

Why Did the Authors of the Chicago Statement Change the Historical Witness of the Saints On Inerrancy  
~ Re-discovering the **Biblical** and **Historical** Doctrine of Inerrancy ~  
“Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”

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For the first time in the history of the SBC, **its leadership** has embraced a Statement of Faith on Holy Scripture which states the **copy** of the Word of God; our Bible is **‘not entirely error-free’** as articulated in the **Chicago Statement** when it states; **“the authority of Scripture [our Bible] is in no way jeopardized by the fact that the copies [our Bible] we possess are not entirely error-free.”**

### Preface

I’m going to present evidence we typically do not like to consider.

- Meaning, given the choice to maintain the *status quo* or run the risk of appearing *divisive*, there’s a strong tendency to choose the former, and remain silent (See **SB** paper ‘**Preaching and Loss**’).
- Let’s not forget the admonition of God in **Jude 1:3**.  
“Ye should *earnestly* [zealously, *importunately*] *contend* [*strive to defend & preserve*] for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”
- Take encouragement from godly examples of ‘*earnestly contending*’ provided in the Word of God:
  - Jesus was removed from the pulpit during his ‘ordination’ sermon, and took to the edge of a cliff; that would be very discouraging for us. (**Luke 4:29**)
  - Apostle Paul wrote almost half of the New Testament, was labeled an insurrectionist, and often penned the Epistles from a jail cell. (**2 Timothy 2:9**)
- So, let’s begin with a question for our **SBC leadership**, who penned and embrace the error contained in the **Chicago Statement**; **that the copy of the Word of God; our Bible is ‘not entirely error-free’.**

### Question

Why did the **SBC authors** of the **Chicago Statement** (1978) change the historical witness of the saints, including our Baptist heritage on the 100% purity; inerrancy of the **copy** of the Word of God; our Bible as noted below? (Emphasis & brackets mine)

The *Biblical* and *Historical* Doctrine of Inerrancy

- **Westminster Confession** 1642 <sup>1</sup> (Called the Mother of all Protestant Confessions)
  - “Being immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, **kept pure in all ages, are therefore *authentic*** [a genuine original, i.e. ***is entirely error-free***].”

The Contemporary and Erroneous Doctrine of Inerrancy

- **Chicago Statement** 1978:
  - “So that we are amply justified in affirming, with the **Westminster Confession**, a singular providence of God in this matter and in declaring that **the authority of Scripture is in no way jeopardized by the fact that the copies [our Bible] we possess are *not entirely error-free***.”

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<sup>1</sup> It echoes the witness of the SBC Confessions, including the one at our inception in 1845; the **Philadelphia Confession**. This is affirmed by **Timothy and Denise George**, a couple prolific in the history of the Southern Baptist history when they state: “The **Philadelphia Confession of Faith** was transplanted to the Charleston Baptist Association in South Carolina. It soon became the most widely accepted, definitive confession among Baptists in America, both North and South. Each of the 293 “delegates,” as they were then called, who gathered in Augusta to organize the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845, belonged to congregations and associations which had adopted the **Philadelphia/ Charleston Confession of Faith** as their own.” (Timothy & Denise George, **Introduction, Baptist Confessions, Covenants, & Catechisms**, Holman, 1996)

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## Answer

Our **SBC leadership** followed the **tradition of man** over the Word of God in embracing the erroneous definition of inerrancy which limits it to the *original* (autograph) manuscripts; not extending inerrancy to the **copy** (apograph); our Bible; stating it's “*not entirely error-free*” as advocated by **BB Warfield** of **Princeton Seminary**.

- The ‘Warfieldian tradition’ is the fountainhead from which flows the current-day qualifying phrase, *in the **original** manuscripts (i.e. autographs, writings)*, which limits inerrancy to the original documents penned by those who received the Word of God by divine inspiration.

This qualifying phrase is also contained in the Statements of Faith on Holy Scripture in the **Chicago Statement**, **Evangelical Theological Society**<sup>2</sup> and many **SBC Church Confessions**. However it's not contained in our **Baptist Faith and Message** or the Confessions of our Baptist heritage, including the one at the inception of the SBC, the **Philadelphia Confession of Faith**.

“The doctrine of inerrancy was not the creation of the Princetonians [Presbyterian] or American fundamentalists [Baptist]. Rather, the original resource material will show that the inerrantist view<sup>3</sup> has been nearly unanimously accepted throughout church history by the Eastern and Western churches.”  
**Kent Brandenburg**; *The Truth about a Few Key Questions on the History of the Doctrine of Inerrancy*

- This flawed definition was coined and popularized by **B. B. Warfield** (1887–1902), the last ‘Principal’ of **Princeton Seminary** and evident in his essay, *The Inerrancy of the Original Autographs*’ (1893). This is noted by Baptist Pastor, **Kent Brandenburg** in his article, *The Truth about a Few Key Questions on the History of the Doctrine of Inerrancy*’ when he states (emphasis mine):
  - “Warfield sort of coined the word “inerrancy,” **but he was coming up with a word that would be distinct from what Christians did already believe**, to bridge the gap between liberalism and the actual biblical and historical view.

