

Textual Criticism drawn from de Wells of Infidelity

Republished November 4, 2009 (updated May 19, 2002; first published April 16, 1999) (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org).

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Through diligent and long research into the subject of Bible texts and versions, I have come to the conviction that modern textual criticism is infidelity. Most of the men who developed the theories of textual criticism in an attempt to overthrow that “tyrannous” Received Text (as some of them called it), were rationalists who denied the supernatural inspiration of Holy Scripture. Men like the Baptist A.T. Robertson and Presbyterian B.B. Warfield (left) did not develop textual criticism, but merely rehashed and passed along that which they received from the rationalistic fathers in this field. The vast majority of the men who have written the influential works on textual criticism in the 19th and 20th centuries are rationalists. The Presbyterian leader Robert Dabney, who stood against theological modernism in the 1800s in America, warned that the evangelicals of his day had adopted textual criticism “from the mint of infidel rationalism.” The same is true today. The vast majority of the textual critics are Modernists or New Evangelicals at best (Fuller Theological Seminary, etc.) Some Bible-believing fundamentalists have adopted textual criticism, but they did not create it. A wide variety of Bible-believing men from the past two centuries have made the same observation. Let me give some examples.

18TH- AND 19TH-CENTURY BRITISH BIBLE BELIEVERS UNDERSTOOD THE CONNECTION BETWEEN TEXTUAL CRITICISM AND MODERNISM

I will begin with men in 19th-century Britain. It was from these men that I first began to understand the rationalistic position of textual criticism. Several years ago, I dedicated myself for several months to researching the battle for the Bible in 19th-century Britain. Those men were much closer to the theological battles surrounding the origin of modern textual criticism. Large numbers of King James Bible defenders in 19th-century Britain understood the theological apostasy associated with the critical Greek texts. The fruit of my research into that era appeared in the book *For Love of the Bible*, which we published in 1995. The following is a brief summary, beginning at the start of the 19th century.

In 1819, **HENRY JOHN TODD**, chaplain to the king of England and keeper of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s records, published *A Vindication of Our Authorized Translation and Translators of the Bible*. This work was occasioned by the clamor of some that wanted to correct the Received Greek New Testament and the King James Bible by modern textual criticism. This clamoring gradually increased among a relatively small segment of influential scholars as the 19th century progressed and resulted, ultimately, in the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament and the English Revised Version of 1881. Todd understood that modern textual criticism was intimately associated with theological heresy. I searched for a copy of Todd’s treatise for five years and finally located it in the British Library. Consider the following important excerpt:

“For when we see men of the most latitudinarian principles uniformly pressing forward this dangerous proposal; when we see the most unbounded panegyrics bestowed on those, who have converted the Mosaic history into allegory, and the New Testament into Socinianism; when we see these attempts studiously fostered, and applauded, by the advocates for this projected [Bible] revision; we must conjecture, that something more is meant than a correction of mistakes, or an improvement of diction. Those doctrines, the demolition of which we know to be, in late instances, the grand object of such innovators when they propose alterations in articles of faith, or correction of liturgical forms, are surely in still greater danger when attempted, by the same

men, under the distant approaches of a revision of our English Bible (Todd, *A Vindication of Our Authorized Translation and Translators of the Bible*, 1819, pp. 79,80).

Todd and a vast number of other 18th- and 19th-century Christian scholars and preachers understood that the field of textual criticism was dominated by and was promoted by men who were infected with theological modernism. Twentieth-century textual criticism has merely built upon this skeptical foundation. James White, in his book *The King James Only Controversy*, claims this is the figment of a Ruckmanite's imagination, but he can only say that by ignoring history. In the early part of the 19th century, the critical Greek text was successfully resisted precisely on the same basis upon which the King James Bible defender today resists the modern texts and versions, but by the end of that same century, it was accepted. Someone might ask, "Why did the Westcott-Hort text eventually prevail?" The answer is not hard to find. Theological rationalism spread like ivy. There is a saying about ivy that describes its growth stages: it sleeps; it creeps; it leaps. That is what happened with modernism. It was planted in the 18th century and slept for some time. It began to creep in the early 19th century; and from the middle to the end of the century, it was spreading like wildfire across the Christian landscape. By the end of the century, it was so well entrenched in high places of Christian scholarship in British Protestant and Baptist denominations that it was able to win the day. Not only were many scholars themselves afflicted with modernistic views of the Bible, but a vast number of others, not themselves modernistic in theology, were nonetheless too spiritually weak to resist modernism. Instead, they were willing to work hand-in-hand with the modernists, ignoring God's warnings, "evil communications corrupt good manners" and "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." We see this in the Baptist Union of Spurgeon's day. He took his stand and left the Union in 1887, but most of the men who claimed to hold the same view of the Bible that Spurgeon held refused to discipline the Modernists or to separate from them. In practice, they were forerunners of the New Evangelicals of our century. Spurgeon described the wretched situation in 1887 England with these powerful words:

"Believers in Christ's atonement are now in declared union with those who make light of it; believers in Holy Scripture are in confederacy with those who deny plenary inspiration; those who hold evangelical doctrine are in open alliance with those who call the fall a fable, who deny the personality of the Holy Ghost, who call justification by faith immoral, and hold that there is another probation after death. ... Yes, we have before us the wretched spectacle of professedly orthodox Christians publicly avowing their union with those who deny the faith, and scarcely concealing their contempt for those who cannot be guilty of such gross disloyalty to Christ. To be very plain, we are unable to call these things Christian Unions, they begin to look like Confederacies in Evil" (*Sword and Trowel*, November 1887).

Spurgeon's battles against modernism within the Baptist Union occurred at precisely the same time that the English Revised Version and the Westcott-Hort Greek Text was being prepared, and the same battle was being fought (and lost) in other denominations, including Anglicanism, Congregationalism, Presbyterianism, and Methodism. (An excellent overview of this is found in *The Forgotten Spurgeon* by Iain Murray, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2nd edition 1973). In other words, apostasy had effectively prepared the way for the modern text and versions. The men we describe in our book *For Love of the Bible*, who fought earnestly against the Westcott-Hort Greek text (and its predecessors) and the English Revised Version, understood these facts and were on the side of truth on those days.

The next example I will give is THE BIBLE LEAGUE of England. This organization was formed in 1892 to resist the tide of apostasy that was sweeping across the Protestant landscape in late 19th century Britain. In an article detailing the history of the Bible League, S.M. Houghton connects its origin with the "Downgrade Controversy" that C.H. Spurgeon fought in the 1880s and 1890s. Spurgeon's death in 1892 galvanized the convictions of some in the battle against Rationalism. The Bible League was formed later that same year. The Bible League Quarterly began to be published in 1912. They describe the spread of apostasy from the 1890s until now in these words:

"Spurgeon's days saw apostasy as a trickle; by the time of the Bible League's foundation [1892] it had become a stream; shortly it expanded to a river, and today it has become a veritable ocean of unbelief. For the most of men the ancient landmarks have disappeared from sight. Life upon

earth has become a voyage on an uncharted ocean in a cockle-shell boat ‘tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.’ Never before in human history has the ‘sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive’ (Eph. 4:14) been so greatly in evidence. ‘Evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived’ (2 Tim. 3:13)” (S.M. Houghton, “The Bible League: Its Origin and Its Aims” 1971, *Truth Unchanged, Unchanging*, Abingdon: The Bible League, 1984).

