

BC Article 5 –I Believe in The Pure and Effective Bible

Brothers and Sisters: The works of Shakespeare, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress(本仁的《天路历程》), or the works of Charles Dickens are classic pieces of literature. They have remained for us a long time and are known for their good literary quality. Chinese, Japanese, Arabians, and Indians have many classic pieces of literature as well. But all these works can be, and probably will be, surpassed in the future. Furthermore, as classic as these works are, they were not always accurate. Dickens' socialism, for instance, has proved to be faulty. Some Arabian views of science were more like science fiction than fact. And it is not surprising because these writers were mere men.

The Bible, on the other hand, will never be surpassed (被超越). The Bible is perfectly accurate and authoritative. So what makes the Bible so amazing, so beautiful, so astounding (令人惊叹的), so accurate, and so authoritative when compared with the greatest writers and their messages? This is what you will hear about today!

Our headings are:

The Bible is Holy and from God

The Bible is the Source of your Faith

The Bible is Confirmed by the Holy Spirit

The Bible proves its Dignity (尊严) and Authority.

Our goals are: That you will **fully grasp the greatness of God's love** to you by giving you his infallible Word, and that you then begin to **serve him more faithfully as you study it.**

Let read together *Belgic Confession Article 5*

We receive all these books, and these only, **as holy and canonical**, for the **regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith**; believing without any doubt all things contained in them, not so much because the Church receives and approves them as such, but more especially because the **Holy Spirit witnesses in our hearts** that they are from God, and also because **they carry the evidence thereof in themselves**. For the very blind are able to perceive that the things foretold in them are being fulfilled.

我们接受这些经卷为神圣的经典，作为我们信仰的规范与根基，并且坚固我们的信仰；毫无疑问地相信其中所包括的一切，因为教会接受并证实了这一切，尤其是因为圣灵在我们的心中作见证，证明这一切是从神而来的，而且它们本身就足以证明是由神而来。就是盲眼者都能明白其中的预言正在应验。(Translated by Rev. Charles Chao D.D.)

The Bible is Holy and from God

We receive all these books, and these only, as holy and canonical,

1. To consider the value of a gift you will normally consider who the giver is. If your husband or your child were to give you a gift, you would gladly accept it because he loves you. And then you would hope that the gift was something useful. **If a thief were to give you a gift you would reject it, and for good reason. You would not like what he did and you surely don't want stolen property. You consider who the giver is to get an idea of the gift - its quality and its conditions.**

2. God, holy and perfect God, in his grace, gave the Holy Bible as his gift to his children. And they received it. And because you know that he is a perfect and holy God – your Creator – who gave you the Bible, you know that it is a good gift.

Hebrews 1:1-2b - God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son,

Apostle John showed very specifically that God's Son was the personification (人格化) of the Word of God.

John 1:1,14 - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Human writers advocate for their position...right or wrong...and never perfectly. God always advocates for truth.

3. Now most people don't try to slip in a few words in the Bible to change it, and they rarely remove a few words. But many do attempt to attack the perfection of the Bible. How?

a. They try to change the Bible by redefining (重新定义) what it says...or by twisting some of the words with new and inventive interpretation. (For example: The Bible does say that women shouldn't be elders, but they were only restricted from being elders because they were uneducated. So it is okay now!)

b. Sometimes they bring other books alongside it. This is very common among cults (邪教). This is insidious (阴险的). But God expects you to have a noble respect for his truth and he threatens condemnation to hell – anathema (咒诅) – on the one who adds or subtracts from his Word.

Isaiah 66:2 For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says the LORD. "But

on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, **And who trembles at My word.**

(耶和華說：“這一切都是我手所造的，所以就都有了。但我所看顧的，就是虛心痛悔、因我話而战兢的人。)

Why is it such a big deal to attack the perfection of the Bible? Those who add or subtract from the Bible, or make anything else equal to it, are really saying the Bible is not perfect. If it is not perfect, they then can't assume it is authoritative. You see, holiness and perfection make the Bible an authority!

The Bible is the Source of Faith

for the **regulation, foundation, and confirmation** of our faith; believing without any doubt all things contained in them,

1. Let me ask: Why would a person give you gift. A person might give you a cookbook because he thinks you can't cook and he wants to help you! Another might give you a book about raising children because they don't think you are doing a good job. Another may have a sinister motive in giving you gifts - maybe he wants you to love him...maybe he wants you to do something else for him...like a husband giving his wife a cookbook. **Why did God give you the Holy Bible?** He did this because he loves you and he knows that it was critical for you. How critical?

2. God gave the Bible to regulate (rule) you faith –what you believe. This “ruler” is most needed at a time of changing values in our relativistic society. Man now wants to save himself by science...or by saving the planet...or cleaning up the air we breathe. Remember what happened in Judges: Everyone did what was right in his own eyes: homosexuality, abuse of the poor, rape, corruption, injustice, idol worship, adultery, and bloodshed. Add euthanasia to that list and you have Canada. Man, apart from God, lives in anarchy(无政府状态). Yes, this corruption even comes upon Christians.

