



# the Dean Burgon News

## IN DEFENSE OF TRADITIONAL BIBLE TEXTS

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JANUARY, 1980

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## An Answer To "Textus Receptus: Is It Fundamental To Our Faith?"

By Rev. D. A. Waite, Th.D., Ph.D.  
President, The Dean Burgon Society

[Installment # 2]

[Written by Dr. Thurman Wisdom, Dean of the School of Religion at Bob Jones University, as printed in **FAITH FOR THE FAMILY**, October, 1979, pp. 3-4]

### C. The Importance of These Issues.

There have been some of our friends who have written to our Dean Burgon Society in a very honest and sincere manner, telling us they think we're going off on a sidetrack, a hobby, a tributary, and not sticking with the things that really matter in today's theological issues, when we have openly and solidly taken our position in favor of a Bible which is not only plenary and verbally inspired of God, but also is, in the original writings, infallible and inerrant in all matters of which it speaks. To us, this is the major issue facing Christianity today as it has been facing Christianity throughout the years of Church History! There can be no greater issue to defend! There can be no greater stand to take! There can be nothing of greater importance for us today! For if the Bible be under attack, and if the very words of inspiration be denied, questioned, or otherwise doubted, where is our doctrine of inerrancy? We do not believe there is another single issue, in other words, of any greater moment or import than this issue which The Dean Burgon Society has raised for all to consider! We felt that Dr. Panosian's article (which we are answering in

series in the D. B. NEWS), the article which recently appeared in **The Sword of The Lord** by Dr. Robert L. Sumner, and this present article by Dr. Thurman Wisdom demand an answer, and, by God's grace, and with His enablement, we wish to offer at least this personal answer as an opener. There are, perhaps, many others who will want, in the future, to make reply as well. We welcome such answers into the arena of truth and public opinion. We invite you, our readers, to follow this continued article from month to month, and to get all of your friends to follow along with us also.

**D. Our Method.** Perhaps the simplest treatment of Dr. Wisdom's article would be to give each item on which I wish to make a comment (one way or another) in his own words, giving the lines in which the statement occurs; then to give a brief statement on the issues involved in the statement; and finally to give my own comments either in agreement, in reply, in difference, or an effort to shed some light on the issues involved. At the present time, there are approximately 51 items on which I would like to comment by way of my "ANSWER."

### II. THE ANSWER ITSELF

#### 1. ITEM # 1.

**A. Faith for the Family's Statement.** "The word 'fundamental,' according to Webster, 'applies to something that is a foundation without which an entire system or complex whole would collapse.' To Funda-

(Continued on page 3)

## "KING JAMES FANS" (?)

By E. L. Bynum

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[Installment Number 3]

### The Use Of Loaded Questions

Dr. Rice lists several questions which he insists that the defenders of the KJV answer, and if they don't answer them, he charges them to say nothing to him or to anyone else. His questions are loaded, or stated in such a way that they would be difficult to answer. Some of them are like the old question, "Have you quit beating your wife yet?", and then insist upon a yes or no answer. Either way you answer it, you are guilty. However, we are going to take a look at some of Dr. Rice's questions.

He asks, "What accepted Bible commentary, what statement of faith, of any church or denomination states that the King James Version is without error in translation?" He goes on to say, "There is not one such commentary or statement of faith or statement by a reliable authority that the King James Version is without an error in translation. Not one in the world!" He then launches into the tract he accuses me of writing and misquoting Fuller. He then closes that portion of his article with a repeat on the question by saying, "Again the question, and do not write me on this matter (and I hope you will never say a word to anyone else on the matter) without answering this question honestly: What authorities, commentaries, statements of faith of widely accepted Christian leaders say 'that the translators were infallible or that their work was perfect'? That is not sensible and it isn't true." Please note that he has now

*THE DEAN BURGON SOCIETY, INC. proudly takes its name in honor of Rev. John William Burgon (1813-1888), the Dean of Chichester in England, whose tireless and accurate scholarship and contribution in the area of New Testament Textual Criticism; whose defense of the Traditional Greek New Testament Text against its many enemies; and whose firm belief in the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, we believe, have all been unsurpassed either before or since his time!*

changed his question somewhat!

In the first place, I don't know anyone who ever claimed "that the translators were infallible." I have many books on the Bible version issue, by defenders of the KJV. In my files I have article after article on this issue, and I cannot recall anyone ever saying the men were infallible who translated it! There has only been one man who was infallible, and that was our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Bible does not teach that Moses or Paul were infallible, even though God used them and others to write down His Word. It is His Word that is infallible, not the men that we sometimes call authors.

