

shroud it in medieval-like canonical authority, in the name of "Biblical theology".

Thus there has been a transition from the Bible as sacred text deposited and lodged in the bosom of the Church, to the Bible as viewed as only religious text – and just as firmly centered in the University. The rejection of the Latin Vulgate, the sacred text of the medieval Roman Catholic Church, by Erasmus and Valla¹ as being corrupt, gutted the Vulgate of sacred status.² Rome countered with decrees at Trent (1546) relevant to Jerome's Vulgate in an effort to recapture its standing as sacred text. When by the nineteenth century this failed, the Trent undertaking was, in effect, replaced by the 1870 Vatican I decree which conferred infallibility to the Pope.³

As a result of this ongoing struggle which had its inception at the division of the "Christian" community into the Eastern and Western entities and the ensuing developments to which we have alluded, the war continues. It has merely shifted alignments. Rather than East versus West, it has evolved into battles between the Church and the Academy in determining what constitutes the correct New Testament text.

TEXT CRITICISM TODAY - THE AGE OF MINISCULES⁴

It may come as a surprise, but only a relative few of the 3,000 plus manuscripts now cataloged have been collated (to collect, compare carefully in order to verify and often to integrate).⁵ The same is true

¹ Lorenzo Valla (c.1406-1457) was an ordained Italian priest, perhaps the most brilliant mind of the Renaissance. He was one of the first exponents of modern historical criticism. Utilizing those skills, he exposed the spurious character of the "Donation of Constantine" – a document that allegedly proved that Constantine had given central Italy over to papal control when he moved the Roman capital to the East. Valla demonstrated the Donation was an 8th century forgery and thus could not be used to support papal claims to temporal power. This exposé also contained a bitter attack on the temporal power of the Papacy. He undertook a critical comparison between the Latin Vulgate and the Greek N.T. Valla had a deep influence on Renaissance scholars and also on the Reformers, especially on Erasmus and Martin Luther.

² Letis, p. 7 in a December 1988 formal correspondence to this author in which he outlined his doctoral dissertation approach.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Moorman, *When The KJV Departs From The "Majority" Text*, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-27. Much of the data included under this subtitle has been taken from Moorman's excellent publication.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

concerning the 2,143 extant lectionaries. Such collation has been limited to the papyri fragments, older uncials, and those cursives which give some support for the Alexandrian (a-B) text. Except for a few cursory checks, the vast majority has been ignored. The reason is that the overwhelming majority of manuscripts supports the TR/KJB; and seeking out any further support is the last thing in which textual criticism is interested. Westcott and Hort certainly were not interested in giving the majority the opportunity to speak. They wove their theory around only a few MSS, and of these they had but second hand knowledge. They collated no manuscripts themselves, but rather applied themselves to the study of collations and apparatuses made by others.¹ As a result, their knowledge of the documents was second-hand and partial. Hort knew of the existence of fewer than 1,000 cursives, and only c.150 of these were available to him in complete collation.²

Since Hort, around 1,800 cursives have been found. Again, apart from a cursory glance to see if there might be some readings supportive of the a-B category of text, they have been merely cataloged and ignored. Attention instead has centered on the comparatively few papyri fragments and what to do when they disagree with a and B. Indeed, Kurt Aland has admitted "... the main problem in N.T. textual criticism lies in the fact that little more than their actual existence is known of most of the manuscripts ..."³ However, minuscules must pass a "test" before Aland and other textual critics consider them worthy of inclusion in a textual apparatus. All MSS/mss which are generally Byzantine will fail.⁴

The issue of the presence of grammatical smoothness has even been used as an argument against the TR and Byzantine mss in general. The critics maintain that the TR and its supporting mss, reading in as flowing a style as they do, "reflect editorial revision designed to improve the flow and syntax." Textual criticism has long implied that the rougher the grammar, the more likely a variant reading is to be the original.⁵ But

¹ Westcott and Hort, *Introduction, op. cit.*, pp. 77-78, 144.

² Frederik Wisse, *The Profile Method for Classifying and Evaluating Manuscript Evidence*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), p. 2.

³ Kurt Aland, "The Significance of the Papyri", *op. cit.*, p. 330.

⁴ Wisse, *The Profile Method for Classifying and Evaluating Manuscript Evidence, op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁵ Moorman, *When The KJV Departs From The "Majority" Text, op. cit.*, p. 20.

why must the Holy Spirit be accused of using rough grammar? Did not the Divine Author in inspiring the words and sentences of Scripture know how to use proper Greek? Are we to understand that His knowledge has since "evolved?"

