



Preservation of Holy Scripture – Critical versus Traditional Views¹

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As part of this study, Dr Cammenga also examines what goes into making a good translation of the Scriptures: 'Specifically, what more can be said regarding a version's reliability? How does one determine which of the various Bible versions currently on the market is, or are, reliable?' Part of this, of course, are the translation principles used, but of more fundamental importance are the principles used in producing the underlying Biblical language texts. Here Dr Cammenga gives a detailed examination of these principles. He begins by giving an overview which briefly summarises ten contrasting features of the two views. It should be noted that there is overlap in these in individual textual critics; for example, in point 1 some who hold the critical view believe that the Scripture is the unique Word of God, but they would treat it as if it were not, as seen in point 2.

Critical View	Traditional View
1. Scripture is like any text of human origin.	1. Scripture is the unique Word of God.
2. Approach Scripture like any other text.	2. Scripture requires its own special approach.
3. The subjective judgment of the individual critic is the ultimate criterion for determining the Scripture text, to be applied through the methods of intrinsic and transcriptional probability.	3. The Scripture text is to be established on the basis of all the available textual evidence by applying all the relevant textual principles, at least the 'seven notes of truth' (defined by John Burgon...).
4. The older the manuscript, the better its text.	4. The age of a manuscript is a necessary but not sufficient criterion for determining the quality of its text, even less an absolute one. For the New Testament text, age is also inadequate in that some of its earliest manuscripts are among the most corrupted ones, so that an older witness is not necessarily better. Moreover, the oldest uncials ¹ adduced to support the Critical Text are not the oldest extant manuscripts.

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Critical View	Traditional View
5. The quality of a manuscript is determined by its genealogy.	5. Genealogy is an inadequate principle, insufficient in and of itself. Drawn as it is from familial relationships, the textual analogy is flawed. As the precise relationships between most extant New Testament manuscripts are unknown, this principle is inapplicable.
6. The number of manuscripts is not a criterion for determining the quality of a text.	6. Insufficient in and of itself, the number of manuscripts is one of several textual criteria necessary for determining the providentially preserved Text. The normal laws of evidence require it. . .
7. The traditional majority text is the result of conflation (the mixing of two or more texts).	7. There is no sufficient and unambiguous historical evidence to support any conflation, much less wholesale conflation, of the Traditional Text. Omission in the Critical Text is more plausible.
8. The Traditional Text is the result of at least two deliberate revisions.	8. That there were the two revisions supposed by Hort is pure conjecture. This view is not supported either by external evidence of the existence of church councils on such revisions, or of any documents relating to major Bible revisions produced by such councils.
9. Cureton's Syriac is the only surviving specimen of the unrevised version.	9. This critical assumption is pure hypothesis, unsupported by historical or textual evidence.
10. The critical minority text is the purest.	10. The traditional majority text is the purest.

“The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever”
 Psalm 12:6-7

Preservation of Holy Scripture – Critical versus Traditional Views – Notes

Introduction

The TBS item has contrasted the traditional view of the preservation of Holy Scripture that Dean Burgon validated by means of his 7 Tests of Truth and the critical i.e. Aleph, B-based Westcott-Hort subjectivity of modern editors that Dean Burgon likewise condemned as *this sojourn in cloudland*. See this extract².

7. Burgon carefully set out 7 tests of truth for manuscripts readings³:

1. Antiquity of witnesses
2. Number of witnesses
3. Variety of evidence
4. Respectability of witnesses
5. Continuity of witnesses
6. Context
7. Internal considerations

He declared that *“In the balances of these seven Tests of Truth the speculations of the Westcott and Hort school, which have bewitched millions are ‘Tekel,’ weighed in the balances and found wanting.”*

Of Westcott and Hort’s subjective exaltation of Codices Aleph, B, D, Burgon stated *“In contrast with this sojourn in cloudland, we are essentially of the earth though not earthy. We are nothing if we are not grounded in facts: Our appeal is to facts, our test lies in facts”*⁴.

The effectiveness of Burgon’s method may be illustrated by means of an AV1611 majority reading i.e. 1 Timothy 3:16, an AV1611 minority reading i.e. 1 John 5:7 and a non-AV1611 addition to Acts 8:39⁵:

1 Timothy 3:16 “God” was manifest in the flesh

ALL the manuscript evidence is in favour of either **“God”** or **“Who”** or **“Which.”** I described in Section 6.2 how **“THEOS”** or **“God”**, which is found in the majority of manuscripts and is written **“THS”**, can easily be changed into **“OS”**, **“Who”**, or **“O”**, **“Which”**.

Pickering⁶ summarises Burgon’s findings on 1 Timothy 3:16 as follows:

Burgon found that 300 Greek MSS (uncial, minuscule, lectionary) read the word “God” in 1 Timothy 3:16 and only seven did not.