## CHAPTER 2

### What About The Statements Of Faith?

Dr. Rice's first question is as follows: "What accepted Bible commentary, what statement of faith, of any church or denomination states that the King James Version is without error in translation?" This is a question that is calculated to be a KJV straw man, that Dr. Rice will vanquish on the field of combat. I have a question for Dr. Rice. "What statement of faith, of any church or denomination states that the King James Version contains a considerable amount or ANY amount of errors? Our question is just as fair as Dr. Rice's, and I contend that the Confessions of Faith give more support to the defenders of the KJV, than they do to its critics. No Confession of Faith that I have seen makes any criticism of the KJV, nor do any of them suggest that another version is needed.

A student of the Confessions of Faith knows that various articles were placed in the Confessions when certain problems arose over doctrine! Some of the early Confessions of Faith said nothing about the inspiration of the Bible. Yet, we dare say that it would be grossly unfair to say that they did not believe that the Bible was inspired of God. However, we believe that the historical Confessions of Faith have a definite bearing on the translation issue.

The Westminster Confession, of 1646, is probably the most famous Confession of Faith ever written. It says, "The Old Testament in Hebrew, and the New Testament in Greek, being immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them." This is of course not a Baptist Confession, but it has had great influence among Baptists. This Confession says that the Scriptures were "inspired by God, and by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages..." How could anyone make such a statement, unless they believed that they had reliable copies of the originals and reliable translations?

The Helvetic Consensus Formula of 1675 says, "God saw to it that His word, which is with power unto salvation to everyone who believes, was entrusted to writing not only through Moses, the prophets and apostles, but also He has stood guard and watched over

# The Supernatural Approach To Textual Criticism

By Thomas M. Strouse, Ph.D.  
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[Installation Number 3]

## The Supernatural Approach To The Transmission Of The Text

This approach is far more positive and satisfying to the true Christian textual critic. However, there are several varieties which need examining.

The Supernatural Preservation of Biblical Doctrine. This variety of the above approach maintains that the essential doctrine of the NT is found even in the worst MSS., and that it is inconsequential what text or version is used; God has preserved His doctrine in all texts. F. H. A. Scrivener says that Textual Criticism offers one great truth concerning this approach.

The almost complete freedom of Holy Scripture from the bare suspicion of willful corruption; the absolute identity of the testimony of every known copy in respect to doctrine, and spirit, and the main drift of every argument and every narrative through the entire volume of Inspiration.<sup>11</sup>

The problem with this approach is that the doctrine God has preserved is not based on

it with a fatherly concern to the present time that it not be destroyed by the cunning of Satan or by any other human deceit." (Emphasis ours). If these people had no reliable text and no reliable translation, how could they make such a statement? If their Greek and Hebrew texts were not pure, and they had no pure translation, why would they make such a foolish statement?

The Midland Confession, 1655, was adopted unanimously by the messengers of the churches meeting at Warwick, England. This group of Baptists said, "We profess and believe the Holy Scriptures, the Old and New Testament, to be the word and revealed mind of God, which are able to make men wise unto Salvation, through faith and love which is in Christ Jesus; and that they are given by inspiration of God, serving to furnish the man of God for every good work; and by them we are (in the strength of Christ) to try all things whatsoever are brought to us, under the pretence of truth. II Tim. 3:15-17; Isaiah 8:20." We hardly see how the critics of the KJV can find any comfort in that statement of faith. Those who adopted the Midland Confession of 1655, believed in the inspiration of the Scriptures, they believed they had those Scriptures, and they believed that by those Scriptures they could "try all things whatsoever are brought to us, under the pretence of truth." In 1655, you can well know what English version they used, and they had never heard of the Westcott & Hort text, and we can thank the Lord for that.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

concepts but the words of Scripture. The very words of Scripture formulate the Christian theology. Without the exact words of Paul, for instance, the Christian theologian can only approximate Pauline doctrine. Also, a pragmatic problem which arises out of this approach concerns the matter of Scripture memorization. With the multitude of choices of English versions from which the English-speaking Christian may choose, what version will be the Christian's standard? And if the Christian started out memorizing the AV, and then the ASV, and then the NASB, and now the NIV, his mind would be bogged with numerous renderings of favorite Scripture verses. Moreover, his understanding of any one verse would be a conglomeration of words and ideas which may represent different concepts. And hence, pragmatically, this approach undermines Scripture memorization and therefore any definitive and personal doctrinal undergirding. Perhaps "conceptual memorization" is the final result of the "conceptual inspiration" approach to Scripture!<sup>12</sup>