For the critic, the nineteenth century was the age of the uncials; the mid-twentieth century was the age of the papyri, but now he is entering the age of the minuscules.¹ However, when one reads that many more cursives are being cited in the latest Nestle-Aland Greek N.T., he should not be deceived into believing that a significant shift away from the Alexandrian text has taken place. What the present "age of the minuscules" really means to the editors of the critical text is that they hope to find a little more support for the a/B/Alexandrian family of text.

As a matter of fact, they did not find much support during their "age of the uncials." Further, despite initial promise, the "age of the papyri" has become something of an embarrassment for their cause. Thus insofar as finding anything that would even remotely strengthen their case for the a-B text from the manuscripts, this "age of the minuscules" is their last hope. So despite any appearance to the contrary or talk of being eclectic – Aleph, B, and their few allies still dictate the modern critical text. The feeling still prevails that no purpose would be served in giving the majority a greater voice.

For the text critics, these old uncials are more than adequate representatives of the MS tradition to the extent that the rest can be ignored. After all, they challenge us, "why start more than thirteen centuries after the autographs were written, and wade back through literally thousands of MSS in an immensely complicated and expensive process, if at best one can only arrive at a fifth-century text which is already well represented by copies of that time."² This argument forms the background for all those who consider it justifiable to ignore all, or at least nearly all, of the minuscules (cursives).

The only argument which would justifiably allow the critics to circumvent the task of studying all the late mss would be that there exists among the early uncials a relatively uncorrupted tradition which shows all other

¹ Moorman, *When The KJV Departs From The "Majority" Text*, *op. cit.*, p. 5; here Moorman cites from the Nestle-Aland 26th edition, pp. 47-48.

² Wisse, *The Profile Method for Classifying and Evaluating Manuscript Evidence*, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.

text-types of the period to be secondary and corrupted.¹ Only if this position can be proved, and if it is clear from some sampling that late mss fall predominantly in the tradition of one of the corrupted texts, could they justify the omission of a full study of these late minuscules. Yet A and B, the two main pillars of the critical text, exhibit 3,036 clear differences in the Gospels; what candidate can they propose as a "relatively uncorrupted tradition"? They have none! Yet they continue to keep the TR/KJB dishonestly shrouded – out of public sight, without giving all of the witnesses an opportunity to speak.²

The point that we wish to make clear at this occasion is that anyone who seeks to gather Byzantine manuscript evidence from the standard sources (Alford, Tischendorf, Souter, Merk, Vogels, Nestle, Aland, or von Soden) is really getting only a few scraps from the table.³ The interests and energies of these men have been expended elsewhere. Their labors with regard to the great mass of Byzantine mss have been limited to those places where there has been departure from the TR.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Recently, some well meaning brothers have attempted to allow the mss a voice by utilizing the massive 1913 work of Hermann von Soden to assist them in producing a "Majority Text". However, von Soden's enterprise represents only a very small portion of the total. He merely made a cursory sampling of the vast numbers of mss. Moreover Herman C. Hoskier thoroughly documented that while hoping to find "great things" from von Soden's final volume he was forced, albeit regrettably, to have to strongly condemn it. Hoskier stated that the work was not only "honeycombed" with errors, many documents which should have been recollated had not been touched whereas others were only partially so done with many others having been incorrectly handled.⁴

Wisse informs us that von Soden collated a significant number of MSS only partially. After his test check on a weighty portion of von Soden's

¹ Wisse, *The Profile Method for Classifying and Evaluating Manuscript Evidence*, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

² Moorman, *When The KJV Departs From The "Majority" Text*, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴ Herman C. Hoskier, *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 15, (London: Oxford University Press, 1914), p. 307. Hoskier continues over the next 20 pages documenting a most withering indictment.

data, Frederik Wisse adds "Once the extent of error is seen, the word 'inaccuracy' becomes a euphemism. ... von Soden's inaccuracies cannot be tolerated for any purpose. His apparatus is useless for a reconstruction of the text of the mss he used."¹ It is worthy of mention that, although von Soden viewed the Byzantine text as being un-derived from and possibly as old as Aleph-B (a departure from standard W-H dogma), in all other matters he was so strongly Alexandrian that Hoskier reported: "von Soden's text is so thoroughly Alexandrian that it falls into line with Hort, irrespective of MS evidence."²

By now we trust that our reader can discern that our extant manuscripts reflect but do not determine the text of Scripture.³ The text was determined by God from the beginning (Psa.119:89 etc.). After the advent of printing (A.D. 1450), the necessity of God's preserving the manuscript witness to the text was diminished. Thus, in some few instances, the majority of MSS/mss extant today may not reflect at every point what the true, commonly accepted, and majority reading was 500 years ago. The Greek manuscripts do not constitute the sole viable witness to the true text of the New Testament.