Men associated with the Bible League understood that the stew of modern textual criticism was cooked up in this pot of end-time theological confusion.

“In the eighteenth century Religious Rationalism was begotten in Germany and began to spread in its Universities. It has influenced and debased the theological thought in almost the whole of Protestant Christendom. ... The Father of this new revolutionary attitude to the Word of the Lord and the Lord of the Word was J.S. Semler (1725-91), Professor of Theology at Halle. One of his pupils, J.J. Griesbach (1745-1812) was appointed Professor of the New Testament at Jena in 1775. ... It should not be surprising, nor should it be overlooked, that GRIESBACH, INFLUENCED FROM HIS UNDERGRADUATE DAYS BY THE RISING TIDE OF RATIONALISM SWEEPING OVER HIS COUNTRY, WAS A FOE OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY. HE ABANDONED THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS, AND CONSTRUCTED A NEW GREEK NEW TESTAMENT TEXT” (emphasis added) (D.A. Thompson, *The Controversy Concerning the Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel according to Mark*, Surrey: The Bible Christian Unity Fellowship, pp. 39-40; reprint of four articles which appeared in *The Bible League Quarterly*, London, 1973).

The Bible League recognized that the Received Text was first rejected not by a Bible-believing evangelical, but by a Modernist, by a foe of orthodox Christianity! John P. Thackway (1950-), who has been Editor of the Quarterly since 1993, told us that since its inception the Bible League “has stood for the TR and AV position, and from time to time since the Quarterly was first published in 1912 articles relative to this would have appeared.”

Next, we quote from the **TRINITARIAN BIBLE SOCIETY** (TBS), which has examined these matters carefully since its formation in 1831. In fact, the TBS was formed in the midst of a battle against theological rationalism. The founders of the TBS were originally in the British & Foreign Bible Society (which was founded in 1804). They protested the presence of Unitarians within the BFBS, and when the majority of BFBS members supported the Unitarians, men of strong conviction obeyed the Bible and separated themselves from the BFBS. They founded the TBS as an alternative Bible society for the publication and distribution of sound Scriptures. The Trinitarian Bible Society warns that modern textual criticism is founded upon Rationalism.

“Textual Criticism, the evaluation of the actual manuscripts in the ancient languages, the preparation of printed editions of the Hebrew and Greek Text, and the modern translations now being made in English and many other languages, are very largely conducted under the direction or influence of scholars who by their adoption of these erroneous theories have betrayed the unreliability of their judgment in these vital matters. WE MUST NOT PERMIT OUR JUDGMENT TO BE OVERAWED BY GREAT NAMES IN THE REALM OF BIBLICAL ‘SCHOLARSHIP’ WHEN IT IS SO CLEARLY EVIDENT THAT THE DISTINGUISHED SCHOLARS OF THE PRESENT CENTURY ARE MERELY REPRODUCING THE CASE PRESENTED BY RATIONALISTS DURING THE LAST TWO HUNDRED YEARS. Nor should we fail to recognise that scholarship of this kind has degenerated into a skeptical crusade against the Bible, tending to lower it to the level of an ordinary book of merely human composition” (Terance Brown, *If the Foundations Be Destroyed*, T.B.S Article No. 14, p. 13).

Bible believers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were busy rejoicing in, preaching, and obeying the Scriptures, and carrying the Scriptures to the ends of the earth through missionary endeavors. Contrariwise, the textual critics were entertaining unbelieving theories of rationalism. Flying in the face of the doctrine of preservation, they rejected the Traditional Text that had been handed down to them by Bible-believing Christians. Instead of busying themselves with obeying the Lord’s Great Commission to carry the Gospel to the every creature, they groped around in dark monasteries and papal libraries trying to rediscover the Scriptures which they supposed had been cor-

rupted through the transmission of time. Their ears were attuned to the vain philosophies emanating from Germany, and they were wickedly applying secular principles of textual criticism to the Holy Scriptures.

That old British war-horse **JOHN BURGON** (1813-1888), who held several high degrees from Oxford University and who was one of the foremost biblical scholars of his day, understood this perfectly well. Three false movements were eating at Britain's spiritual foundation in the nineteenth century--Darwinism, Modernism, and Romanism—and Burgon stood decidedly against all three. One of the hallmarks of Burgon's ministry was his exalted view of Holy Scripture. It was his love for the Bible that produced his fierce opposition toward every form of rationalism. Burgon gave Modernism absolutely no quarter. He refused to be quiet about it. He refused to treat it kindly. He refused to be patient with it. When articles began to be published at Oxford in 1860 casting doubt upon the inerrancy of Scripture, Burgon, who had been appointed the same year as Select Preacher of the University, presented a series of messages in defense of the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible. I certainly am not sympathetic with much that Anglicanism stands for, and Burgon was an Anglican, but there is no doubt in my mind that this man loved the Bible and had a passion to defend it against its enemies.

An excerpt from Sermon II illustrates Burgon's zeal for the supernatural inspiration of the Bible and against modern biblical criticism:

DESTROY MY CONFIDENCE IN THE BIBLE AS AN HISTORICAL RECORD, AND YOU DESTROY MY CONFIDENCE IN IT ALTOGETHER; FOR BY FAR THE LARGEST PART OF THE BIBLE IS AN HISTORICAL RECORD. If the Creation of Man,—the longevity of the Patriarchs,—the account of the Deluge;—if these be not true histories, what is to be said of the lives of Abraham, of Jacob, of Joseph, of Moses, of Joshua, of David,—of our Saviour Christ Himself? ... Will you then reject one miracle and retain another? Impossible! You can make no reservation, even in favour of the Incarnation of our Lord,—the most adorable of all miracles, as it is the very keystone of our Christian hope. EITHER, WITH THE BEST AND WISEST OF ALL AGES, YOU MUST BELIEVE THE WHOLE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE; OR, WITH THE NARROW-MINDED INFIDEL, YOU MUST DISBELIEVE THE WHOLE. THERE IS NO MIDDLE COURSE OPEN TO YOU (Burgon, Sermon II, p. 46).

