

DEAN BURGON ON THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS

On page 548 of Burgon's The Revision Revised, Burgon declares that the 'Textus Receptus' needs **correction**.

Let us listen to what Dean Burgon has to say on the subject of **correcting** the Textus Receptus:

Once for all, we request it may be clearly understood that we do not, by any means, claim **perfection** for the Received Text. We entertain no extravagant notions on this subject. Again and again we shall have occasion to point out (e.g. at page 107) that the *Textus Receptus* needs **correction**. We do but insist, (1) That it is an incomparably better text than that which either Lachmann, or Tischendorf, or Tregelles has produced: infinitely **preferable** to the 'New Greek Text' of the Revisionists. And, (2) That **to be improved**, the Textus Receptus will have to be **revised** on entirely different 'principles' from those which are just now in fashion. Men must begin by unlearning the German prejudices of the last fifty years; and address themselves, instead, to the stern logic of facts. (Revision Revised, 21)

For no one may flatter himself that, by undergoing a further process of 'Revision,' the 'Revised Version' may after all be rendered trustworthy. The eloquent and excellent Bishop

of Derry is ‘convinced that, with all its undeniable merits, it will have to be somewhat extensively revised.’ And so perhaps are we. But (what is a far more important circumstance) we are further convinced that a prior act of penance to be submitted to by the Revisers would be the restoration of the underlying Greek Text to **very nearly-not quite** -the state in which they found it when they entered upon their ill-advised undertaking. **‘Very nearly-not quite:’ for, in not a few particulars, the ‘Textus receptus’ does call for Revision certainly; although Revision** on entirely different principles from those which are found to have prevailed in the Jerusalem Chamber. To mention a single instance:-When our Lord first sent forth His Twelve Apostles, it was **certainly** no part of His ministerial commission to them to ‘raise the dead’ (νεκροὺς ἐγείρετε, S. Matthew X. 8). This is easily demonstrable. **Yet** is the **spurious** clause retained by our Revisionists; because it is found in those corrupt witnesses- a B C D, and the Latin copies. When will men learn unconditionally to put away from themselves the weak superstition which is for investing with oracular authority the foregoing quaternion of demonstrably depraved Codices? (*Revision Revised*, 107-108)

Dean John Burgon Felt That, Though the Textus Receptus Was an Excellent Text For the Use in the Meantime, and

Was a “Thousand Times” Superior to the Greek Text of Westcott and Hort, Yet He Did Not Hold to its “Perfection.” Dr. Waite says, “I do not want anyone reading this to misunderstand Dean John William Burgon’s position on the “Textus Receptus” or the “Traditional Text.” Dean Burgon held it to be superior to the text of Westcott and Hort or any of that school of false textual critics. He did feel, **however**, that it was not “**perfect.**” **If revised**, it should be properly **revised** in **the minor places** where it might need such. Any such **revision** must adhere strictly upon the principles laid down by this **master textual critic. Until then**, the Textus Receptus was to be used without apology as the printed text **closest to** the original autographs of any in print today.” [Dr. D.A. Waite’s Burgon’s Warnings on Revision, 21] (Emphasis, GEL) [I would like to remind our readers of what John Carter said. He said: **“The Bible does not yield its treasures to its critics.”**]

Dean Burgon Used the “Commonly Received Text” as a “Common Standard,” Not as “the Final Standard of Appeal.”

Dean Burgon wrote:

I have referred five famous codices (A B a C D)—certain of which are found to have turned the brain of critics of the new school—to one and the same familiar exhibition of the commonly received text of the New Testament: but by so doing I have not by any means assumed the textual purity of that common standard. In other words, I have not made it “the final standard of appeal.” All critics, wherever found,—at all times, have collated with the commonly Received Text: but only as the most convenient standard of comparison not, surely as the absolute standard of excellence. [Dean Burgon, *Revision Revised*, pp. xviii-xix.]

This is an honest statement of Dean Burgon’s view of the “Textus Receptus” or “Received Text.” He did not think it was **perfect**, but needed **minor improvements** in spots, but any **revision** was to be preceded by certain safeguards.... [Waite, pp. 21-22]

Dean Burgon Felt the “Textus Receptus” **Needed “Revision”** in **“Many of its Lesser Details,”** **But** That It Was “an Excellent Text as it Stands” That Will “Never Lead **Critical** Students of Scripture

Seriously Astray.” (Emphasis, GEL) Dean Burgon wrote:

Obtained from a variety of sources [that is, the Textus Receptus or the Traditional Greek Text] this text proves to be essentially the same in all. That it requires **revision** in respect of **many of its lesser details** is understandable: but it is at least as certain that it is an excellent text as it stands, and that the use of it will never lead **critical** students of Scripture seriously astray,—which is what no one will venture to predicate concerning any single critical edition of the N.T. which has been published since the days of Griesbach, by the disciples of Griesbach’s school. [Dean Burgon, Revision Revised, p. 269.] (Waite, 23)