The ancient versions, lectionaries, and quotes from the Fathers must also be taken into account. Hence, we should not be surprised to find that the Spirit of God has occasionally used the Latin West for corroboration on a disputed reading.⁴ After all, if we went strictly by the majority of the extant Greek manuscripts we wouldn't be able to include the Book of Revelation in the canon, for only one in fifty MSS/mss contains it. There was a bias against the book in the Greek speaking East, thus it was not used in the lectionary services.

Again, the reason that all defenders of the TR since the Reformation follow the majority text is because ***it reflects the actual usage by the Church*** (the body of believers in all ages) which Jesus promised to lead into all truth, not merely because of statistical "superiority" or "probability". To not grasp or comprehend this leaves the reader with a

¹ Wisse, *The Profile Method for Classifying and Evaluating Manuscript Evidence*, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

² Hoskier, *Codex B and its Allies*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 461.

³ Moorman, *When The KJV Departs From The "Majority" Text*, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁴ Moorman, *When The KJV Departs From The "Majority" Text*, *op. cit.*, p. 27. Also see: Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-203.

"tentative" Bible. Even opponents freely admit this conclusively decisive point. For example, Professor Kurt Aland forthrightly grants:¹

"It is undisputed that from the 16th to the 18th century orthodoxy's doctrine of verbal inspiration assumed ... [the] *Textus Receptus*. It was the only Greek text they knew, and they regarded it as the 'original text'".

Merrill M. Parvis penned:

"The *Textus Receptus* is not the 'true' text of the New Testament ..."

but then incredulously went on to concede:²

"It [the TR] was the Scripture of many centuries of the Church's life. ... **The *Textus Receptus* is the text of the Church.** It is that form of text which represents the sum total and the end product of all the textual decisions which were made by the Church and her Fathers over a period of more than a thousand years." (author's emphasis)

These candid admissions by such leading scholars of the opposing view underscore and prove our entire thesis – that the *Textus Receptus* always has been the N.T. used by the true Church! Indeed, this has recently been conclusively proven by a remarkable piece of new manuscript evidence.

Three tiny fragments of uncial codex which were acquired in Luxor, Egypt in 1901 and donated to Magdalen College in Oxford, England had been preserved in its library in a butterfly display case. Dated c.A.D. 180-200 in 1953, both sides of the Magdalen Papyrus (the largest piece is 1⁵/₈" by 1/2") exhibit Greek script from the 26th chapter of Matthew.

In 1994, these fragments came to the attention of the German biblical scholar and papyrologist Dr. Carsten Peter Thiede (Director of the Institute for Basic Epistemological Research in Paderborn, Germany). Painstakingly redating the scraps, Dr. Thiede placed them at A.D. 66 – the only known first century N.T. text extant.³

¹ Kurt Aland, "The Text Of The Church?", *Trinity Journal* 8 (Fall 1987): p. 131.

² Merrill M. Parvis, "The Goals Of New Testament Textual Studies", *Studia Evangelica* 6 (1973): p. 406.

³ Carsten P. Thiede & Matthew D'Ancona, *Eyewitness to Jesus*, (New York: Doubleday, 1996), pp. 124-125. Dr. Thiede's findings appeared in a sensational front-page story of the December 24, 1994 (Christmas Eve) edition of the London *Times*.

But this was only the beginning. Using an eipflourescent confocal laser scanning microscope, Dr. Thiede found that fragment 3 (recto) revealed the TR/KJB reading from Matthew 26:22, "*hekastos auton*" – every one of them – rather than "*heis hekastos*" – each one [in turn one after the other] – as all the various critical texts read!¹ Thus this fragment now documents the antiquity of the TR/KJB text to the time of Peter, Paul, John the Apostle, as well as some of the 500 witnesses of our Lord's resurrection (I Cor.15:4-8) – and extends Nolan's finds beyond A.D. 157 (see page 169) back to A.D. 66.

Neither should it be imagined that Dr. Thiede was motivated to arrive at these conclusions because he is a TR supporter; he is not. As a papyrologist and having hard physical data in hand, he was not intimidated to abandon his new textual discoveries because they conflicted with the presuppositions and conjectural theories of New Testament textual scholars. Facts, you see, are stubborn things.