What exactly did Burgon believe about the Bible's inspiration? Consider this statement from Sermon III:

I am asked whether I believe the words of the Bible to be inspired,—I answer, To be sure I do,—every one of them: and every syllable likewise. Do not you?—Where,—(if it be a fair question,)—Where do you, in your wisdom, stop? The book, you allow, is inspired. How about the chapters? How about the verses? Do you stop at the verses, and not go on to the words? ... No, Sirs! THE BIBLE (BE PERSUADED) IS THE VERY UTTERANCE OF THE ETERNAL;—AS MUCH GOD'S WORD, AS IF HIGH HEAVEN WERE OPEN, AND WE HEARD GOD SPEAKING TO US WITH HUMAN VOICE. Every book of it, is inspired alike; and is inspired entirely. ... THE BIBLE IS NONE OTHER THAN THE VOICE OF HIM THAT SITTETH UPON THE THRONE! EVERY BOOK OF IT,—EVERY CHAPTER OF IT,—EVERY VERSE OF IT,—EVERY WORD OF IT,—EVERY SYLLABLE OF IT,—(WHERE ARE WE TO STOP?)—EVERY LETTER OF IT—IS THE DIRECT UTTERANCE OF THE MOST HIGH! ... 'Well spake the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of' the many blessed Men who wrote it.—The Bible is none other than the Word of God: not some part of it, more, some part of it, less; but all alike, the utterance of Him who sitteth upon the Throne;—absolute,—faultless,—unerring,—supreme! (Sermon III, pp. 75,76,89).

Oxford University was the most exalted institution of higher learning in all of Britain. What we see in the previous excerpts is one of the most brilliant scholars of the nineteenth century boldly testifying of his faith in an infallible Bible before the student body of this august university. We can be sure that such an uncompromising testimony has not been heard at that university in this entire century. Burgon's views did not prevail. His earnest pleas were ignored. The soul-destroying gloom of rationalism settled over Oxford as it has over much of Christianity. This is the apostasy of the last

hours. Modern textual criticism has worked hand-in-hand with rationalistic apostasy since its inception.

Burgon dedicated his brilliant scholarship to the task of defeating heretical views of the Bible. He made several tours of European libraries, examining and collating New Testament manuscripts wherever he went. He visited the Vatican Library in 1860 to examine the Vaticanus. In 1862, he traveled to Mt. Sinai to inspect manuscripts at St. Catherine's. Edward Hills notes the purpose of these travels: "Being driven by the desire to get to the bottom of the false statements being made by the reigning Critics of his day, Burgon devoted the last 30 years of his life to disprove them. Believing firmly that God had providentially preserved the true text of the New Testament, he set out to discover how the depraved and corrupt readings developed. This required him to travel widely" (E.F. Hills, "A Biographical Sketch of the Life of Burgon," *Unholy Hands on the Bible: Vol. 1*, Jay Green, ed., p. xix).

John Burgon observed a close kinship between biblical criticism and textual criticism. These are sometimes called higher and lower criticism. He said:

"That which distinguishes Sacred Science from every other Science which can be named is that it is Divine, and has to do with a Book which is inspired; that is, whose true Author is God. ... It is chiefly from inattention to this circumstance that misconception prevails in that department of Sacred Science known as 'Textual Criticism'" (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, p. 9).

Burgon understood that modern textual criticism is not built upon a foundation of faith in the Bible as God's supernatural, infallible Word. He was right. Burgon understood something about modern textual criticism that the defenders of the eclectic textual approach cannot see.

I realize that Burgon did not believe exactly in every detail what I believe about the KJV and its Received Text, but what he believed is vastly closer to the "King James Only" position than to the eclectic textual criticism position. John Burgon exalted the King James Bible above all other English versions, and he maintained that the Received Text was, apart from minor improvements he felt could be made, the preserved Word of God. In describing the King James Bible, Burgon spoke of "the living freshness, and elastic freedom, and HABITUAL FIDELITY of the Grand Old Version which we inherited from our Fathers, and which has sustained the spiritual life of the Church of England, and of all English-speaking Christians, for 350 years" (Revision Revised, p. 225). He encouraged his readers to "cling the closer to THE PRICELESS TREASURE WHICH WAS BEQUEATHED TO THEM BY THE PIETY AND WISDOM OF THEIR FATHERS" (Revision Revised, p. 232).

In my book *For Love of the Bible*, I have given many other examples of men in 19th century Britain who understood the rationalistic nature of modern textual criticism.

BIBLE BELIEVERS IN NORTH AMERICA UNDERSTOOD THAT TEXTUAL CRITICISM IS CONNECTED WITH MODERNISM

Crossing the ocean to North America, we find that the same battle was raging. Rationalism was sweeping into seminaries and Bible colleges, and many staunch defenders of biblical inspiration saw an affinity between biblical criticism and textual criticism. **ROBERT L. DABNEY** (1820-1898) was a noted American Presbyterian scholar who boldly opposed modernistic views of the Bible in the nineteenth century. He also stood for the Received Text and understood the rationalistic background of modern textual criticism. Dabney warned that **Evangelicals who accepted the modern text were adopting it "FROM THE MINT OF INFIDEL RATIONALISM"** (Dabney, "The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek," *Discussions Evangelical and Theological*, pp. 361; this first appeared in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871). I know for a fact that the Evangelicals of that day who were following textual criticism took great offense at Dabney's charge, just like men like James Boice or James White do today when charged with adopting textual criticism from "the mint of infidel rationalism." I praise the Lord for men like Dabney who are willing to take a stand for the truth even when it offends people. Dabney understood that

the fathers of textual criticism lacked the common sense to be able to properly use the knowledge they were gaining.

“We call these the opinions now fashionable; for those who watch the course of this art are aware that there is as truly a fashion in it, infecting its votaries, as in ladies’ bonnets, medicines or cravats [neck scarves]. ... The minds for which criticism retains its fascination are usually of that peculiar and ‘crotchety’ type found among antiquarians. The intelligent reader is, therefore, not surprised to find, along with much labor and learning, a ‘plentiful lack’ of sober and convincing common sense. ... We shall find them continually varying, each one obnoxious to grave objections, and the question still unsettled. ... Their common traits may be said to be an almost contemptuous dismissal of the received text, as unworthy not only of confidence, but almost of notice” (emphasis added) (Dabney, pp. 350,52,54).

DR. EDWARD F. HILLS (1912-1981), who had a Th.D. from Harvard in textual criticism, also recognized the rationalism and unbelief inherent in this system. Most modern versions are built upon this rationalistic foundation. In his books, Hills carefully documents the modernistic influences which led to the development of textual criticism, and he contrasts unbelieving textual scholarship with a Christ-honoring, Bible-believing approach. Consider the testimony of this brilliant, yet humble scholar:

“Has the text of the New Testament, like those of other ancient books, been damaged during its voyage over the seas of time? Ought the same methods of textual criticism to be applied to it that are applied to the texts of other ancient books? These are questions which the following pages will endeavor to answer. An earnest effort will be made to convince the Christian reader that this is a matter to which he must attend. **FOR IN THE REALM OF NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM AS WELL AS IN OTHER FIELDS THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF MODERN THOUGHT ARE HOSTILE TO THE HISTORIC CHRISTIAN FAITH AND WILL DESTROY IT IF THEIR FATAL OPERATION IS NOT CHECKED.** If faithful Christians, therefore, would defend their sacred religion against this danger, **THEY MUST FORSAKE THE FOUNDATIONS OF UNBELIEVING THOUGHT AND BUILD UPON THEIR FAITH**, a faith that rests entirely on the solid rock of holy Scripture. And when they do this in the sphere of New Testament textual criticism, they will find themselves led back step by step (perhaps, at first, against their wills) to the text of the Protestant Reformation, namely, that form of New Testament text which underlies the King James Version and the other early Protestant translations” (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Bible Defended*, Introduction, 3rd ed., 1979, p. 1).