*There is a **conservative criticism** of Warfield, mine and others, that says that Warfield kowtowed to liberalism with a new understanding of inerrancy. There is a **liberal criticism** of Warfield that says that he came up with the word “inerrancy” and that his view wasn't historical. It wasn't, but the view that is historical is a worse problem for liberals than even Warfield's, so liberals and their sympathizers should get zero mileage out of their critique of Warfield.*

***What's tough here is that we're dealing with three different definitions of inerrancy, which causes this to be confusing.** It looks like people, like having the confusion and ambiguity, because it helps their cause. This is not reflective of a biblical cause, the cause of Christ, which goes for certainty and clarity. God is not the author of confusion. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. A **faithless view, even if it is more faithful than an even more faithless view, shouldn't be chosen as superior or advocated.***”

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<sup>2</sup> **Evangelical Theological Society**, **ARTICLE III: DOCTRINAL BASIS** states; “The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written and is therefore inerrant in the **autographs**.”

<sup>3</sup> The ‘inerrantist view’; or what I would also add: is the **Biblicist**, historical, traditional, orthodox or classical view of inerrancy, as memorialized by the saints in the **Westminster Confession** (1644), called the ‘Mother of all Confessions’ because its affirmation on the 100% purity; inerrancy of the *copy* of the Word of God; our Bible is echoed in the subsequent Protestant Confessions, including that of our Baptist heritage at the inception of the **SBC** (1845); the **Philadelphia Confession** (1742). See **SB** paper, ‘**Letter to a Pastor**’.

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### Summary

- The authors of the [Chicago Statement](#) have introduced a 3<sup>rd</sup> definition of inerrancy. Now, there are 3 Protestant definitions regarding the inerrancy of the Word of God:
  1. **Liberal View:** Neither the **Original** or **Copy** is Inerrant; 100% Pure.
  2. **Chicago Statement View:** The **Original** is Inerrant, 100% Pure, but NOT the **Copy**.
  3. **Biblical & Historical View:** The **Original** and **Copy** is Inerrant, 100% Pure.

### Conclusion

No wonder Laymen and even Pastors are confused on the meaning of Inerrancy.

Today, given the above, when a Pastor holds up the Bible and declares it's the 100% pure; inerrancy Word of God, the listener is forced to ask himself the question; “Is my Pastor referring to the **original** or the **copy**; our Bible”; how would we know?

You could ask your Pastor, or first read the Confession of Faith of your Church on the Holy Scripture. If its definition of the inerrancy of the Bible reads; “It's without error in the **original writing (i.e. manuscripts, autographs)**”, your church Confession does **not** hold to the *Biblical* and *historical* of inerrancy. Perhaps your church leadership is unaware of this nuance, so share this with them.

### Testimony

- My church, [Sagemont Church](#) is to be commended for changing its Confession of Faith on the inerrancy of Holy Scripture by removing the qualifying statement; “**original writings**” as seen below:

#### Previous Confession [highlight mine]

- “The books of the Bible were written by men inspired of God's Spirit. **Since the Bible is inspired by God, it is without error in the original writings.** Every word of it is true.”

#### Present Confession

“The books of the Bible were written by men inspired of God's Spirit. Every word of it is true.”

### What Can We Do?

1. Become knowledgeable of this issue, and check it by the Word of God; as the Bereans.  
“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” (Act 17:11)

- **Question**

What is the issue?

- **Answer**

Do you believe God promised to *preserve* His Word 100% pure; inerrant in the **copy**; our Bible. (See the [SB](#) paper, ‘[God's Standard Bearers: The Josiah Initiative](#) ~ Witnesses to the 100% Pure **Copy** of The Word of God’).

Put another way, do you believe the Bible teaches the Doctrine of Divine (Providential) *Preservation*<sup>1</sup> of the **copy** of the Word of God 100% pure; inerrant, just as it does the Doctrine of the Divine *Inspiration*<sup>2</sup> of the *original*? <sup>1</sup>(Psalms 12:6-7, Psalms 119:152; Matthew 5:18; 24:35; Luke 16:17; 1 Peter 1:25); <sup>2</sup>(2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Peter 3:15-16; 2 Timothy 3:16)

2. Inform others by sharing this information provided on the [Standard Bearers website](#) and [Standard Bearers Browser](#).

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### Standard Bearers Notes

1. When sharing Standard Bearers papers, it's best to forward the link to the document and not the document itself, since these documents are updated due to more relevant information or corrections.
2. Standard Bearers holds that *Biblical* and *historical* doctrine of inerrancy can be faithfully expressed in a Church Confession of Faith on Holy Scripture as follows :

The Word of God reveals He gave the Holy Scriptures 100% pure; inerrant in the *original* (i.e. autograph) by the Doctrine of Divine *Inspiration* (2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Peter 3:15-16; 2 Timothy 3:16) and He keeps it 100% pure; inerrant in the *copy* (i.e. *apograph*); our Bible by the Doctrine of Divine (*Providential*) *Preservation* (Psalms 12:6-7, Psalms 119:152; Matthew 5:18; 24:35; Luke 16:17; 1 Peter 1:25).