However this brings us to ask: Since the texts of the TR and T.T. are identical twin brothers,² why did Burgon only defend the T.T.; why did not Burgon "contend for the acceptance of the *Textus Receptus*"³ whereas Hills (Waite, Letis, this author etc.) did? (Both men did advocate "retaining" the TR but for different reasons and purposes.)

Hills best explains the reason for the disparity between himself and Burgon's views by calling attention that Burgon (as well as Prebendarys Scrivener and Edward Miller) was not a Protestant but a High-Church Anglican.⁴ As such, Burgon believed in infant baptism and apostolic succession. The latter meaning that only bishops who had been

¹ Thiede, *Eyewitness to Jesus*, pp. 59-60. These results were presented at the 21st Congress of the International Papyrologists' Association in Berlin August, 15, 1995, and met with "unanimous approval" (p. 61). Dr. Thiede adds that the precise nuance cannot be rendered in English: the Magadalen text emphasizes they were all speaking at once - a realistic portrayal of a dramatic moment with its accompanying excitement. But the standard critical text reads such that they spoke one after the other, waiting their turn in an orderly fashion (p. 60). Thus this original reading which was always preferable based on internal criteria is now corroborated by the oldest papyrus of Matthew's Gospel (p. 60).

² Except for the infrequent instances where the T.T has missing text (i.e., I Joh.5:7-8; Acts 7:37, 8:37, 9:5-6; Luk.17:36; Mat.5:27, 27:35; Heb.2:7, 11:13 etc.), the TR and T.T. exhibit only minor insignificant differences.

³ Hoskier, *Codex B and its Allies*, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 415; also see: Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, op. cit., pp. 107, 372, 373, 392.

⁴ Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, op. cit., p. 192.

consecrated by earlier bishops and so on back in an unbroken chain to the first bishops who had been set aside as such by the laying on of the hands of the Apostles were the true and only instruments that God would use in Church matters. This world view caused him great annoyance over the fact that, although about two thirds of the New Testament Revision Committee were also Anglican¹ (Church of England; most of whom were liberal), the southern convocation had allowed a few Baptist, Methodist, and other "separatists" (not to mention Vance Smith, a Unitarian who had in writing denied the deity of Jesus²) to participate.³ It was, in fact,

¹ *The New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*, Henry Snyder Gehman, ed., (Phil., PA: The Westminster Press, 1970), p. 981. Indeed, the Church of England and its Universities at Oxford and Cambridge were rife with men who had long denied the infallibility of Scripture. These were eager to acclaim a textual theory in harmony with their views. The liberalness of the Revision Committee can hardly be appreciated today. For example, the chairman, Bishop Ellicott, believed there were clear tokens of corruptions in the Authorized Version (Charles John Ellicott, *Addresses on the Revised Version of Holy Scripture*, (New York: E.S. Gorham, 1901), p. 70), and Dean Stanley openly confessed that the Pentateuch was not the work of Moses and that the Biblical narratives contained therein were not infrequently "colored" due to the imperfections of the men who wrote them (Arthur P. Stanley, *Essays Chiefly on Questions of Church and State from 1850 to 1870*, (London: John Murray, 1884), pp. 329-330). He further believed that the Word of God resided in the sacred books of other religions, as well in the Bible (*Essays*, p. 24). Bishop Thirlwall retired from the committee and refused to return until the Unitarian, Dr. Vance Smith, was allowed a seat at communion (see following fn. "Samuel Hemphill, *A History*).

² Samuel Hemphill, *A History of the Revised Version of the N.T.*, (London: E. Stock, 1906), pp. 36-37. When on 22 June of 1870 the "1881" revisers came together to initiate their work, a communion service (suggested by Westcott) was held in Westminster Abbey. Arthur Westcott, son of B.F. Westcott, recorded that his father and Hort insisted upon the inclusion of the Unitarian scholar, Dr. Vance Smith. The upper house of the Convocation of Canterbury had passed a resolution that no person denying the deity of Christ should take part in the work, yet Smith had so done in his book *Bible and Theology*. Westcott's son states: "The Revision was almost wrecked at the very outset", and quotes his father in a note to Hort as threatening to sever his connection with the project (as did others!) if Smith were not allowed to participate: "If the Company accept the dictation of Convocation, my work must end." (A. Westcott, *Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 394). Arthur mentions more than once that his father was often considered "unorthodox", "unsound", or "unsafe" (i.e., A. Westcott, *Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 218). After receiving Holy Communion with his fellow-revisors, Smith later commented that he did not join in reciting the Nicene Creed or in any way compromise his principles as a Unitarian (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, *op. cit.*, p. 507). The English people were infuriated by Smith's inclusion (*Ibid.*). It may be argued that it is unfair, irrelevant or even an ad hominem to address the liberal theological views of W&H with regard to their textual theory, but a man's world view and the frames of reference that view engenders inevitably bear upon his attitude toward the Sacred Writ.

³ Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, *op. cit.*, pp. 504-505.

this High-Church Anglicanism which led Burgon to place so much emphasis on the N.T. quotations of the Church Fathers, most of whom had been bishops.¹ For him, these quotations were vital because they proved that the Traditional Text found in the vast majority of the Greek manuscripts had been authorized from the very beginning by bishops of the early Church.

However, this high Anglican position betrayed Burgon when he came to deal with the printed Greek N.T. text for from the Reformation times down to his own day the Greek text favored by the bishops of the Church of England had been the *Textus Receptus* – and the TR had not been prepared by bishops but by Erasmus who had not been a bishop but was an independent scholar. Thus Erasmus, and his Greek edition, did not align with Burgon's High-Church stance on apostolic succession and authority.² Still worse for Burgon was the fact that the particular form of the *Textus Receptus* used in the Church of England was the third edition of Stephanus – and Stephanus was a Calvinist.³

Hills came to many of the same conclusions that Burgon had reached, but being a conservative Presbyterian and trained in the classics at Yale with a doctorate in N.T. textual criticism from Harvard, his frame of reference was that of a true heir of the Reformation.⁴ Thus, rather than to the High-Church argument of apostolic succession as a guarantee of the text's fidelity, Hills appealed to the affirmation of the Presbyterian Westminster Confession of Faith. This Confession sanctioned the *Textus Receptus* as being the Greek text which bore the mark of historic continuity and as having been preserved in its integrity within the Christian Church itself – hence it must be the providentially preserved true text (WC 1:8). Moreover, this was the very position of the Protestant dogmaticians, both Lutheran and Reformed, ever since the seventeenth century.⁵

¹ Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

² Letis, *The Majority Text*, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

³ Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

⁴ Theodore P. Letis, "The Revival of the Ecclesiastical Text and the Claims of the Anabaptist", *Calvinism Today*, Vol. II, no. 3, (North Yorkshire, England: July 1992), p. 11.

⁵ Letis, "The Protestant Dogmaticians" *op. cit.*, pp. 1-19. By "Protestant dogmatician" Dr. Letis means the "much maligned heirs of Luther and Calvin from the post-Reformation era of the 17th-century" (see his p. 1).

Hills convincingly argued that, from a believing consistently Christian standpoint, Burgon's (and all other) position was illogical as anyone believing in providential preservation of the N.T. text must accept and defend the *Textus Receptus* since it is the only form in which the Traditional Text has actually circulated in print. Moreover, that to decline to defend the TR implies that God preserved a pure text all during the manuscript period but for some unexplained reason left this pure text "hiding in the manuscripts and allowed an inferior text to issue from the printing press and circulate among His people for more than 450 years."¹

Realizing that the only bridge that would take us back beyond the extant MSS/mss of the majority text – the fourth century – to the lost autographa was *Providential Preservation*, Hills correctly saw the absolute necessity for a theological element in determining the Text.²

Hills thereby concludes (as does this author) that when we believe in and receive Christ Jesus, the logic of faith first leads us to a belief in the infallible inspiration of the original Scriptures.³ This is followed by a belief in the providential preservation of this original text down through the ages and thence to a belief in the Bible text current among believers as the providentially preserved original text. This is the "common faith" which has always been present among the Church of the Living God. Indeed, Hills summarizes it best:⁴

"But if the providential preservation of the Scriptures is not important, why is the doctrine of the infallible inspiration of the original Scriptures important? If God has not preserved the Scriptures by His special providence, why would He have infallibly inspired them in the first place? And if it is not important that the Scriptures be regarded as infallibly inspired, why is it important to insist that Gospel is completely true? And if this is not important, why is it important to believe that Jesus is the divine Son of God? In short, unless we follow the logic of faith, we can be certain of nothing concerning the Bible and its text".

