

# THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

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## *It Is Written: A Believer's Guide to the Doctrine of Scripture* edited by John Hooper

Reviewed by Thomas W. Juodaitis

*It Is Written: A Believer's Guide to the Doctrine of Scripture*<sup>1</sup>, edited by John Hooper, published by The Bible League Trust, 2025, 630 pages, hardback with dust jacket, \$35, available in USA, UK, and Europe.

The Bible League Trust of the United Kingdom has published a new book on the doctrine of Scripture with contributions from twenty-one authors mostly from the United Kingdom and a few from the United States. Most of the contributors have affiliation with either the Bible League Trust or the Trinitarian Bible Society, often both. *It Is Written* is edited by John Hooper who is a council member of the Bible League Trust, book review editor of the *Bible League Quarterly*, and Chairman of *The Gospel Magazine Trust*. Readers of *The Trinity Review* may be familiar with him for his article “Peter Enns, the Bible, and Its Humanity,” which is included as an Appendix in this volume. Hooper also contributes other articles. The Bible League Trust was formed a little over three months after the home-going of Charles Haddon Spurgeon by a “Council of evangelical men who saw a great need for the work of defending Scripture to continue. They resolved:

Believing that the hour has come when all who know the value of the great gift which

God has given us in His Word should band themselves together to witness for it, and to defeat the attempts now made to disparage its claims and to mislead the Christian church and the world as to the dependence that should be placed upon it, we now resolve to form ourselves into a Bible League and to invite the co-operation of all who believe in the verbal inspiration and infallibility of the entire Bible as originally given.

The Bible League Trust aims to: Encourage belief in the inspiration and sufficiency of the Word of God; Resist the varied attacks made upon Scripture; and Promote the reverent study of the Bible” (629).

The Trinitarian Bible Society was “[f]ounded in 1831 for the circulation of Protestant or uncorrupted versions of the Word of God.” Its purpose is

to promote the Glory of God and the salvation of men, by circulating, both at home and abroad, in dependence on the Divine blessing, the HOLY SCRIPTURES, which are given by inspiration of God, and are able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Available in USA & Australia through <https://www.textandtranslation.org/bookshop/>, and in UK and Europe through <https://www.bibleleaguetrust.org/publications/it-is-written/>.

<sup>2</sup> From the Trinitarian Bible Society website, About page, <https://www.tbsbibles.org/page/about>.

The Trinitarian Bible Society holds to the *Tectus Receptus* and the Authorised or *King James Version* translated from those source texts.

The contributors are as follows with a brief description:

**Jonathan Arnold** is Pastor of Westminster Baptist Chruch, and General Secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society.

**David Blunt** is Minister of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing), North Uist & Grimsay, and editor of *The Free Church Witness*.

**Graham Chewter** is a deputation speaker for the Trinitarian Bible Society.

**Craig Dennison** is a deputation speaker for the Trinitarian Bible Society.

**John Hooper** is a council member of the Bible League Trust, book review editor of the *Bible League Quarterly*, and Chairman of *The Gospel Magazine Trust*.

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**William Macleod** is a retired minister, and Principal of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) Seminary, Inverness.

**Kevin McGrane** is a ruling elder at Bury St Edmunds Presbyterian Church; trustee of *The Gospel Magazine*, and a Council member of the Protestant Truth Society.

**Edward Malcolm** is Minister of St. Mary's Church of England (Continuing), Castle Street, Reading; editor of *The Gospel Magazine*, and a Council member of the Protestant Truth Society.

**Dafydd Morris** is a minister serving in the Rhondda Valley, South Wales, and a deputation speaker for the Trinitarian Bible Society.

**Timothy Nelson** is Minister of Tybdale Memorial Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster,

Belfast, and Principal of the AWhitefield College of the Bible.

**Bill Patterson** is President, Mt. Abarim Baptist Mission International, Texas, USA, church planter and Bible translator.

**Neil Pfeiffer** is Minister of Swansea Evangelical Reformed Church, Chairman of the Bible League Trust, and a Committee member of the Christian Worship Trust.

**Jeffrey T. Riddle** is Pastor Christ Reformed Baptist Church in Louisa, Virginia, and Chairman of the Reformation Bible Society (USA).

**Douglas Somerset** is Minister of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Aberdeen, and Secretary of the Scottish Reformation Society.