It's referred to as the *Biblical* and *historical* doctrine of inerrancy of the Word of God in that it's *Biblical* because it's revealed in the Word of God and it's *historical* because it's the witness of the saints including our Baptist heritage.

3. This *Biblical* and *historical* doctrine of inerrancy is affirmed by the witness of the [Trinitarian Bible Society](#), founded in 1831 for the circulation of Protestant or uncorrupted versions of the Word of God.
  - “Today, as has been stated, things are very different. The doctrine of Scripture has been, and is being, assailed on every side: not least from within many branches (including those taking the name of ‘evangelical’ and ‘reformed’) of the so-called ‘Christian Church’ of our day. The Committee, therefore, considers it necessary for the Society clearly and unambiguously to state where it stands on this most fundamental of all doctrines. It has consequently prepared the following Statement and Word List (the latter defining some of the technical terms referred to in the former). These documents do not contain anything that is novel but simply summarise the historical position of the Society.

NOTE 1. The Trinitarian Bible Society maintains that the providentially preserved true and authentic text is to be found in the Hebrew Masoretic and the Greek Received Texts. In so doing, it follows the historic, orthodox Protestant position of acknowledging as Holy Scripture the Hebrew and Greek texts consistently accessible to and preserved among the people of God in all ages. These texts had remained in common use in different parts of the world for more than fifteen centuries and they faithfully represent the texts used in New Testament times.” [For more click here....](#)

4. Standard Bearers papers are written especially with Pastors and Laymen in mind, to build our faith in the authenticity and authority of the Word of God. Also they're declarative in nature, meaning they simply attempt to proclaim the truths revealed in the Word of God, believing as it is written; “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” ([Roman 10:17](#)). This avoids the weariness and confusion of engaging in the endless rhetorical flourish of academia, which often continue without clarity or certainty; the [Chicago Statement](#) being a good example.

God bless,

Louis M. Kole  
[Standard Bearers](#) ~ *All Things Scriptural*

“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” ([Revelation 3:11](#))

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## Standard Bearers Browser

### Vision

It is the [mission](#) of [Standard Bearers](#) to present the *Biblical* and *historical* doctrine of inerrancy; teaching the Bible is 100% pure; inerrant in the *copy* which we hold in our hands today. Our goal is to strengthen the faith of Pastors, Teachers and Laymen in the authenticity and authority of the 100% pure, inerrant Word of God, knowing ~ “So then faith cometh by hearing, hearing by the word of God” ([Roman 10:17](#)).

### Share

Prayerful consider using the resources contained in the [Standard Bearers Browser](#) for your Sermon preparation, Bible Study class, to forward to others and post to your Social media. For more, go to the [Standard Bearers](#) home page ([www.standardbearers.net](http://www.standardbearers.net)) for an overview of the *Biblical* and *historical* Doctrine of Inerrancy. For another quick read see the [SB](#) paper, ‘[Retaking the Hill of Biblical Inerrancy: The Next Reformation~ The Westminster Confession Rejection of the Chicago Statement](#)’.

### Teaching

For a presentation by [Dr. Floyd Nolen Jones, Ph.D, Th.D.](#) on any of these topics: Chronology of the Old Testament; Creation & Evolution, [Science & the Bible](#), The Identity of the Text of the New Testament or The Biblical & Historical Doctrine of Inerrancy, please contact me; Louis M. Kole at, [kolelm@gmail.com](mailto:kolelm@gmail.com).

### Exhort

You can know for yourself the identity of the 100% pure; inerrant, preserved copy of the Word of God by the aid of the Holy Spirit; the Author, Superintendent and Teacher of the Word of God. This is the promise of God and the witness of the saints.

*“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”* ([John 16:13-14](#))

*“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.”* ([1 John 2:27](#))

[Francis Turretin](#)<sup>4</sup> 1623-1687 (brackets and emphasis mine):

*“By **original** texts, we do not mean the **autographs** [originals] written by the hand of Moses, of the prophets and the apostles, which certainly do not now exist. We mean their **apographs** <sup>5</sup> [perfect copy; genuine original; ‘authentic’] which are so called because they set forth to us the word of God in the **very words** of those who wrote under the **immediate inspiration** of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>6</sup>*

[Hymn ~ Come, Gracious Spirit- Heavenly Dove!](#)

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<sup>4</sup>Gerstner, called Turretin, “**the most precise theologian in the Calvinistic tradition.**” ‘*Turretin on Justification*’ an audio series by John Gerstner (1914-1996) a Professor of Church History at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and Knox Theological Seminary.

<sup>5</sup> Apograph means “**a perfect copy, an exact transcript**”. This is the same witness of the authors of the Westminster Confession when they described their *copy* of the Word of God as ‘**authentic**’, which [Webster’s 1828](#) dictionary defines as “**having a genuine original**”.

<sup>6</sup> Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992 reprint), 1:106, See also Robert Barnett, “Francis Turretin on the Holy Scriptures,” a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Dean Burgon Society held at Calvary Baptist Church, Ontario, Canada, in 1995.