¹ Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

² Letis, *The Majority Text*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

³ Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

Dr. Hills further illustrated what he meant by his term "the logic of faith":¹

"For example, how do we know that the Textus Receptus is the true New Testament text? We know this through the logic of faith. Because the Gospel is true, the Bible which contains this Gospel was infallibly inspired by the Holy Spirit. And because the Bible was infallibly inspired, it has been preserved by God's special providence. Moreover, this providential preservation was not done privately in secret holes and caves but publicly in the usage of God's Church. Hence the true New Testament text is found in the majority of the New Testament manuscripts. And this providential preservation did not cease with the invention of printing. Hence the formation of the Textus Receptus was God-guided.

"And how do we know that the King James Version is a faithful translation of the true New Testament text? We know this also through the logic of faith. Since the formation of the Textus Receptus was God-guided, the translation of it was God-guided also. For as the Textus Receptus was being formed, it was also being translated. The two processes were simultaneous. Hence the early Protestant versions, such as Luther's, Tyndale's, the Geneva, and the King James, were actually **varieties** of the Textus Receptus. And this was necessarily so according to the principles of God's preserving providence. For the Textus Receptus had to be translated in order that the universal priesthood of believers, the rank and file, might give it their God-guided approval." (author's emphasis)

Farther along, Dr. Hills continued:²

"This faith, however, has from time to time been distorted by the intrusion of unbiblical ideas. For example, many Jews and early Christians believed that the inspiration of the Old Testament had been repeated three times. According to them, not only had the original Old Testament writers been inspired but also Ezra, who (*supposedly*) rewrote the whole Old testament after it had been lost. And the Septuagint likewise, they maintained, had been infallibly inspired. Also the Roman Catholics have

¹ Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-114.

² *Ibid.*, p. 194.

distorted the common faith by their false doctrine that the authority of the Scriptures rests on the authority of the Church. It was this erroneous view that led the Roman Church to adopt the Latin Vulgate rather than the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures as its authoritative Bible. And finally, many conservative Christians today distort the common faith by their adherence to the theories of naturalistic New Testament textual criticism. They smile at the legends concerning Ezra and the Septuagint, but they themselves have concocted a myth even more absurd, namely, that the true New Testament text was lost for more 1,500 years and then restored by Westcott and Hort." (author's parenthesis)

Yet despite the efforts on behalf of the Church by Burgon, Scrivener, Hoskier, and – in the twentieth century – Hills, recently we have been placed in the bizarre situation of noting that whereas our opponents blasphemously assert that the TR/KJB New Testament is wrong in at least 5,300 instances – many of our Christian friends now say, "No, it errs only about 1,500 times." Thus many good brothers in Christ Jesus have been seduced into siding with the liberals and/or apostates as both positions embrace "restoration" rather than "preservation". Truly, such is a deplorable state! Worthy of the most deliberate consideration is the proposition that anytime the entire world system agrees with the Christian about any matter which is spiritual or has spiritual overtones – not only are we wrong – the error is nearly always 180 degrees out of phase with God's truth.

Moreover, the single greatest move of the hand of God since the time of the Lord Jesus and the Apostles as recorded in the Book of Acts was that of the Reformation. This great move must be recognized as the direct result of the historical restoration by Erasmus of the true text that the Apostles lived and wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The reader must then confront himself with the question: "If the Reformation were the fruit of restoring to the people the text known today as the *Textus Receptus*, where is the great revival that should have accompanied the labor of the past 100 years of text-critically editing and correcting that document?" The "Great Awakening" of the 1700's as well as the revivals of the late 1800's and early part of the 1900's under men such as Wesley, Whitefield, Finney, Spurgeon, Moody, R.A. Torrey, and Billy Sunday were all preached from the King James text.

To the contrary, we know of no revival that resulted from using the critical text. Thus we see that the **fruit** of the TR/KJB has been the

harvest of millions of souls. In stark contrast, the fruit of the critical text and its offspring has been doubt, division, endless debate, wasted time and energy that could have been spent in worship or evangelical effort, and the destruction of the faith at most seminaries and many pastors along with the sheep who feed at their feet. If the critical text is the better text, where are the great revivals that should have followed this enterprise? Does not this hard historical truth bear irrefutable testimony as to which text the Spirit of God has endorsed and stamped genuine – to that which He breathed man-ward?