Dean Burgon Did Not Take the “Received” or Any Other “Text” as a “Standard from Which There Shall Be no Appeal.” (Emphasis, GEL) Dean Burgon wrote:

But pray—, who in his senses,—what-sane man in Great Britain—ever dreamed of regarding the “received,”—aye, or any other known “text”—as a “standard from which there shall be no appeal”? Have I ever done so? Have I ever implied as much? If I have, show me where. [Dean Burgon, Revision Revised, p. 385.] (Waite, 23) (Emphasis, GEL)

Dean Burgon Held That the “Received Text” Even in His Day Was “Full 1550 Years Old” and Even “a Vast Deal Older,” and He Esteemed It “Quite Good Enough for All Ordinary Purposes, Yet He Sometimes Made “Appeal From It.” (Emphasis, GEL)
Dean Burgon wrote:

For my own part, being fully convinced, like yourself, [writing to Bishop Ellicott, the Chairman of the English Revised Version Committee of 1881], that essentially the received text is full 1550 years old,—(yes, and vast deal

older)–I esteem it quite good enough for all ordinary purposes. **And yet**, so far am I from pinning my faith to it, that I eagerly make my appeal from it to the threefold witness of copies, versions, Fathers whenever I find its testimony challenged– [Dean Burgon, Revision Revised, p. 392.]

Again, this is Dean Burgon’s **solid faith** in the **essential soundness** of the Received Text, **and yet** his recognition that in “**lesser details**,” the copies, versions, and Fathers might yield **slight corrections** if properly and soundly used. [Waite, 24] (Emphasis, GEL)

In closing, I need to warn my readers about **intellectual perverts** who would tell you **either** the Textus Receptus **or** the King James Bible needs to be **corrected**.

The intellectual perverts, whether they realize it or not, have identified themselves with the ancient Egyptian city of Alexandria and the Alexandrian cult. The humanist H. G. Wells had this to say about the dysfunctional eggheads of Alexandria’s scholastic community:

“Wisdom passed away from Alexandria...For the use of books was substituted the worship of books. Very speedily the learned became a specialized ... class with unpleasant characteristics of its own ... a new type of human being; shy, eccentric, unpractical, incapable of essentials, strangely fierce upon trivialities of literary detail, as bitterly jealous of the colleague within as of the unlearned without - the Scholarly Man. ... He was as intolerant as a priest ... as obscurantist as a magician.... He was a sort of by-product of the intellectual process of mankind.” [H.G. Wells, *The Outline of History* (1920), p. 305, quoted in *Final Authority* by Dr. William Grady (1993), p. 77. **Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,**

Years ago, when I was studying in the Seminary at Maranatha Baptist Bible College, my mentor, Dr. James Hollowood, warned me in a course on the History of Fundamentalism in America that the modernists pride themselves in their education. In other words, they have a pride of intellect. True Historic Baptists need to guard themselves against this type of pride. There is an intellectualism that reaches the head but never the heart. Fundamentalists that have a pride of intellect lack a true compassion of the heart.

The modernists have a hidden agenda. Do Fundamental Baptists also have a hidden agenda when it comes to the TR and the KJB? **YES**. Do they believe that the TR and the KJB need **correcting**? **YES**.

Finally, may we call the KJB inspired, or merely the best translation of the inspired originals and copies of them? Is it truly scripture as we read in II Timothy 3:16 or not? I believe the KJB did not lose inspiration in translation. Few pastors are unwise enough to stand in the pulpit and say that the Bible in the hands of the congregation is a good translation but somehow not equal to the manuscripts. **But** there are fundamental **“academic”** defenders of the Textus Receptus who **boldly** say that very thing.

These “fundamental” academics are forced to sign statements of faith with which they do not agree. They meekly bow to the demands of the powers that be so that they can be in the club. They do, however, have a mental reservation about what they are signing. John Henry **Cardinal** Newman followed the same train of thought. Like Origen, Newman held to a “doctrine of reserve,” which means hiding your true beliefs from the general public. There were faculty members at Maranatha Baptist Bible College who did the same thing on a yearly basis

when asked to sign the doctrinal statement of MBBC. This went on for years. Shades of **modernism** and **neo-evangelicalism** are at work in this once fundamental Baptist school.

Some of these “fundamental” academics have stated that they are too old to fight. **And yet** they have testified to others that they believe that the King James Bible is inspired.

One academic, based on his statements, has been influenced by **Lower** or **Textual Criticism** when he states in essence that the **Received Text** is an **inferior text** and is in need of **correcting**. How is this well-known academic any different than the devilish Westcott and Hort? **He is not any different.**