The Supernatural Preservation of the Text to the Inspiration of a Translation. This approach seemingly is an over-reaction to the naturalistic approach, going in the direction of the other extreme—the inspired KJV. It is one thing to say that the Traditional Texts, the Massoretic and Received Texts, are closest to the originals, and it is a completely different thing to say that a translation is inerrant. Evidently, Peter F. Ruckman holds this view, affirming that the KJV is inerrant and infallible.<sup>13</sup> Certainly this is going too far theologically; inspiration is the unique process that occurred in the writing of the originals. Moreover, inerrancy and infallibility are the results of inspiration, affecting initially the originals and extending to the copies as they were accurately transcribed.<sup>14</sup> Hills lists three reasons why this approach is wrong-headed: 1) The KJV translators, although they felt they were providentially guided, did not believe their translation was inspired, for they stated in their preface that their translation was "to make a good one better, or out of many good ones one principle good one." 2) The 8422 marginal notes in the 1611 KJV indicate that "the KJV translators did not regard their work as perfect or inspired, but they did consider it to be a trustworthy reproduction of God's holy Word..." 3) The two editions of the 1611 KJV, the second correcting "Judas" with "Jesus" in Matthew 26:36, also militates against this approach.<sup>15</sup>

[To Be Continued]

<sup>11</sup> A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the NT (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell and Co., 1883) p. 3. He goes on to quote the earliest known advocate of this position, Richard Bentley: "The real text of the sacred writers does not now (since the originals have been so long lost) lie in any MS. or edition, but is dispersed in them all, 'Tis completely exact indeed in the worst MS. now extant; nor is one article of faith or moral precept either perverted or lost in them; choose as awkwardly as you will, choose the worst by design, out of the whole lump of readings," p. 7. Cf. also B. B. Warfield An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the NT (London, Hedder and Stoughton, 1886), p. 14.

<sup>12</sup> One of the favorite verses of most Christians, John 3:16, is a pungent example. Even though there is very little basic difference in the Greek texts of the TR and the UBS on this verse, the resultant translations differ in vocabulary, word order, omissions, and content. The RSV omits "begotten;" the NIV restates it as "His one and only Son;" the TEV includes "so

**AN ANSWER TO "TEXTUS RECEPTUS: IS IT FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR FAITH?"**

(Continued from page 1)

mentalists this definition applies to doctrines which make up the basic fabric of Christianity—doctrines without which scriptural Christianity could not exist. One of these doctrines, without question, is the verbal inspiration of scripture." [From October, 1979, issue of Faith for the Family, pp. 3-4, lines ##1-11].

**B. The Issue.** Is the text of the Old and New Testaments "fundamental" to our Faith?

**C. My Comments.** Certainly the very text of the Old and New Testaments which make up our Bibles is of the utmost importance to the Fundamentalists' faith and doctrine. It, in fact, is a *sine qua non* for historic Christianity itself. Without a definitely defined Bible—based on a solid Old Testament Hebrew Text and a solid New Testament Greek Text—there can be no Christianity itself! Where is the Virgin Birth of Christ without a sure Bible text? Where is the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ without a sure Bible text? Where is the Creation of the world by the immediate hand of an omnipotent God without a sure Bible text? Where is Heaven without a sure Bible text? Where is salvation by God's redeeming grace through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ without a sure Bible text? Where is the doctrine of universal sin and the lostness of all men everywhere without a sure Bible text? Indeed, there is nothing which is more "fundamental" to our Christian faith than the genuine text of scripture! Dr. Wisdom used the title "Textus Receptus" in his title. This merely means that "text" which has been "received" down through the centuries of the Christian Church to be the closest text to the original manuscripts. Though it refers primarily to the New Testament Greek text, it could also designate the Old Testament Hebrew text such as that passed on by the Masorete (traditional) Hebrew scholars through the many generations. Certainly it is of great importance to assess these "RECEIVED" or "TRADITIONAL TEXTS" of both Old and New Testaments in the establishment of the text closest as humanly possible to the original autographs. Where is "verbal inspiration" without a sure text of Scripture? We must be interested in each and every "WORD" of the Old and New Testaments since God has spoken to us in WORDS.

**2. ITEM # 2. [to be continued]**

much" and "may not dies"—a doctrinal change; and the Moffat translation rearranges the latter half of the verse. With the multitude of variety in translations, are Christians being encouraged to memorize Scripture or to neglect the memorization of Scripture? "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." (Joshua 1:8). Cf. also verses such as Psalm 1:1-3, 119:11, 16, 97, etc.

<sup>13</sup>For one of many examples, cf. "Q and A," Bible Believer's Bulletin, ed. Peter Ruckman, I, No. 5, p. 8. On the other hand, Ruckman certainly is an advocate of the TR. The Christian's Handbook of Manuscript Evidence (Pensacola: Pensacola Bible Institute, 1970), p. 11.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. H. C. Thiessen, Introduction to the NT (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1943), p. 80.

<sup>15</sup>E. F. Hills, Believing Bible Study (Des Moines, The Christian Research Press, 1977), pp. 64-66.

**Book Reviews**

By Ken Johnson

**A GUIDE TO THE TEXTUAL CRITICISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT** (by Edward Miller, a Dean Burgon Society reprint, 160 pages, paper, \$7.00).

