible reproductions are thus promoted: "Own a **piece of history**"; "Beloved for its **majestic phrasing and stately cadences**, the KJV has **profoundly influenced our language** and

¹ Editor's Note: Part I of this article appeared in THE ANCIENT BAPTIST JOURNAL, Vol. IV Iss. I, and is available at www.ancientbaptist.com. The introduction to that article is reprinted here.

² Christian Book Distributors Bibles Catalog, Fall 2011, p. 52 (emphasis added).

theology”; “Celebrate the anniversary of this **passionate rendering of God’s Word!**”; and finally, “A beautifully crafted **illustrated heirloom** to bless future generations!”³

Others are less cunning, using this year as an opportunity to wage an aggressive onslaught against the authenticity of the Scriptures. Just a few weeks ago, Fox News (“the most *trusted* name in news”) ran an Associated Press article entitled, “Bible Detectives: Jerusalem Scholars Trace Bible’s Evolution.” Although it gives the appearance of a grand and noble cause, the underlying scathing attitude toward the Scriptures is apparent:

A dull-looking chart projected on the wall of a university office in Jerusalem displayed a revelation that would startle many readers of the Old Testament: the sacred text that people revered in the past was **not the same one** we study today. An ancient version of one book has an **extra phrase**. Another appears to have been **revised to retroactively insert a prophecy after the events happened**. Scholars in this out-of-the-way corner of the Hebrew University campus have been quietly at work for 53 years on one of the most ambitious projects attempted in biblical studies—publishing the authoritative edition of the Old Testament, also known as the Hebrew Bible, and tracking every single **evolution of the text** over centuries and millennia.

And it has evolved, despite deeply held beliefs to the contrary. For many Jews and Christians, religion dictates that the words of the Bible in the original Hebrew are divine, unaltered and unalterable...But the ongoing work of the academic detectives of the Bible Project, as their undertaking is known, shows that this text at the root of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam was **somewhat fluid** for long periods of its history, and that its transmission through the ages was **messier and more human than most of us imagine**.⁴

³ Ibid.

⁴ “Bible Detectives: Jerusalem Scholars Trace Bible’s Evolution,” Associated Press: August 12, 2011 (<http://www.foxnews.com/scitech/2011/08/12/bible-detectives-jerusalem-scholars->

HE OPENED THE BOOK, HE CLOSED THE BOOK:
JESUS, ISAAH, AND THE PANORAMIC VIEW OF THE BIBLE
PART II

One will not have to look hard among the mainstream media to find other articles similar in their derision of the Scriptures.

Though Baptists agree that the King James Bible is the pinnacle of all English literature and do not deny its contribution to our language and culture, we celebrate its 400th anniversary as the **perfect words of God in English, preserved forever**: “*The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.*” (Isaiah 40:8) J.A. Shakelford said:

The blood of martyrs in other ages attested the love they bore to the cause of Christ and the truths in his word. We should be no less faithful in our day. Human traditions are as displeasing to God now as they were eighteen hundred years ago. Among all the conflicting doctrines as taught by men, we can only hope to find the truth in the word of God.

Baptists are known for their love of the Scriptures, never appealing to anything else for proof of their faith and practice. As Thomas Curtis wrote, “The Bible and Christian experience in the heart are the only weapons needed. All the rest has ever been regarded by them as Saul’s armor. They have preferred the simpler sling and stone of David.”⁵ God promised that He would preserve His words forever: “*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*” (Psalm 12:6-7). God *cannot* lie: “*In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie,*

trace-bibles-evolution/?test=faces, emphasis added).

⁵ Thomas F. Curtis, *The Progress of Baptist Principles in the Last Hundred Years*, (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1855), 319.