“... the Bible version which you use ... has already been decided for you by the workings of God’s special providence. **IF YOU IGNORE THIS PROVIDENCE AND CHOOSE TO ADOPT ONE OF THESE MODERN VERSIONS, YOU WILL BE TAKING THE FIRST STEP IN THE LOGIC OF UNBELIEF. FOR THE ARGUMENTS WHICH YOU MUST USE TO JUSTIFY YOUR CHOICE ARE THE SAME ARGUMENTS WHICH UNBELIEVERS USE TO JUSTIFY THEIRS, THE SAME METHOD.** If you adopt one of these modern versions, you must adopt the naturalistic New Testament textual criticism upon which it rests. This naturalistic textual criticism requires us to study the New Testament text in the same way in which we study the texts of secular books which have *not* been preserved by God’s special providence” (Hills, *Believing Bible Study*, Des Moines, Iowa: Christian Research Press, 1967, pp. 226,27).

Dr. Hills understood this subject at the highest scholarly position. He was trained in textual criticism at the doctoral level at the University of Chicago and at Harvard. I agree completely with Dr. Hills that modern textual criticism is founded upon unbelieving principles. Interestingly, the proponents of the modern versions largely ignore this. Dr. Hills understood something about modern textual criticism that they do not understand.

Former Dallas Seminary Professor **ZANE HODGES** explored this in a 1971 article entitled “Rationalism and Contemporary New Testament Textual Criticism.”

“The acceptance of the newer critical editions of the New Testament does not rest on factual data which can be objectively verified, but rather upon a prevailing consensus of critical thought.

IT WILL BE THE PURPOSE OF THIS DISCUSSION TO SHOW THAT CONTEMPORARY CRITICAL TEXTS ARE, IN FACT, THE FRUIT OF A RATIONALISTIC APPROACH TO NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM. ... Modern textual criticism is psychologically ‘addicted’ to Westcott and Hort. Westcott and Hort, in turn, were rationalists in their approach to the textual problem in the New Testament and employed techniques within which rationalism and every other kind of bias are free to operate. The result of it all is a methodological quagmire where objective controls on the conclusions of critics are nearly nonexistent. It goes without saying that no Bible-believing Christian who is willing to extend the implications of his faith to textual matters can have the slightest grounds for confidence in contemporary critical texts” (Zane C. Hodges, “Rationalism and Contemporary New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January 1971, pp. 27-35).

This is a strong statement. Hodges recognized the vast influence of Westcott and Hort and states that Westcott and Hort were rationalists in their approach to the Bible text. That is precisely what I believe. (Yes, I know that Hodges does not believe exactly like I do in regard to the KJV-Received Text, but what he believes is much closer to what I hold than to what the textual critics hold. At least he believes the Received Text needs only a relatively minor modification, and he is bold to condemn the popular theories of textual criticism as rationalistic and dangerous to the Christian faith.) The Majority Text viewpoint aside, Hodges sees something about modern textual criticism that the defenders of the eclectic textual approach cannot see.

In his 1951 doctoral dissertation to the faculty of the Graduate School of Dallas Theological Seminary, **ALFRED MARTIN**, then Vice President of Moody Bible Institute, noted the connection between apostasy and the critical text:

“At precisely the time when liberalism was carrying the field in the English churches the theory of Westcott and Hort received wide acclaim. These are not isolated facts. RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS ON THE SUBJECT--THAT IS, IN THE PRESENT CENTURY--FOLLOWING MAINLY THE WESTCOTT-HORT PRINCIPLES AND METHOD, HAVE BEEN MADE LARGELY BY MEN WHO DENY THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE” (emphasis added) (Alfred Martin, “A Critical Examination of the Westcott-Hort Textual Theory.” Th.D. Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, May 1951, p. 70).

I could quote a variety of other scholarly men making the same point (and I have done so in my book *For Love of the Bible*).

THE FATHERS OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM WERE INFECTED BY RATIONALISTIC THINKING

We will now take a brief look at some of the leading names in nineteenth-century textual criticism. These are the men who laid the foundation for the modern versions.

As we describe the early history of textual criticism, we will also observe that the science of modern textual criticism was largely rejected by Bible-believing Christians throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. Not only did Bible-believing people not accept the theories and texts produced by the early textual critics, they looked upon the same as heresy. One historian of textual criticism describes the early history of the same as “a period of strife between those who followed the so-called *textus receptus* blindly, and those who were determined to secure the most ancient witnesses they could and to trust them” (Alexander Souter, *The Text and Canon of the New Testament*, 1912, p. 100). Souter slanders the Received Text defenders by claiming they clung to it out of blindness and ignorance, but he does, in a backhanded manner, admit that a battle was waged by Bible-believing people against the critical textual theories throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.

RICHARD SIMON (1638-1712), according to Bruce Metzger, laid “the scientific foundations of New Testament criticism” (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 155). Simon was a French Roman Catholic who “disregarded the traditional and dogmatic presuppositions of his age” and “examined critically the text of the Bible as a piece of literature.” This means that Simon did not regard the Bible as the supernaturally inspired, divinely preserved Word of God, but as a mere

book. From a biblical standpoint, this father of modern scientific textual criticism was an unbeliever and a heretic. Metzger shares Simon's rationalism and unbelief (looking upon the Old Testament as a mixture of truth and myth, etc.), so it is not strange that he does not fear identifying this heretic as one of the fathers of modern textual criticism.

JOHN MILL (1645-1707) is also commonly listed as one of the first modern textual critics. Though, for the most part, he did not attempt to correct the Received Text with his textual findings, he published a critical apparatus that listed thousands of variant readings from a wide variety of sources. Protestant and Baptist church leaders believed that Mill's textual work was undermining the authority of the Scripture. Daniel Whitby, pastor of St. Edmund's, Salisbury, "argued that the authority of the holy Scriptures was in peril" (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 108). We believe old Whitby was correct. The authority of the Bible has been vastly undermined by modern textual criticism. It is not the gathering of textual data itself that imperils the Holy Scriptures, but the misuse of that data by textual critics who do not work from the principle of faith in divine preservation.

DANIEL MACE used Mills' textual apparatus to produce a new Greek text with his own English translation. Metzger observes that "Mace's edition was either vehemently attacked or quietly ignored." Dr. Leonard Twells, pastor of St. Mary's in Marlborough, condemned Mace's work under the categories of a "corrupt text, false version, and fallacious notes" (Metzger, p. 111).