3. God gave the Bible as the foundation of your faith...your salvation. Cliff notes might help you pass your exam, but it is not sufficient as a foundation for faith. Confucius (孔夫子) might help you sound more educated, but he couldn't lead you to Christ. The Bible is the sure foundation. A house built on a poor foundation quickly falls apart with a great crash.

John 20:31 - but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

Romans 1:16 - For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

The Christian willingly believes by faith, without necessarily having scientific proofs, all the things that are contained in the Bible. To him, miracles are true because God says so. And his experience with God show that he is a truth teller!

4. God gave the Bible to confirm you in the faith, removing any doubt from your mind of your salvation (拯救) . We call this sanctification (成圣) .

2Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 **that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

1Peter 2:1 Therefore...as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, (所以...就要爱慕那纯净的灵奶,象才生的婴孩爱慕奶一样,叫你们因此渐长,)

The only cure for having doubts is the opening of the unchanging Bible. This is so unlike ever changing manuals...or disappearing manuals...or using one manual for different models of appliance.

The Bible is Confirmed by the Holy Spirit

not so much because the Church receives and approves them as such but more especially because the Holy Spirit witnesses in our hearts that they are from God,

1. You have already heard how the Bible came to be. God spoke through holy men. God confirmed it through his Son, the prophets, and the apostles(使徒). God preserved it. Men received it. These things prove the Bible to be true, but God added one more confirmation by his Holy Spirit(圣灵). **The Spirit confirms that the Holy Bible is the accurate and authoritative Word of God in your hearts.**

1 Corinthians 2:14 - But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.(然而属血气的人不领会神圣灵的事,反倒以为愚拙;并且不能知道,因为这些事惟有属灵的人才能看透.)

2. This says something about how you are able to reach the unbeliever. Sadly, today, people push contemporary (现代的) worship services, or seeker friendly worship services, or social work, as the best way to reach non-Christians. But when it comes right down to it, the way to reach the unbelieving is simply by proclaiming the Word of God and **then stand back and let the Spirit use the Word to bring about repentance (悔改) , faith, and obedience.**” So be patient when a non-Christian doesn't understand. You can't do the internal work. Be patient.

The Bible Proves its Dignity and Authority

and also because they carry the evidence thereof in themselves. For the very blind are able to that the things foretold in them are being fulfilled.

1. God the Father gave one more confirmation that the Bible is the accurate, beautiful, effective, excellent, and authoritative Word of God. The Bible does what no other book could ever do – it perfectly prepares you...not for an exam...but for eternity! Already there are ancient Chinese books that no one knows what they say! The script is too old and forgotten! But look at the Bible!

Romans 15:4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the **patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.**

Proverbs 22:20-21 Have I not written to you **excellent things Of counsels and knowledge, That I may make you know the certainty of the words of truth,** That you may answer words of truth To those who send to you?

When you consider the consistency (一致性) of all the parts, it leaves you amazed. These 66 books were written over a period of more than 1500 years by many different authors in different countries and yet they never contradict (相互矛盾), but support, each other. And no one has ever proven the Bible wrong...though many have tried.

2. Further, you can see the truthfulness of the Bible by prophecies coming true. When men said: Man would never fly or go undersea in submarine (潜水艇), it did not take long for these men to be proved wrong. The Wright's brothers own grandfather (a pastor) said that flying was only reserved for angels. **But the Bible has always predicted correctly:** The Fall of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, etc. They Bible predicted hundreds of details of Christ's birth and life. These prophecies were so specific that there was no chance it could be anyone else. The Bible predicted the rise of God's kingdom after Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem.

3. Because this evidence is so clear that even blind men can see it, God can confidently execute justice (正义) upon those who know his Word and reject it!

Romans 1:32-2:1 - who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them. Therefore you are inexcusable...

We know this in theology as the "autopistia" of Scripture. That's a Greek phrase which means that Scripture is self-authenticating (自证) or self-authoritative.

Conclusion:

The Bible is from God and it is therefore holy and perfect. You can trust it with all your heart. This holy Bible, which is for the world, tells man how to be saved and sanctified. This holy Bible is confirmed in your hearts as true by God's Holy Spirit. This holy Bible confirms itself by its dignity and authority. No other book can make such claims. The Bible is neither a hoax (欺骗) nor a forgery (伪造).

Brothers and Sisters Jesus Christ: The Bible is from a God who truly loves you.

1. When you know and believe the holy, perfect, reliable and beautiful Bible, your confidence in God will be strengthened, and you will be able to personally serve God better. Only the brave will confront the enemy. Faith makes you brave.

2. Then make every effort to study the Bible well, teach it to your children in family worship, and give it to your co-workers and friends. This is one part of the inheritance (产业) you want to give to your children now – something they can't squander (荒废). This is what the world needs now! Have you ever given a Bible to someone? What is the use of bread kept in your cupboard...even while people are starving?

3. If you do this, others can learn of the Savior and be rescued from their sin and hopelessness.

If you are not a Christian, God is graciously giving you this opportunity to hear his Word today so you can know what is in it. I pray that you will begin to search out the Scriptures more and learn how to be saved from your sins and how to be separated from yours sins. You don't have to look anywhere else. This is the end of your searching! God's Word is for you! Read. Believe. Rejoice.