The Dean Burgon Society has performed a real service to interested pastors, teachers, and Christian laymen in their putting into print this fine work of Edward Miller. The significance of this book lies in its author's being the student and co-worker of Dean Burgon. It reflects with total accuracy the great ability of Burgon to defend with cause the Traditional Text of the Greek New Testament.

Miller's book is divided into nine sections with an appendix dealing with seven important disputed passages of Scripture. The context of the book takes the reader from the need of an understanding of the subject of "Textual Criticism" through the basic materials used by the textual critic. The author has written his material in terms that are technical enough to encompass the field of study without neglecting the needs and understanding of the layman and includes material valuable to the student of Textual Criticism to aid him in establishing a basis for the superiority of the Traditional Text.

Although Miller (and Burgon) wrote and published research into textual problems before the "Translation Explosion" of the twentieth century, his effort and honest evaluation of textual evidence is a powerful aid in the defense against the erroneous concepts of establishing "a" text based on dialectical standards now being expoused. The more concerned student of God's Word will value this re-published work as an asset of significant value in knowing and defending the use of the Traditional Greek New Testament Text.

PENNSYLVANIA: Enclosed is my \$10.00 money order (a pre-order of \$5.00 for a copy of the re-print book "A Guide to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament" by Edward Miller and \$5.00 for a gift to the Society).

**An Answer To "What Is The 'Inspired' Word Of God?"**

By Rev. D. A. Waite, Th.D., Ph.D.  
President, The Dean Burgon Society

(Continued From Last Month)

**15. ITEM #15.**

**A. FAITH FOR THE FAMILY'S Statement.** "These available manuscripts differed slightly from one another, were comparatively few in number, and the oldest among them dated back only to the tenth or eleventh centuries." [Feb., 1979, lines ##98-103].

**B. The Issue.** Does "fewness" and/or the "tenth" or "eleventh" century date on the manuscript copies used make such inferior per se?

**C. My Comments.** "Fewness" in and of itself does not speak of inferiority. If a man possessed only ONE Greek manuscript—and that ONE the original itself—it would be SUPERIOR and by no means inferior. Erasmus used manuscripts which are even today, by and large, in accord with the vast MAJORITY of extant Greek manuscripts in our possession. This speaks very well indeed for his selection of manuscripts—however few, relatively speaking, they might have been. As far as the "age" of the particular Greek manuscripts that either Erasmus or Ximenes might have held in their hands, Miller pointed out, in the case of Ximenes' edition—the Complutensian—that it was "admitted to be a fair but not by any means a faultless edition of the TEXT THAT HAD ALREADY BEEN IN VOGUE, AS IS UNIVERSALLY ADMITTED, FOR UPWARDS OF A THOUSAND YEARS." [Miller, GUIDE TO TEXTUAL CRITICISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, op. cit., p.8]. The same can be said of those manuscripts used by Erasmus. Or, for that matter, those used by those who followed Erasmus who were editors of the Traditional Greek Text, namely: (1) Robert Stephen (1546 ff.); (2) Theodore Beza (1565 ff.); (3) Bonaventure and Abraham Elzevir (1624 ff.), and others. [Cf. Miller, GUIDE, op. cit., pp. 10-12]

[TO BE CONTINUED]

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**WISCONSIN:** The enclosed check is to pay for a copy of Miller's, A Guide to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament. The balance of the check is an offering to help with publication expenses.

**NEW JERSEY:** Please find \$5 enclosed for a copy of "A Guide to the Textual Criticism of the N.T." by Miller. Also \$2.50 for "Heresies of W. & H." by D. A. Waite. Total \$7.50.

**WISCONSIN:** I greatly appreciated your ministry here on campus. I am sure that the impact will remain with our students. Again let me thank you for your ministry and for what the society is doing for the textual problems of today.

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**USA:** Thank you so much for your stand and starting to reprint many good works on God's preserved word. Please reserve a copy of your first preprint by Edward Miller.

**ILLINOIS:** I especially appreciated receiving your Dean Burgon News for July 1979. Thank you very much for your inspiring and stimulating and faith-strengthening stand in your NEWS!

**CALIFORNIA:** I was glad to find my question about the Septuagint answered in the June number of the Dean Burgon News. I am looking forward to reading more about the faults of the Septuagint, I hear so much quoted from it on the radio, in which the impression is given that it is the authoritative word of God, which I feel is in some cases an obvious error.

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**MICHIGAN:** I trust that you are not swayed or intimidated by friends who think that you are going off on a sidetrack, riding a hobby-horse, and not sticking with the things that really matter. What is more important than the battle going on today over an inspired Bible that is inerrant and the best possible manuscripts for translation! Do not be intimidated.... keep up the fine work and battle.

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