

Scribal Notes

on the Traditional Texts of Scripture authored by the disciples of Jesus Christ

This newsletter is dedicated to the defense and examination of the Words of the traditional text of God's Holy Scripture. The notes found below are historical, grammatical, and textual in nature. The base texts for these readings are the traditional scholar's edition of the 1524/25 Ben Chayyim Hebrew Text (Letteris 1866 edition) and also the 1598 edition of Beza's Greek text as issued by F.H.A. Scrivener (1908), both, which underlie the Authorized Version of 1611. Furthermore, we also seek to study first century life in the New Testament from a Greco-Roman & Rabbinic perspective. This enables the reader to approach bible texts with the necessary tools for understanding their meanings.

*This article broadly surveys the reasons for the general confusion in Churches today with regard to textual matters. The decline & retreat from historic truth in many fellowships stems from various footnotes/endnotes and other materials placed in the margin areas of modern bibles. These notes foster doubt in the believer's heart concerning the real Words of God and thus whole denominations have been duped by the scholarly pursuits of modernism.

TEXTUAL CRITICISM FOR LAYMEN

How does one define the (so called) science of textual criticism? It is a scholarly endeavor that challenges traditionally held beliefs about any text, by calling into question a text's history, its transmission and wording. The textual critic seeks to restore the original words of the document by subjecting it to a series of theoretical tests.^{1[1]} The textual critic, after having been liberally educated according to the history of the bible and its transmission, then seeks to restore unto the body of Christ what he/she believes has been missing for the last 1700 years. Our modern Hebrew and Greek editions of scripture are the result of a consistent, scholarly attack on the historicity of scripture. Beginning in the 18th century a few voices began to question whether or not we actually have the original words penned by the apostles.^{2[2]} Overlooking the consenting testimony of the early church fathers they began to flood the bookstores with writings that infect the reader with their 'scholarly findings.' With this strategy in place they began to undermine the *transmission* of God's Holy Word. Accusing scribes of textual emendations and forcing things into the text from a personal point of view. Indeed, of the 5800 manuscripts (MSS) available today there are some very notorious documents that purport to be Holy Scripture. But the Church of Jesus Christ has historically embraced one traditional set of texts that preserve the ancient testimony of the eyewitnesses to Christ and if the Lord is not able to preserve His Word how can we claim that He is able to preserve us in the faith. The text critic desires to remove words that he believes are not a part of the original text and seeks to add words or change the syntax of sentences according to texts which have been discarded and in discontinued use for more than 1500 years, Manuscripts that the early church knew to be depraved. Though the early church fathers and antiquity attest to the authenticity of the texts which underlie all pre-modern versions, by putting forth books that sideline divine inspiration and undervalue inerrancy they are able to lead the believer 'by the nose' and direct their hearts into a state of confusion. After all, who better than a university trained or Seminary educated liberal knows the Bible? Often they deny the virgin birth of Jesus, and even the atoning death of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Though doubting the truthful claims of scripture, as to the reality of the resurrection, and even refusing to believe in a literal second coming yet, these are the men and women who have manufactured the Hebrew and Greek editions of the scripture since the late 1800s.^{3[3]} Upon these scriptures all modern versions have been based. Modern day Critical editions of the New Testament (NT) Greek text undermine the authority of God's Word in a number of ways. Generally, most Christians have little idea of how the English text of scripture has been tampered with and if they do they still know little more of how the Greek and Hebrew words behind newer versions have affected every thing from punctuation to word order.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TRADITIONAL TEXT

^{1[1]} Words & Works See Old English Texts and Modern Readers: Notes on editing and textual criticism H. Gneuss p.127

^{2[2]} John Mill, J.A. Bengel J.J. Wettstein and others were gentlemen who judged the T.R. in light of unused and neglected MSS. They believed that these MSS anti-dated the Textus Receptus and that they could restore the original text.

^{3[3]} B.F. Westcott & F.J.H. Hort were the editors of the 1881 Greek text that forms the basis for all modern versions of scripture. *Paul Kahle convinced R. Kittel to forsake the Ben Chayyim Hebrew text for the Lenigrad codex in his 3rd.edition of the Biblia Hebraica.

I The Creeds:

The original texts of scripture were written at an early date and quickly multiplied by the believers. These texts were embraced as authentic and were recognized as authoritative on the basis of the names ascribed unto them. Many false documents arose during the early centuries of the Church but the same God who superintends the worlds also providentially cared for the Words inspired of the Spirit. How could He do anything less than preserve His word? In the formative years of Christianity the church was able to sift through the variants of confusion which existed in differing texts and praise God a traditional text emerged which approximates more fully to the ancient autographs than any other document forged in history.

We would do well to remind ourselves of the ‘witnesses’ of the early church and of their high value and esteem of the Holy Texts of scripture. (1) The Apostles Creed is an example of beliefs that were established upon the firm foundation of traditional texts. (2) The Nicene Creed also affirms an understanding of and a familiarity with traditional type texts. These creeds emphasize personal beliefs that few contemporary textual editors could ever subscribe to. In fact, they are intent on demeaning any genuine faith in the Word of God and in the details of scripture.