RICHARD BENTLEY (1662-1742) is another man commonly listed as one of the influential fathers of modern textual criticism. Though he planned a new edition of the Greek New Testament, it was not actually produced. What he did produce was a "canon of criticism that, in one form or other, has been approved by all textual critics since" (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 112). His goal, by the way, was not to attempt to publish a New Testament as it was given by the apostles but merely to "restore a Greek and Latin text to the state in which they were in the fourth century" (Souter, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 98). One of Bentley's principles of textual criticism was "the difficult is to be preferred to the easy reading." This was based strictly upon a humanistic perspective of the biblical text, that "a scribe is more likely to make a difficult construction easier, than make more difficult what was already easy." It does not take into account the fact that the Bible is the Word of God and has been subject, therefore, to processes different from that of other literature. Modern textual criticism completely ignores, for example, the Satanic attacks upon Scripture. How did Bentley know his principle is the proper method for discerning the preserved Word of God? He didn't. Like many accepted principles of modern textual criticism, it is a mere theory. Since the original Old Testament and New Testament manuscripts do not exist, it is impossible to test the certainty of the textual theories. The only way the pure Scripture can be discerned is by the principle of faith in God's promise of preservation.

Bentley was not a Bible scholar but a "classical scholar" who approached the Bible in the same manner that he approached ancient non-inspired writings, such as those of Horace. Souter observes that "the impulse [Bentley] gave to [his textual] studies was such, that but for him there would have been no Lachmann and no Hort." Metzger admits that Bentley depended to a large degree upon his own "instinctive feeling as to what an author must have written" (Metzger, p. 182). This is called "conjectural emendation." It describes an educated guess, and it is heresy. No scholar today can know by his intuitions and feelings what the preserved Word of God is. The house of modern textual criticism sits upon the sand. Even Metzger admits that Bentley's bent for conjectural emendation led him to make many decisions that were "rash and indefensible." We would describe practically the whole of modern textual criticism in those terms. Conjectural emendation did not die out with Bentley; Metzger admits that the 24th edition of Nestle's Greek New Testament includes about 200 conjectures (p. 185).

JOHANN BENGEL (1687-1752) is another important link in the history of modern textual criticism. He adopted the principle of classifying manuscripts and "recognized that the witnesses to the text must not be counted but weighed" (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 112). In this manner, the textual critics have been able to ignore the overwhelming majority witness represented in the Received Text and to replace it with the minority witness of manuscripts such as the Sinaiticus and the Vaticanus. Though Bengel was orthodox in his Protestant faith and did not deny the

infallibility of Scripture, the deity of Christ, etc., his textual work and principles were widely recognized as heretical by German churches and “he was treated as though he were an enemy of the holy Scriptures” (Metzger, p. 113). Modern version defenders look upon the Christians of old who fought against the early textual critics as ignorant people who were blindly holding onto tradition. We don’t accept this position. Bible-believers of that day understood that the principles of modern textual criticism deny biblical preservation. If the Bible has been preserved, it was preserved in the Received Text; and if it has been preserved, what are the textual critics doing? They are introducing corruption and heresy. I believe Bengel was wrong and those who treated him as an enemy of Holy Scripture were right.

JOHANN JAKOB WETTSTEIN (1693-1754) was a textual scholar who collated manuscripts and published a Greek New Testament. When he first published a specimen of his textual criticism in 1718, he was charged with Arian and Socinian heresy (pertaining to the denial of the Trinity and the deity of Christ) and he was eventually expelled from the pastorate in Basle. After that, Wettstein taught philosophy and Hebrew at the Arminian college in Amsterdam, assuming the vacated seat of the modernistic Jean Leclerc (Johannes Clericus), who “maintained that reason is an infallible guide in judging of all that man needs to know for salvation” (Schaff-Herzog). Leclerc suggested that Luke produced two editions of the book of Acts (Metzger, p. 163). Wettstein believed that all of the early Greek manuscripts have been contaminated by the Latin versions (Metzger, p. 114). It was obvious to most Bible believers of that day that the critical Greek text supported heretical doctrines, weakened the doctrine of Christ’s deity, and represented doctrinal corruptions introduced by heretics in the third and fourth centuries. Though rejected by Bible believers, Wettstein’s textual criticism was heartily approved by heretic. His critical notes were reprinted by the Christ-denying Modernist Johann Semler in 1765.

JOHANN JAKOB GRIESBACH (1745-1812) was one of the earliest fathers of modern textual criticism. Marvin R. Vincent says, “With Griesbach, really critical texts may be said to have begun” (A History of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament, 1899, p. 100). As noted earlier, Griesbach was a convinced student of one of the fathers of Modernism, **JOHANN SALOMO SEMLER** (1725-91). Griesbach was influenced from his undergraduate days by the rising tide of Rationalism sweeping over Germany and “was a foe of orthodox Christianity” (D.A. Thompson, The Controversy Concerning the Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel According to Mark, p. 40). Both Semler and Griesbach rejected the deity of Jesus Christ and the supernatural infallibility of Holy Scripture. Semler was the father of the wicked accommodation theory, believing that Jesus Christ and the Apostles accommodated themselves to the prejudices, errors and superstitions of their time.

Bruce Metzger makes a two-fold admission pertaining to Semler that sounds a loud warning to Bible believers (though Metzger does not mean it to be such). He says that Semler is “often regarded as the father of German rationalism” and at the same time “made noteworthy contributions to the science of textual criticism” (Metzger, The Text of the New Testament, p. 115). That there is a direct connection between German rationalism and modern textual criticism cannot be denied. Semler “was the leader of the reaction in Germany against the traditional views of the canon of Scripture” (Vincent, A History of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament, p. 92).

“It was said that Semler ‘made use of his chair [as a professor at Halle] and his pen to undermine the very foundations of Christianity.’ According to Semler, the whole revelation must be brought to the bar of human reason and the cultured mind must relieve itself of any obligations to believe anything in the Bible that appears ‘unreasonable.’ Semler’s contribution to the destructive criticism of the Bible was his ‘accommodation theory,’ which declared that our Lord and His Apostles accommodated themselves to the prejudices, the errors and the superstitions of their time” (*If the Foundations Be Destroyed*. Trinitarian Bible Society Article No. 14, p. 1).

Griesbach was also associated with the Modernist W.M.L. de Wette and wrote the preface to de Wette’s Contributions to Old Testament Introduction (1806-07). In this work de Wette, another of the fathers of Old Testament criticism, denied the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and claimed that the book of Deuteronomy was not written until the reign of king Josiah.

Semler, who looked upon the Bible as a man-made book, provided Griesbach with some of his textual theories. Semler, for example, was the father of the recension theory that claims the Received

text is an editorial recension created centuries after the Apostles. Another Griesbach theory adopted from Semler claimed that textual readings favoring theological orthodoxy should be suspect (because they denied biblical preservation and falsely believed the orthodox readings were created by textual editors during the early centuries). In other words, according to this principle, if there is a reading in the Received Text that plainly teaches the Godhead of Christ or some other foundational doctrine of the New Testament faith, that reading should be held suspect in favor of a variant in some old manuscript that lessens or does away with the doctrine. This, my friends, is topsy-turvy thinking! Griesbach also held that “the shorter reading (under most circumstances) is to be preferred to the more verbose.” It is not therefore surprising that the critical edition of the Greek New Testament is much shorter than the Received Text. Griesbach was the first to declare Mark 16:9-20 spurious and to omit it from the 1796 edition of his Greek text.