**John P. Thackway** is a Minister of Emmanuel Church, Salisbury; a Council member of the Bible League Trust and editor pf the *Bible League Quarterly*; Vice-Chairman of the Trinitarian Bible Society, and a Committee member of the Christian Worship Trust.

**Matthew Vogan** is Editorial Director of the Trinitarian Bible Society, and a Committee member of the Scottish Reformation Society.

**Malcolm Watts** is Forner Minister of Emmanuel Church, Salisbury, a Vice-President of the Trinitarian Bible Society, and Principal of the Salisbury Reformed Seminary. (xxi-xxii)

*It Is Written* contains a Foreword by John P. Thackway, a List of Contributors (see above), an Introduction by the Editor, then twenty-three chapters, and three more articles in the Appendix. The chapters are as follows:

**Chapter 1:** An Inseparable Union by Gerald Buss

**Chapter 2:** The Bible as Revelation by John Hooper

**Chapter 3:** The Inspiration of Scripture by Murdo A. N. Macleod

**Chapter 4:** God's Inerrant and Infallible Word by Graham Chewter

**Chapter 5:** The Canon of Scripture by Malcolm H. Watts

**Chapter 6:** God Preserves All His Word by Matthew Vogan

**Chapter 7:** The Authority of Scripture by David Blunt

**Chapter 8:** The Sufficiency of Scripture by Timothy Nelson

**Chapter 9:** The Perspicuity of Scripture by Edward Malcolm

**Chapter 10:** The Text of the Old Testament by Douglas W. B. Somerset

**Chapter 11:** The Text of the New Testament by Jonathan Arnold

**Chapter 12:** A Defence of the Authenticity of Mark 16:9-20 by Jeffrey T. Riddle

**Chapter 13:** A Defence of the “Three Heavenly Witnesses” by Jeffrey T. Riddle

**Chapter 14:** The Bible on Bible Translation by Philip Hopkins

**Chapter 15:** Divine Inspiration and Bible Translation by Jonathan Arnold

**Chapter 16:** A Translator’s Perspective by Bill Patterson

**Chapter 17:** Seven Reasons for Retaining or Returning to the Authorised Version by Craig Dennison

**Chapter 18:** A Testimony by Kevin McGrane

**Chapter 19:** Christ and the Scriptures by Dafydd Morris

**Chapter 20:** The Bible and the Holy Spirit by William Macleod

**Chapter 21:** The Unity of Scripture by Trevor Kirkland

**Chapter 22:** The Interpretation of Scripture by Trevor Kirkland

**Chapter 23:** The Believer’s Response to Scripture by Neil Pfeiffer

The Appendices include:

**Appendix 1:** Neglect of the Bible by Kevin McGrane

**Appendix 2:** Peter Enns, the Bible and Its Humanity by John Hooper

**Appendix 3:** Does “Gender-Inclusive” Language Have a Place in the Bible? By John Hooper

There is no index, probably due to the length of the book and possibly due to the fact that it is written not for the scholar (though it does not lack in scholarship) but for the Believer, thus the

subtitle of the book: *A Believer’s Guide to the Doctrine of Scripture*. The chapters are well written, and the content is excellent with sound arguments and Scripture to buttress them. Most of the references are to Reformers, Puritan theologians, and mostly English, and few American theologians – a few quotations appear from Gordon H. Clark. The Editor, John Hooper has some familiarity with Clark and has contributed to *The Trinity Review*. More familiarity with Clark, especially his *God’s Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics* would have made *It Is Written* even better.

*It Is Written* makes its stand upon the *Textus Receptus* and the *Authorized Version (King James Version)* translated from it. The writers compare the other modern English versions, demonstrating their deficiencies and how those deficiencies affect doctrine, such that the often-used argument that “no essential doctrines are affected by the Critical Text and those translations based upon it” is not true. I heartily recommend *It Is Written: A Believer’s Guide to the Doctrine of Scripture* and view it as a companion to other books upholding the doctrine of Scripture such as our own *God’s Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics* and *Logical Criticisms of Textual Criticism* by Gordon H. Clark, *God-Breathed: The Divine Inspiration of the Bible* by Louis Gausseen, and others: *Unholy Hands on the Bible: An Introduction to Textual Criticism* by John W. Burgon and Jay P. Green, Sr., and *The Battle for the Bible* by Harold Lindsell.