...The ONLY early witness which could be in favour of **“Who”** is Aleph⁷. The bad character of this manuscript has been discussed in the parent work⁸.

The TBS⁹ states that (Aleph) was characterised by numerous alterations and omissions.

Dr Hills states further that *The Traditional Text reads “God was manifest in the flesh”, with A (according to Scrivener), C (according to the “almost supernaturally accurate” Hoskier)...the Western text (represented by D2 and the Latin versions) reads “which was manifest in the flesh”...*

Concerning the versions, Burgon¹⁰ shows that the Old Latin does NOT bear witness to **“He”** but rather to **“O,”** **“which”** and that *From a copy so depraved, the Latin Version was altered in the second century.* See Hills, above. The TBS¹¹ states *While the Syriac “Peshitto” version has been justly described as “the oldest and one of the most excellent of the versions”...It was evidently influenced by Greek manuscripts like Codex D and the Latin versions, which have “which was manifested”...It is probable that the earliest Syriac copies had “God was manifested”...*

As for the quotations by the fathers, Burgon¹² found only Gelasius (A.D. 476) and *an unknown author of...uncertain date* citing **“which”** and NOT ONE citing **“who.”** By contrast, the fathers citing **“God”** are numerous. They include Gregory of Nyssa (d. A.D. 394¹³), who *in at least 22 places, knew of no other reading but “Theos”*¹⁴...

[R]eviewing ALL the evidence, it is significant that 1 Timothy 3:16 certainly meets 6 if not all of Burgon’s tests of truth. It may be that some *respectability of witnesses* is lacking in the aberrant readings of some ancient versions but other *respectable* witnesses are numerous as Kinney¹⁵ shows.

1 John 5:7, 8 “in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth”

Christian writers who cited the words in question BEFORE the 4th Century are Tatian (A.D. 180), Tertullian (A.D. 200) and Cyprian (A.D. 225). Athanasius cited the words in A.D. 350¹⁶. Dr J. A. Moorman¹⁷ indicates that Priscillian...cited the verse in 385 A.D....

The early versions which cite the verse are the Old Syriac (170 A.D.) and the Old Latin (A.D. 200)¹⁸...Wilkinson¹⁹, citing Nolan, says of the Old Italic Bible, which existed in A.D. 157, that *it has supplied him with the unequivocal testimony of a truly apostolical branch of the primitive church, that the celebrated text of the heavenly witnesses (1 John 5:7) was adopted in the version which prevailed in the Latin Church, previously to the introduction of the modern Vulgate...*

The TBS²⁰ cites R. L. Dabney as follows:

There are strong probable grounds to conclude, that the text of Scriptures current in the East received a mischievous modification at the hands of the famous Origen. Those who are best acquainted with the history of Christian opinion know best, that Origen was the great corrupter, and the source, or at least earliest channel, of nearly all the speculative errors which plagued the church in after ages...He disbelieved the full inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures, holding that the inspired men apprehended and stated many things obscurely...He expressly denied the consubstantial unity of the Persons and the proper incarnation of the Godhead - the very propositions most clearly asserted in the doctrinal various readings we have under review...

When one reviews ALL the evidence, it is noteworthy that 1 John 5:7-8 satisfies at least 5, if not 6 of Burgon's 7 tests of truth²¹... Only *number of witnesses* and in consequence some *respectability of witnesses* is lacking, through omission.

Acts 8:39 “the Spirit of the Lord fell upon the eunuch”

One critic...states “...*some of the manuscripts which have Acts 8:37 also have in v. 39 “the Spirit of the Lord fell upon the eunuch”* and poses the question “*Why is this not in the KJV?*”

There are at least three good reasons.

1. The AV1611 translators, being much more scholarly than the modern translators and endowed with much greater spiritual wisdom, Luke 21:15, were able to discern between the authentic reading and the false one...
2. The spurious reading in Acts 8:39 no doubt lacks number, respectability, continuity and variety of witnesses. It may also lack antiquity and the context, as defined by Burgon [*True or False?*] pp 264 ff, may be suspect...
3. There are two references in the Book of Acts to the Holy Ghost falling upon individuals, Acts 10:44, 11:15. They deal with incidents in Acts 2:3, 4 and 10:44. In each case there were Jews present and the gift of TONGUES was manifested, magnifying God as a SIGN to these Jews, 1 Corinthians 1:22, Acts 2:5-11, 10:45-46, 11:17-18. In Acts 8:39 NEITHER condition applies and therefore internal considerations mitigate against the reading.

The reading therefore fails 5 TO 7 of Burgon's tests and is therefore rightly rejected.