These theories were adopted by Griesbach and later by Westcott and Hort, who said they venerated the name of Griesbach “above that of every other textual critic of the New Testament” (Introduction, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, p. 185). Metzger reminds us that Westcott and Hort did not collate any manuscripts or provide a critical apparatus; rather they “refined the critical methodology developed by Griesbach, Lachmann, and others, and applied it rigorously” (Metzger, p. 129). Griesbach was the first to begin abandoning the Received Text to construct a new Greek text that contained many of the novelties later popularized by Westcott and Hort.

Griesbach’s textual theories were boldly rejected by most Protestants and Baptists. Kenyon acknowledges that even textual scholars such as Matthaei, Birch, and Scholz continued to adhere to the Received Text and “repudiated the doctrine of Griesbach” (Kenyon, *The Text of the Greek Bible*, p. 177). An example is Frederick Nolan, who, in 1815, published *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate or Received Text of the New Testament*, in which the Greek manuscripts are newly classed, the integrity of the Authorised Text vindicated, and the various readings traced to their origin was published in 1815. As the title suggests, this 576-page volume was a defense of the text underlying the Authorized Version. Nolan said, “... it shall be my object to vindicate those important passages of the Received Text which have been rejected from the Scripture Canon, on the principles of the German method of classification” (p. 43). Among the several passages that he thus vindicated are 1 Timothy 3:16 and 1 John 5:7. Nolan defended the Received Text on the basis of faith and theological purity. He opposed the critics of his day who were disparaging the work of Erasmus, Stephanus, and Beza in a manner mimicked by today’s modern version proponents.

Though Bible-believing men of the early 19th century rejected Griesbach and his textual theories, he was well received by the Christ-denying Unitarians. This is stated plainly in *A History of Unitarianism in Transylvania, England and America*.

“[Thomas] Belsham was busily occupied in his own field in London. As minister at Essex Street he was looked to as practically the leader and mouthpiece of the Unitarians. Thus in his sermons he not only powerfully maintained the Unitarian cause, and expounded its doctrines, but also discussed in the light of liberal principles certain questions of national policy, or measures debated in Parliament ... But his predominant interest at this period was in the preparation of a new version of the New Testament, based upon a Greek text embodying the results of recent criticism. A project for a work of this sort had been proposed by [Joseph] Priestley in 1789, and was well advanced toward completion, when an important part of the manuscript was destroyed in the Birmingham Riots in 1791. Later in the same year, when the Unitarian Book Society was formed, the translation of the New Testament was made one of its main objects. After some five years’ delay it was decided not to make an independent version, but to adopt the excellent one [this was the opinion of the Unitarian author of this history] of Archbishop William Newcome, Primate of Ireland, as a basis, chiefly because it followed Griesbach’s text, and to accompany it with an introduction and notes. The plan was taken up with ardor, and the work was published in 1808, in three sizes, and later in several editions; and it was at once reprinted in America (Boston, 1909), where Unitarianism was already incubating. It included a valuable introduction on the progress and principles of textual criticism, anticipating many judgments later adopted in the Revised Version of 1881; but drew the fire of the orthodox by omitting as late interpolations several passages traditionally cited as pillars of trinitarian doctrine. [Examples of these omissions were the removal of the word “God” in 1 Timothy 3:16 and the deletion of 1 John 5:7.]

Belsham had taken the leading part in the editing of the work, and he regarded it with great satisfaction. It was widely circulated in Unitarian quarters; but in spite of its presenting a much more correct text, many strictures upon it were passed even by Unitarians, while to the orthodox its notes gave much offence, and by them it was generally scorned as a sectarian work, 'The Unitarian New Testament,' though it was never officially adopted even by the Unitarians" (Earl Morse Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism in Transylvania, England, and America*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952, pp. 338,339).

Griesbach was also loved by Modernists. For example, Joseph Buckminster "persuaded the officials at Harvard College in 1809 to publish an American edition of Griesbach's critical Greek New Testament, because **he saw its value in promoting text criticism, in his opinion, 'a most powerful weapon to be used against the supporters of verbal inspiration'**" (Theodore Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text*, p. 2).

Modern version defenders today often claim that there are no doctrinal issues at stake in the textual variances, but the Unitarians and Modernists in the 19th century understood plainly that this is not the case. They understood very well that the theories of modern textual criticism produce a New Testament text that supports their heresies better than the Received Text. In my new book *Myths about Modern Bible Versions* (currently at the printer) I trace the intimate connection between Unitarianism and the critical Greek text. The theories of modern textual criticism and the rejection of the Received Text were fathered in this demonic atmosphere.

Thus, at the beginning of the 19th century, Bible-believing Christians rejected the critical text as heretical, but the Unitarians and Modernists joyfully received the critical Greek text because it supported their doctrinal heresies pertaining to the Trinity and Christ's deity, and also because the textual variety weakened the authority of Scripture. By the end of the 19th century, though, apostasy had so leavened many of the denominations that the Westcott-Hort Greek, which was built upon the Griesbach text and which contained the same type of doctrinal corruptions (in fact, the Westcott-Hort text was more radical and was farther removed from the Received Text), found wide acceptance. **Those today who deny that the critical Greek text is less doctrinally sound than the Received Text, are flying in the face of the facts. The old Unitarians understood the doctrinal differences between the texts. They rejected the Received Text because they understood that it defeated their heresies.** They made the translation of a new Bible based upon the critical text a top priority. For those who have ears to hear, this speaks volumes.

KARL LACHMANN (1793-1851), Professor of Classical and German Philology at Berlin, has been described as a German rationalist (Charles Turner, *Why the King James Version: The Preservation of the Word of God through the Faithful Churches*, p. 7). Yet to "Lachmann belongs the distinction of entirely casting aside the *Textus Receptus*..." (Vincent, *A History of Textual Criticism*, p. 110). He produced editions of the N.T. in Berlin in 1842 and 1850, which carried Griesbach's ideas still further afield from the preserved Text. Lachmann did not believe it was possible to reproduce the original text of the New Testament (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 124). His goal was merely to "secure the text in widest use in Jerome's time, leaving it to emendation and conjecture to get behind that" (Alexander Souter, *The Text and Canon of the New Testament*, 1912, p. 101). ALAND tells us that Lachmann's battle cry was "Down with the late text of the *Textus Receptus*, and back to the text of the early fourth-century church" (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 11).