Included here is the Editor’s Introduction:

It is a great privilege to be able to introduce you to another publication by the Bible League Trust. If you are not familiar with the Bible League, let me briefly put you in the picture. It was constituted in 1892, shortly after the death of C. H. Spurgeon, with a view to continuing the stand he took on the great issues of the day, particularly on the doctrine of Scripture. The purpose of the Bible League, according to its declared aims, is to encourage belief in the inspiration and sufficiency of the Word of God, resist the varied attacks made upon it, and promote its reverent study. To publish a book such as this, then, fulfills all those

criteria, and to publish it at this time could not be more apposite. We are living in days when the foundations are not merely crumbling through neglect – they are being actively overturned and destroyed.

“How precious is the Book divine, by inspiration given!” So wrote the 18<sup>th</sup> century hymnwriter John Fawcett, and if I have learned anything over the many months it has taken to put this book together, it is the exceeding preciousness of the Word of God. The Bible is a book unlike any other book, and I commend it to you.

That the Bible is the Word of the living God, inspired, infallible, authoritative and sufficient, the source of all truth and sole foundation for the Christian faith and life, was for centuries understood and believed with few prepared to question it. The creation ordinances of male and female, marriage, work, the sabbath day, together with the Ten Commandments, for centuries formed the basis of society and this nation’s [England] laws. However in the 19<sup>th</sup> century questions began to be asked and doubts raised; in the 20<sup>th</sup> century doubt gave way to open denial, and the destructive effects of that unbelief are now all around us.

As theological seminaries and churches too have abandoned the foundational belief in an inspired and infallible Bible, everything in that Bible is now the subject of debate, contextualization and irrelevancy. The process has been advanced further by the imposition of gender neutrality into the text of Scripture, deceiving the very elect, so that we are now left with churches displaying rainbow banners, promoting their transgender credentials and parading the message “Jesus thinks you’re fantastic!” A book reaffirming the traditional doctrine of Scripture is well overdue.

In his fine little work, *The Inspiration of Scripture*, Lorraine Boettner wrote, “For any serious study of Christian doctrines we must first of all have the assurance that the Bible is true.” How true! Once doubt begins to be cast over the words of Scripture, there can be no certainty over its doctrines. That is supremely the case when the doctrine being studied is that of the Holy Scripture itself. If we cannot trust what Scripture says about itself, how can we be confident about anything else it says? Readers can safely take it as read that each contributor to this book is fully persuaded in his own heart that the Bible is true. It has been a privilege and pleasure to work with them, and I thank them for their patience and tolerance as they, in turn, have worked with me.

That there is some overlap and repetition between chapters is only to be expected, just as we see God

Himself in Scripture using repetition to lay emphasis on truth. It also demonstrates an across-the-board unity, a singleness of mind and purpose on the part of the one divine Author. Whatever the theme under consideration, whether it is inspiration, infallibility, translation principles or any other, it is but one facet of the one truth that is the doctrine of Scripture. Each is connected to all the others and it is fascinating to see those connections at work. The doctrine of Scripture itself is, in turn, but one aspect of “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3), for which all of us, who have put our names to this book, contend.

In its format *It Is Written* is not unique. Symposia on the doctrine of Scripture have been written before, one example being *The Origin of the Bible*, published by Tyndale House Publishers and updated in 2020. Its 16 chapters cover a similar range of subjects – with some notable exceptions – written by evangelicals of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is an interesting, informative and, in some ways, helpful book, but on the key issue of the providential preservation of Scripture it is silent, and in its handling of textual and translation matters it quickly become clear that there has been a significant parting of the ways. This divergence finds its origins in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when doubts were first cast over the traditional approach to the text of Scripture and what became known as the Critical Greek New Testament Text was born. Where *It Is Written* is possibly unique as a modern publication is in its advocating of the “old paths” of textual and translation philosophy, paths that can be traced back much further, to Reformation times and beyond.

Finally, on a practical matter, most chapters end with suggestions for further reading for those who are interested to know more. Commendation of a work is not to be regarded as a blanket endorsement of all that the author has written, perhaps even within the recommended title. The works have been chosen for their usefulness on the particular aspect of the doctrine of Scripture under consideration.

I hope this introduction has whetted your appetite for what follows. It is the earnest prayer of all the Bible League trustees that by reading this book your love for the Word of God will grow and your determination to uphold and defend it will be strengthened. Above all, may it be a blessing to your soul, and all to the glory of God.

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