Addendum to Section 14:3 on Acts 8:39

A Google search has located a site on Miniscule 1739²², a 10th century ms. The entry states *In Acts 8:39, instead of πνεῦμα κυρίου ἤρπασεν τὸν Φίλιππον ([The] Spirit of [the] Lord caught up Philip)), it has the interesting textual variant πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπέπεσεν ἐπὶ τὸν εὐνοῦχον, ἄγγελος δὲ κυρίου ἤρπασεν τὸν Φίλιππον ([the] Holy Spirit fell on the eunuch, and [the] angel of [the] Lord caught up Philip) supported by Codex Alexandrinus and several minuscule manuscripts: 94, 103, 307, 322, 323, 385, 453, 467, 945, 1765, 1891, 2298, 36^a, it^p [Itala Old Latin manuscript p], vg [Vulgate], syr^h [Harclean Syriac].*

See **References** for manuscript abbreviations^{23, 24}.

It should be noted that Mss. 103, 307, 322, 323, 385, 453, 467, 945, 1739, 1765, 1891 listed above also contain the genuine scripture Acts 8:37, along with Mss. E, 4, 36, 88, 97, 104, 242, 257, 429, 464, 629, 630, 913, 1522, 1877 and others. See again Will Kinney's²⁵ detailed vindication of Acts 8:37 as *Inspired Scripture*.

That said, the enemies of **“the book of the LORD”** Isaiah 34:16 **“the scripture of truth”** Daniel 10:21 **“the royal law”** James 2:8 like our critic will clutch at any straw or crumb of chaff to denigrate the 1611 Holy Bible.

The interesting textual variant in Acts 8:39 never entered English texts but because the mss. listed above that contained Acts 8:37 contained the variant reading, our critic by means of guilt by association therefore used the variant to cast doubt, Genesis 3:1, upon the genuineness of Acts 8:37 as it stands in the 1611 Holy Bible.

The truth is as follows. Although Codex Alexandrinus does not contain Acts 8:37 it does contain as listed above the variant reading in Acts 8:39. That is how the variant came into existence, in this early codex of the 5th century.

Stanley N. Helton²⁶ explains, this writer's emphases, that *While most of the witnesses are late; one is important and early. In Codex Alexandrinus the first hand scribe entered it as a correction...*

Codex Alexandrinus²⁷ was brought to Britain in 1624. Post-1611 editors of the 1611 Holy Bible²⁸ clearly saw the 'correction' to be a manmade insertion.

Gustavus Paine states *The Puritans fought their way forward. The 1611 Bible by its own worth was making itself welcome throughout the country, for those on both sides needed the best modern texts with which to fight their doctrinal skirmishes. High churchmen in greater numbers began to use the 1611 version, which in centuries to come would be the sole bond uniting the countless English-speaking Protestant sects.*

In 1629 the Bible was again revised, but only in small ways, and once more in minor respects in 1638. The last issue of the Geneva Bible was in 1644. By then the King James Version was ahead of all others, and now the strife over forms and doctrine helped it on.

Thanks to men like Daniel **“Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding...and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel”** Daniel 5:12 who were of **“...them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil”** Hebrews 5:14 the insertion was rejected and Acts 8:37 vindicated as belonging to **“the book of the LORD”** Isaiah 34:16 **“the scripture of truth”** Daniel 10:21.

Therefore, as the Lord commands through Jeremiah **“...he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD”** Jeremiah 23:28.

Conclusion

The foregoing reveals but three applications of Burgon's 7 tests of truth but they bear witness to the effectiveness of his method and in turn therefore to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ ***“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away”*** Matthew 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33.

Finally, not a reference to any non-extant 'original' or to any parent work published post-1611²⁹:



Psalms 119:140 KJV

Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.

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AV1611 Collected Works of Alan O'Reilly Index of main and sub topic headings where extant

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¹ www.tbsbibles.org/page/magazine

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² *AV1611 Treatises/O Biblios – The Book* pp 32-33

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⁸ *O Biblios – The Book* Chapter 1 Section 1.6, Chapter 9

⁹ www.tbsbibles.org/page/articles *God was Manifest in the Flesh: 1 Timothy 3:16* p 10

¹⁰ www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/36722?msg=welcome_stranger#toc9

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¹¹ *God was Manifest in the Flesh: 1 Timothy 3:16* p 8

¹² *The Revision Revised* p 479

¹³ *God was Manifest in the Flesh: 1 Timothy 3:16* p 16

¹⁴ *The Revision Revised* pp 45, 486ff

¹⁵ armingchampions.com/KJB/kjbarticles.htm

1 Timothy 3:16 “GOD was manifest in the flesh” or the Vatican Versions “He”?

¹⁶ avpublications.com/ *New Age Bible Versions* by Gail Riplinger, p 381 2019 Edition p 421

store.kjv1611.org/ *1 John 5:7* by Dr Peter S. Ruckman, pp 7-8

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- ¹⁸ *New Age Bible Versions* p 381 2019 Edition p 421
1 John 5:7 p 8
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- ²¹ *True or False?* 2nd Edition pp 264ff
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