Like some of the other fathers of textual criticism, Lachmann was not a theologian, but a philologist "who had distinguished himself by critical editions of Latin and German classics" (Vincent, p. 110). Like Bentley before him, Lachmann was not studying the New Testament as the supernaturally-inspired and divinely preserved Word of God but as a mere book. He was a profane man who treated the Bible like any other book and his textual research was a mere scholarly venture; yet, his work was taken seriously by textual critics because he was furthering their objective of undermining the authority of the Received Text. Lachmann "began to apply to the N.T. Greek text the same rules that he had used in editing texts of the Greek classics, which had been radically altered over the years. ... Lachmann had set up a series of several presuppositions and rules which he used for arriving at the original text of the Greek classics ... He now began with these same presuppositions

and rules to correct the N.T. **which he also presupposed was hopelessly corrupted.** He had made a glaring mistake. The loving and reverent care given to the copying and preservation of the Scriptures by faithful churches was not matched by a similar process in the copying of the Greek classics” (Turner, pp. 7,8).

Lachmann discarded the Received Text in favor of what he considered the oldest and best text represented in the Vaticanus and a few other similarly corrupt manuscripts. Enemies of the Received Text often falsely claim that it is based upon only a handful of manuscripts that Erasmus happened to have in his possession. In reality, the Received Text represents the text found in the vast majority of Greek manuscripts and versions, and it is the critical text that is more frequently based on scanty manuscript authority. Burgon reminds us that “Lachmann’s text seldom rests on more than four Greek codices, very often on three, not infrequently on two, sometimes on only one” (Revision Revised, p. 21). In his scholarly arrogance, Lachmann was willing to overthrow centuries of godly discernment purified in the fires of persecution in favor of modern novelties.

FRIEDRICH CONSTANTINE VON TISCHENDORF (1815-1874) was a German textual critic who traveled extensively in search of ancient documents. Tischendorf had “a distinct respect for the conclusions of Griesbach and Lachmann (Thompson, p. 42). He was instrumental in bringing to light two of the manuscripts most influential in modern Bible translation work—Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus. Tischendorf looked upon his task as “the struggle to regain the original form of the New Testament” (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 126). His error, like that of other 19th century textual critics, was in failing to recognize God’s promise of preservation. Had he believed the Bible’s own testimony, he would have known by faith that the New Testament did not need to be recovered because it was not lost! Tischendorf’s work was so loved by the Unitarians, that two of them, Caspar Gregory and Ezra Abbot, reissued the eighth edition of Tischendorf’s New Testament with critical notes after his death.

SAMUEL PRIDEAUX TREGELLES (1813-1875) was influential in the field of textual criticism in England. Though he was not committed to the modernistic rationalism that was beginning to permeate the Christian world of that day, he adopted the theories of textual criticism from the rationalists that preceded him. His critical principles “paralleled to a remarkable degree those of Lachmann” (Metzger, p. 127). From his youth, he had a peculiar zeal to go beyond even Griesbach in rejecting the Received Text, which he refused to give “any prescriptive rights.” Thus, regardless of what he believed about biblical inspiration, he did not work from a position of faith in divine preservation. He accepted the rationalistic position that the pure Word of God needed to be recovered.

B.F. WESTCOTT (1825-1901) and **F.J.A. HORT** (1828-1892), Anglican professors at Cambridge University, were responsible for taking the principles of Griesbach, Lachmann, and other fathers of modern textual criticism and fashioning them into a package of theories for the overthrow of the Received Text, which they labeled “vile.” They produced such a Greek Testament and secretly introduced it to the committee that was charged with revising the English Bible in Britain in the late 1800s. The resulting English Revised New Testament of 1881 followed (not in every detail, but in large part) the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament. (The committee had not been charged with revising the Greek text but only with updating the English, and when their work was published, they came under widespread condemnation for exceeding the authority of their appointment.)

That Westcott and Hort were infected with the rationalistic approach to the Bible shared by other fathers of textual criticism has been observed by many scholarly men of God.

Zane Hodges noted Westcott and Hort’s apostasy: “The charge of rationalism is easily substantiated for Westcott and Hort and may be demonstrated from direct statements found in their introduction to *The New Testament in the Original Greek*. To begin with, Westcott and Hort are clearly unwilling to commit themselves to the inerrancy of the original Scriptures” (Hodges, “Rationalism and Contemporary New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January 1971).

A precise, accurate description of Westcott-Hort’s theological position is given by the late Presbyterian bishop D.A. Thompson, who looked carefully into these matters: “Neither of these scholars had been evangelical and as the influence of the German neology increased they moved slowly and discreetly with the times.”

Dr. Edward Hills understood the rationalistic platform from which Westcott and Hort worked:

[I]n 1881 B.F. Westcott (1825-1901) and F.J.A. Hort (1828-1892) published their celebrated *Introduction* in which they endeavored to settle the New Testament text on the basis of this new information. They propounded the theory that the original New Testament text has survived in almost perfect condition in these two manuscripts, especially in the Vaticanus. This theory attained almost immediately a tremendous popularity, being accepted everywhere both by liberals and conservatives. Liberals liked it because it represented the latest thing in the science of N.T. textual criticism. Conservatives liked it because it seemed to grant them that security for which they were seeking. But since this security had no foundation in faith, it has not proved lasting. FOR IN THE WORKING OUT OF THEIR THEORY, WESTCOTT AND HORT FOLLOWED AN ESSENTIALLY NATURALISTIC METHOD. INDEED, THEY PRIDED THEMSELVES ON TREATING THE TEXT OF THE N.T. AS THEY WOULD THAT OF ANY OTHER BOOK, MAKING LITTLE OR NOTHING OF INSPIRATION AND PROVIDENCE. 'For ourselves,' Hort wrote, 'we dare not introduce considerations which could not reasonably be applied to other texts, supposing them to have documentary attestation of equal amount, variety, and antiquity.' ... LIKE GRIESBACH THEY RULED OUT IN ADVANCE ANY POSSIBILITY OF THE PROVIDENTIAL PRESERVATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TEXT THROUGH THE USAGE OF BELIEVERS (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, pp. 65,66).

While some Evangelicals and even some Fundamentalists have come to the defense of Westcott and Hort and have contended that they were theologically sound, these (perhaps) fail to understand the nature of Westcott-Hort's theological apostasy. Like many Neo-orthodox and Modernistic theologians, Westcott and Hort did not so much deny the doctrines of the Word of God directly; they undermined these doctrines with clever doubt, with subtle questioning. Dr. D.A. Waite, who has examined the writings of Westcott and Hort in great detail, testifies: "Westcott's attack on the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is not by any means a direct clash of out-and-out denial, but rather an adroit, skillful, oblique undermining of the bodily resurrection of Christ by means of a re-definition of terms" (Waite, *Westcott's Denial of Bodily Resurrection*, *The Bible for Today*, 1983, p. 8). Dr. Waite's views on this matter are not based on a cursory look at Westcott and Hort's theology. He has examined the writings of these men probably as exhaustively as anyone speaking on the subject today. As a background for his book *Heresies of Westcott & Hort*, Waite studied 1,291 pages of the writings of these men. Further, Dr. Waite brings to the table a vast knowledge of issues related to apostasy. He has researched Modernism, New Evangelicalism, and other erroneous movements for many decades. See Dr. Waite's *The Theological Heresies of Westcott and Hort: As Seen in Their Own Writings* (*The Bible for Today*, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108).