Patient reader, in the previous pages we have declared and proclaimed that the defense of the King James Bible and its Greek foundation, the *Textus Receptus*, has been the very least of concern within the realm and scope of Textual Criticism. Almost all its energy has been directed toward "reconstructing" the text on the basis of a few old uncials, and ferreting out what little support can be gleaned for these MSS. It is not intended by the author to imply that the theological views of Burgon or Hills automatically make their text critical views correct or that those of Origen, Westcott, Hort, etc. necessarily make them wrong. Nevertheless up to the time of Westcott and Hort, the unyielding uniform Protestant consensus (of course, among so many there were some dissenters) can be summed by Quenstedt who, in the 1600's stated:¹

"We believe, as is our duty, that the providential care of God has always watched over the original and primitive texts of the canonical Scriptures in such a way that we can be certain that the sacred codices *which we now have in our hands* are those which existed at the time of Jerome and Augustine, nay at the time of Christ Himself and His apostles." (author's italics)

Moreover, before the time of W-H: "the 'lower criticism' had kept itself quite apart from the so-called dangerous 'higher criticism'. Since the publication of Hort's text, however, and that of the Revisers, much of the heresy of our time has fallen back upon the supposed results acquired by the 'lower criticism' to bolster up their views."²

It cannot be over stressed that just as the LORD used the Hebrew community to preserve the Old Testament Scriptures as He had originally given to them in that selfsame language (i.e., the Hebrew

¹ Preus, *The Inspiration of Scripture*, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

² Hoskier, *Codex B and its Allies*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 421-422.

Masoretic text), even so the instrument by which GOD has preserved the New Testament text has been that community through which the Greek tongue has been continued. The *Textus Receptus* is the official text of the Greek Orthodox Church to this very day.

We purport that the various editions of the *Textus Receptus* are the overall framework within which providential preservation has operated. We affirm that all the words of the inspired New Testament Scriptures are to be found within this framework. We proclaim that the work of the various editors – Erasmus, Stephens, Beza and the Elizevirs – was the result of God's providence in stabilizing the TR as a settled entity. Hence, no further revision of the Greek wording is needed as God, through His providence, has settled the text. Further, we have seen that the dark ages truly began with the Greek text of Westcott and Hort (Origen-Eusebius) which was published by Jerome in 405 A.D., and ended with the 1516 publication of the Greek text of Erasmus.

The single most enduring and reasonable charge that has been leveled against the TR which persists to this day is that Erasmus had to use the Latin Vulgate for the last six verses in the final chapter of the Book of Revelation (although Hoskier, the greatest authority on these manuscripts, doubts this). Yet even if this is granted, what doctrines are at risk with regard to the variant readings here? None. Indeed, Erasmus was using an edition which had been produced "from an ancient Greek exemplar representing a text from at least as far back as the third century when he employed the Vulgata for these last few verses. Unlike the Egyptian uncials, however, no doctrine is at stake whatsoever. The meaning is not even altered."¹

Any small variations among the editions of the *Textus Receptus*, other than typographical errors, should be indicated in the center column of future editions. The critic's allegation that God has not preserved every word of the inspired N.T. text solely in the TR is an un-provable and untruthful assertion. The Christian needs a firmer foundation than the ever shifting consensus of scholarly opinion upon which to anchor his faith. Only the existence of a continuously preserved, providentially determined text provides such a basis. The *Textus Receptus* alone affords such a cornerstone.

¹ Letis, "A Reply to the Remarks of Mark A. McNeil", *op. cit.*, p. 4.

The Christian must come to grips with and understand that a purely rational totally scientific method of dealing with the problems inherent with the text of Scripture can never really produce the desired result for in the ultimate sense, we can never **demonstrate** the agreement between the *Textus Receptus* and the original manuscripts since the originals have not survived to our day. Thus, once again, Hills' "logic of faith" is the only method that can bridge the gap back to the autographs.

However, it must be recognized that the same must be said for the majority or Traditional Text. Indeed, the hostile critics are themselves in the same predicament; none can compare their favored readings to the original in order to establish its superiority.¹ Inevitably we must "receive" the Received Text. The Church is utterly dependent upon God's providential preservation of the text. Moreover, the Reformers did not distinguish between the text they actually possessed and the originals. They believed they had the original wording preserved by the "singular care and providence" of God (See the Philadelphia Confession on this author's p. 81). Truly, the entire matter may be summarized by the words of the late Dr. D.O. Fuller:²

"If you and I believe that the original writings of the Scriptures were verbally inspired by God, then of necessity they must have been providentially preserved through the ages.

For those of us who comprehend and submit to the truth and logic embodied in this singular quote, there remains absolutely no need for textual criticism. Colwell himself acknowledged as much:³

It is often assumed by the ignorant and uninformed – even on a university campus – that textual criticism of the New Testament is supported by a superstitious faith in the Bible as a book dictated in miraculous fashion by God. That is not true. Textual criticism has never existed for those whose New Testament is one of miracle, mystery, and authority. A New Testament created under those auspices would have been handed down under them and would have no need of textual criticism.

