

Textual information on the chart:

"Providential Preservation of the Text of the New Testament"

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(Condensed excerpts from the following text are included in the side boxes of the chart.)

1) THE TWO CITIES

Rev. Jack Moorman, who spent many years in researching the question of Bible versions, has stated that the transmission of the Greek text of the New testament is essentially a "tale of two cities", viz., Antioch and Alexandria. Rev. Moorman writes: "Just as surely as the King James text was woven into the spiritual life of Antioch in Syria, so was the modern versions text in Alexandria. Today a person must decide whether he is more comfortable with a Bible whose roots go back to one or the other of these two cities...certainly Antioch has by far the most glorious heritage." Antioch was the springboard for the Gentile church. It became the center for Gentile Christians just as Jerusalem was for the Jews. "The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch" (Acts 11:26). Antioch was the center for the outreach of the apostle Paul and his missionary journeys. Many of the disciples also visited Antioch. Antioch was the 'heartbeat' of Christianity. Alexandria, where most of the modern texts and translations originated, had no such glory. It is true, however, that Alexandria became a center of intellectualism. It was also noted as a place where every deviant sect was represented. Religious corruption and false doctrines were prevalent including Gnosticism, Arianism, pagan philosophy, etc. Alexandria was the place where the intellectuals of Christianity were attracted.

2) THE TWO ESSENTIALS

If one is to approach the subject of the preservation of the text of the New Testament in the proper manner, there are two fundamental criteria that are essential:

- 1) A belief in the Divine inspiration, inerrancy and infallibility of the Word of God.
- 2) A belief that God has preserved His Word down through the ages through the church for every generation.

The above criteria are adequately set forth in the Westminster Confession (1646) which states: "The Scriptures were immediately inspired of God and under His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages".

According to Dr. Edward Hills, a well known textual critic, it is absolutely essential for a believer investigating this subject of textual transmission to accept the above criteria without reservation.

On examining the chart it is evident that our Protestant and Baptist heritage is founded on the preservation of the Traditional or Received Text. "The very concept of Gods' providential preservation of Scripture", states Dr. Hills, "involves this basic idea that God authenticates as well as preserves, that He has placed His church in actual possession of the genuine text. God chose the Jewish church to be the guardians of the Old testament Scriptures and the Greek church to guard the New Testament, and at the time of the Reformation, Protestants received the genuine texts of the Holy Scriptures....".

3) THE TWO HERETICS Such men as Clement and Origen were active in the Alexandrian area. Both had heretical views regarding scripture. Clement headed a school at Alexandria which propagated teachings along these heretical lines. According to Dean Burgon, Clement quoted freely from corrupted manuscripts. He believed that salvation could be obtained through various means including baptism, faith and works, faith alone etc. Origen, his pupil, carried on his masters teachings with subtlety and great influence. He did not accept the Bible's historicity, eternal punishment, the eternity of the Holy Spirit or salvation by grace.

He was also given to the allegorizing of Scripture.¹ His teachings became the foundation of "scholasticism" which dominated the colleges of Europe during the Dark Ages. Alexandrian intellectualism is still popular to-day in higher criticism.

4) THE TWO FALSE WITNESSES

It is evident that down through the centuries there were two streams of manuscripts. The first stream, The Traditional Text, began with the apostolic churches in Antioch. It passed down through the Italic church in North Italy, the Gallic church in South France, the Celtic church in Britain and Ireland and to the churches of the Reformation. Over 95 percent(5210) of all manuscripts are of the Traditional Text type. The second stream, the Alexandrian Text, consists of a relatively small number of manuscripts(45)² It is from this latter source that the Roman Catholic Church obtained the Scriptures. It is also from this second stream that all modern versions are based (NKJV footnotes only).

The two most influential but corrupted manuscripts in the Alexandrian line (Vaticanus and Sinaiticus) lay hidden in Egypt for some fifteen centuries, only to be discovered in the nineteenth century. Must we conclude therefore that the true text has not been available to the church for this period of time? These two manuscripts disagree with each other in over 3000 places in the Gospels alone.³ Nevertheless it is these manuscripts that form the basis of the modern versions. John W.Burgon states; "These are two of the least trustworthy documents in existence".⁴ In the Scriptures,

Egypt was looked upon as symbolic of the world system. God continually warned his people Israel to have no dealings there. In considering Gods' attitude regarding Egypt would it not seem out of character for God to choose such a place to preserve His Word?

5) THE TWO APOSTATE REVISIONISTS

Two English theological heretics, Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort are largely responsible for the modern translations we have today. In the year 1881 they introduced a Greek Text that rejected the Traditional or Received Text in over 5000 places. Using the Alexandrian manuscripts for their new Greek Text resulted in a text that has some 3000 fewer words than the Traditional Text.⁵ The result is a text that weakens many of the great doctrines. The English Revised version published in 1881 was the result of Westcott and Hort's efforts.

Today the Nestle- Aland Greek text (26th.Edition) is the text that is representative of the Alexandrian Text and is the text used in many colleges and seminaries.

Both Westcott and Hort were apostates. Westcott did not accept Genesis 1-3; Bodily resurrection of Christ; Miracles or the literal coming of Christ. Hort did not accept the infallibility of scripture. He also supported Darwin's theory of evolution. Both men did not believe in eternal punishment or the vicarious atonement.⁶

CONCLUSION

The heart of the matter is; (1) can there be two correct texts? (2) Can there be two forms of Bible?

In light of the above, consider the following questions: Since God has inspired his Word has he preserved His Word? Has He preserved it for every generation? Has He preserved every word? The Bible has its' own answers: *"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). *"And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, 'That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God' ".(Luke 4:4).*

Endnotes:

1 "Final Authority", William P. Grady. Grady Publications,1993.

2 "Forever Settled", Rev. Jack Moorman.Bible for Today, Collingswood, N.J.(1985).

3 "Codex B and its Allies", H.C.Hoskier.Bernard Quaritch Publisher, London.(1914).

4 "Revision Revised" John W. Burgon.Conservative Classics, Paradise, Pa.(1883).

5 "Evaluating Versions of the New Testament" E.W. Fowler. Strait Street Inc., Publisher, Watertown, Wisconsin.(1981).

6 "Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott" MacMillan& Co., London.(1903)

"Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort" MacMillan & Co., London.(1896).

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