The apostasy of Westcott and Hort is also evident in their attitude toward a Christ-denying Unitarian who was invited to participate. George Vance Smith, minister of St. Saviour's Gate Unitarian Chapel, York, had equal vote along with the other committee members, although he had plainly and publicly denied the deity of Jesus Christ. After he participated in a communion service with the other revisers, a letter was published in *The Times* (July 11, 1870) in which he proudly declared that though he had received communion, he had refused to recite the Creed since he would not compromise his "principles" as one who denied the deity of Jesus Christ. A public outcry ensued, but Westcott and Hort and some of the other revisers threatened to resign if Smith was not allowed to participate! Unitarian Smith later gloried in the fact that many changes made in the English Revision better reflected his own wicked views on Jesus Christ. He understood that the critical text and the modern versions support doctrinal heresy better than the Received Text.

The theories of modern textual criticism and the rejection of the Received Text were fathered in this rationalistic atmosphere.

THE INFLUENTIAL TEXTUAL CRITICS OF THE 20TH CENTURY ARE ALSO INFECTED BY THEOLOGICAL RATIONALISM

Nothing has changed in the 20th century. The field is still dominated by unbelievers who deny the supernatural infallibility of the Bible. Consider, for example, the editors of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament. **CARLO MARTINI**, who joined the UBS Greek N.T. editorial committee in 1967, is the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Milan. He was a professor at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, which, in addition to Roman Catholic heresies, promotes the theory of evolution and the heretical documentary views of biblical inspiration, etc. He is past president of the Council of European Bishop's Conferences. A Time magazine article reported that Martini brought together a syncretistic convocation of over 100 religious leaders from around the world to promote a new age, one-world religion. In addressing this meeting, Mikhail Gorbachev said, "We need to synthesize a new religion for thinking men that will universalize that religion for the world and lead us into a new age." Martini is a radical ecumenist and syncretist who is striving to bring all denominations and religions into a "Catholic" unity. The Bible calls this "Mystery Babylon."

EUGENE NIDA is the father of the heretical dynamic equivalency theory of Bible translation. He believes God's revelation in the Bible "involved limitations" and "is not absolute" and that the words of the Bible "are in a sense nothing in and of themselves" (Nida, *Message and Mission*, 1960, pp. 222-228). He does not believe the Bible is written "in a Holy Ghost language." He believes the record of Jacob wrestling with the Angel was not a literal event. He denies the substitutionary blood atonement of Christ (Nida, *Theory and Practice*, 1969, p. 53). He denies that Christ died to satisfy God's justice. He believes the blood of the cross was merely symbolic of Christ's death and is never used in the Bible "in the sense of propitiation."

BRUCE METZGER believed Moses did not write the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy was not written until 700 years before Christ, the Old Testament is a mixture of "myth, legend, and history," the record of the worldwide flood of Noah's day is exaggerated, the book of Job is a folktale, the miracle accounts about Elijah and Elisha contain "legendary elements," Isaiah was written by Isaiah plus two or three unknown men who wrote centuries later, the record of Jonah is a "legend," Daniel does not contain supernatural prophecy, Paul did not write the Pastoral Epistles, Peter did not write 2 Peter, etc. All of these unbelieving lies can be found in the notes to the Reader's Digest Condensed Bible, which were written by Metzger, and in the New Oxford Annotated Bible, of which Metzger is a co-editor.

KURT ALAND denied the verbal inspiration of the Bible and wanted to see all denominations united into one "body" by the acceptance of a new ecumenical canon of Scripture which would take into account the Catholic apocryphal books (*The Problem of the New Testament Canon*, pp. 6,7,30-33).

MATTHEW BLACK is another modernistic editor of the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament. Black co-edited an edition of Peake's Commentary in 1982. Peake's was originally published in 1919 and boldly opposed fundamentalist doctrine. The editors openly reject the doctrine of the infallible inspiration and preservation of Holy Scripture. Note the following excerpt: "It is well known that the primitive Christian Gospel was initially transmitted by word of mouth and that this oral tradition resulted in variant reporting of word and deed. It is equally true that when the Christian record was committed to writing it continued to be the subject of verbal variation, involuntary and intentional, at the hands of scribes and editors" (Peake's Commentary on the Bible, p. 633). Peake's Commentary also casts doubt upon Trinitarian baptism: "This mission is described in the language of the church and most commentators doubt that the Trinitarian formula was original at this point in Matthew's Gospel, since the NT elsewhere does not know of such a formula and describes baptism as being performed in the name of the Lord Jesus (e.g. Acts 2:38, 8:16, etc.)."

(In my book *The Modern Bible Hall of Shame*, I have given lengthy quotes from the writings of these and many other men who are influential in textual criticism and the modern translations in this century, including George Vance Smith, Philip Schaff, Ezra Abbot, Joseph Thayer, Caspar Rene Gregory, Walter Bowie, Edgar Goodspeed, James Moffatt, C.H. Dodd, Eugene Nida, Robert Bratcher, William Barclay, F.F. Bruce, Fredric Kenyon, Ernest Colwell, Frederick Conybeare, Samuel Driver, Gerhard Kittel, Kirsopp Lake, J.B. Phillips, Henry Wheeler Robinson, and Hermann von Soden.)

It is true that some theologically orthodox men have adopted the theories of modern textual criticism, but they did not develop them. When a man goes to an Evangelical or Fundamentalist seminary and studies textual criticism, what textbooks does he normally use? He will use books by Bruce Metzger, Frederic Kenyon, Kurt Aland, F.F. Bruce, etc. I have visited Bible colleges and seminaries all over the country and these are the books that are commonly sold in the bookstores. All of these men, and the overwhelming majority of the other men who have developed the theories of modern textual criticism, are rationalists who deny the infallibility of the Scriptures, who hold the heretical documentary views of the Old Testament, etc. Evangelicals and Baptists who have promoted textual criticism did not develop it themselves, but merely received it from the hands of the Griesbachs, Kenyons, Metzgers, and Alands, and have passed it along as the most up-to-date scientific thought. This does not really surprise me. Sadly, most men, even preachers, do not carefully and prayerfully analyze what they are taught in a Bible institution. And most theologically educated men today would prefer to remain ignorant of the Received Text-KJV position than bear the reproach of being in that “obscurantist” camp.

This reminds us that most colleges and seminaries do not teach anything about the defense of the Received Text (apart from a false caricature of it). Thus most men who graduate from these institutions, while assuming they know both sides of the textual debate, only know one side. Most Bible college and seminary graduates today have never read the works of John Burgon, Edward Miller, Edward Hills, Terance Brown, Donald Waite, or other scholarly defenders of the King James Bible and its Received Text. Dozens of men have shared their testimony with me that they were not exposed to both sides of the issue of Bible texts and versions during their Bible training. Only later did they come into appreciation of a sound defense of the KJV-TR when they studied the aforementioned men (and many others) for themselves instead of depending upon the caricatures of them provided by their Bible college or seminary teachers.