¹ Douglas Taylor, "A Special Look at Appendix C", *Bible League Quarterly*, (Northampton, England: The Bible League Trust, Oct.-Dec., 1990), p. 379.

² Fuller, *Which Bible?*, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

³ Colwell, *What is the Best New Testament?* *op. cit.*, p. 8. This quote is typical of the modern critic's low view of Scripture.

Of course Colwell goes on to assure his reader that as such is not the case, textual criticism is a most necessary tool in determining the "best" New Testament.¹

The next question is, which of the versions – if any – reflects the original wording from the autographs in English? Without hesitation, we say that the King James "Version" is that entity. It is "the Bible" in the English language. Yet strangely when this and the overall message contained in this manuscript has been shared and explained by the author (as well as by others, present or past), the reaction from the vast majority of readers or listeners – whether laymen, pastors or professors – has been so bewildering and unexplainable. Not seeming to comprehend that help and warning are being offered rather than "criticism", most become very defensive and often irritated. A pall of apathy overshadows the subject. This is indeed a troubling tragedy in the extreme.

Yet, as things stand we are left in the strange circumstance whereby everyone is permitted and encouraged to come to the religion classroom, Bible study, Sunday School class, Church service, etc., all bearing different "textbooks". Such is never tolerated or practiced in any other learning situation. University professors of English, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, History, etc., do not permit such a practice for they well know the chaotic situation that would result. An atmosphere for real learning would not exist in such an environment. Even the authorities in the lower levels of education – the High Schools, Junior Highs, and Elementary schools – know better.

To the contrary, the institution selects the textbook (whether good or bad), and the student purchases it. Other material relevant to the subject are to be found and utilized in the reference area of the institution's library. It would seem that only within the confines of the Christian Church is such foolishness practiced and tolerated. Yet in so doing, have we not completely set aside all common sense and logic?

Finally, it is a fair and accurate statement that in direct proportion to how much text criticism was legitimized by the Churchmen of nineteenth century Britain (the bastion of conservatism at that time), to that

¹ Colwell, *What is the Best New Testament? op. cit.*, p. 9. Notice Colwell does not say the "true" or "original" N.T. but merely the "best". Like those listed on p. 131, he obviously neither believed the original text had been preserved nor that it could ever be fully recovered.

selfsame extent was a verbal view of inspiration surrendered.¹ Once the verbal infallible view was abandoned, the Bible ceased to be honored as a "sacred" book. Sadly, the Church slumbers on – deceived by so-called scholarship and oblivious to the singular truth penned over one hundred years hence:

"Vanquished by THE WORD Incarnate, Satan next directed his subtle malice against the Word written"²

The war rages on in unabated fury! The clarion has been sounded.³ "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; ... as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."⁴ How so? By believing His promises that He would preserve His infallible Word – forever!

**Heaven and earth shall pass away:
but my words shall not pass away.**

Mark 13:31

¹ Letis, p. 8 in a December 1988 formal correspondence to this author in which he outlined his doctoral dissertation approach.

² Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, *op. cit.*, p. 334.

³ *The Holy Authorized King James Bible*, I Corinthians 14:8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Book of Joshua, 24:15.

Standard Bearers' Browser

Louis M Kole

Vision

Standard Bearers is dedicated to presenting 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).

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For a group presentation by [Dr. Floyd Nolen Jones, Ph.D, Th.D.](#) on: **The Biblical & Historical Doctrine of Inerrancy, The Identity of the Text of the New Testament, Chronology of the Old Testament, Creation & Evolution or Science & the Bible**, please contact me at, louis.kole@standardbearers.net.

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* and *Superintendent* 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 Turretin¹ 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** ² [perfect copy, 'authentic']; genuine original] 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.**"³*

Hymn ~ Come, Gracious Spirit- Heavenly Dove!

God bless,

Louis M Kole *Standard Bearers*
louis.kole@standardbearers.net

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." (Revelation 3:11)

¹Gerstner, 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.

² Apograh 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 'authenticial', which Webster's 1828 dictionary defines as "having a genuine original".

³ 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.

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◇ [Chart 6 ~ Creation to Creator](#)

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◇ [Pericope De Adultera John 8 ~ Appendix A \(p.219\)](#)

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◇ [Examples of Modern Criticism ~ Appendix C \(p.241\)](#)

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~ *The Westminster Confession **Rejection** of the Chicago Statement*
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"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." (Rev 3:11)

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