II The Church Fathers

Papias, Bishop Of Hierapolis (c. 130AD) He, having heard John speak on occasion and was companion of Polycarp, wrote that “John used to say this also: *Mark became an interpreter of Peter and wrote down accurately, but not in order, as much as he remembered of the sayings and doings of Christ.*

..Mark made no mistake when we wrote down some things as he remembered them; for he made especial care to omit nothing of what he heard and to make no false statement therein^{4[4]}

Here is a man living 100 years within early church history who leaves us a testimony of what was believed of the Gospel of Mark’s authorship. And today the skeptics deny his authorship in concert and few oppose their outrageous claims.

Also, *Irenaeus*, Bishop of Lyons who lived at the end of the 2nd century attests the canonical authorship which is historically attached to each Gospel. Of Matthew He says “*He published his Gospel among the Hebrews in their own tongue.*” Of Mark that “*he, being an interpreter of Peter, handed down to us the substance of Peter’s preaching.*” Of Luke, “*the follower of Paul, set down in a book the Gospel preached by his teacher,*” Of John, the disciple of the Lord, “*himself produced his Gospel while he was living at Ephesus in Asia.*”^{5[5]} I find it amazing that we should abandon true textual history for today’s agnostic theories!

III Medieval Confessions

Of the many confessions of the Elizabethan times the Westminster Confession (The assembly convened from 1643-1652), is certainly the most popular and detailed in exposition. In all of its beauty and charm few have modernized the Archaic English but multitudes have written commentaries on each section. The crowd that loves its exactness in English at the same time demeans the English of the KJB and works to undermine it routinely. Who has ever excised a word from the Westminster? None! But, scholars daily cut and paste the Bible that was based upon the traditional texts of scripture. The Westminster Confession, (*Calvinistic as it is*) is still an eloquent work of prose. But so is the KJB. The confessions of medieval times make no claim at all for any inspiration. {Even the Anglican prayer book of 1928, which retains the Elizabethan English of the 1600s, is still more popular than the revision made in 1977}. Inasmuch as the AV 1611 is based upon ancient texts that were issued continuously for 1500 years we should leave it alone. The cut & paste theories of today have produced texts that no one in the Elizabethan age would recognize. The Geneva Bible was based on traditional texts. As was all of the others from Tyndale’s version unto the Bishop’s Bible. Our new Greek & Hebrew Texts of the last 100 years (and all of the theories abounding concerning their authorship and transmission) are so far distant from the readings utilized by the early church fathers that one wonders if anyone reads early Greek and Latin texts anymore.

IV The Lectionary.^{6[6]}

The lectionaries of old come in a variety of Languages. Greek, Syriac, Latin, Anglo-Saxon etc. and they possess scriptures which illustrate the kind of texts which they had available to them and in particular the kind that they actually used in service. In close study of these scriptures the traditional text passages outnumber other readings easily. Having personally studied a number of lectional reading in various tongues it is surprising that so few write about their importance. But then modern editors of the Bible are not interested in multiplying the ‘witnesses and/or evidences’ for traditional readings. They desire to use only those texts that undergird current consensus among scholars today.

^{4[4]} Documents of the Christian Church 2nd ed. H. Bettenson 1973 p27

^{5[5]} Ibid p28

^{6[6]} A lectionary is “a kind of Gospel book in which a passage of scripture is assigned to nearly every day on which a service might be held.” The New York Cruciform lectionary by J.C. Anderson pub 1992

FALSE ASSUMPTIONS

Today's scholar honestly believes that his work should be held in high esteem and blindly followed. A part of the problem rests with how they approach their task.

They attack the scripture from a historical-critical perspective that supposes itself to be objective but is essentially agnostic at best and a-theistic as a rule.

They are opponents of the supernatural in all aspects of the bible's compilation. Denying divine authorship & transmission. Denying the virgin birth of Jesus and of a need for an atonement and even His resurrection. (It seems to me that disbelief in the divinity and historicity of scripture is a pre-requisite to acceptance on any Bible committee these days)

There are numerous false assumptions presupposed by them and here are a few: (1) *The early authors constructed the texts apart from any divine inspiration and in the process created numbers of theories concerning Jesus which he did not hold of himself.* This belief is beyond absurdity. The whole host of orthodox Christianity believed (by faith) that Jesus was/is all that the Gospels say of Him. (2) *Somewhere in the history of the early church the original autographs were discarded for some texts that were inferior to the former.* There is not one shred of evidence in any written source that speaks of a time when there was a gathering of religious figures to edit the texts of scripture into any particular form. (3) *Today's scholar assumes he can reconstruct the original words of Jesus by searching discarded and depraved texts and by mystically reading the author's intent in various syntactical phrases.* Our variations in English texts today originated this way. One person might believe that the early Christian author 'really meant to say this or that' and so they place this variant in a footnote and within a few decades here comes another man who says lets place the footnote in the text. Sometimes a passage is removed on the basis of an editor's subjective studies. [7\[7\]](#)

(4) Then there is the assumption that *today's scholar is more fully equipped to be objective than the people of old, who blindly followed history and tradition believing that a God could/would actually inspire writings.* Where is the objectivity when an anti-Christian spirit dominates today's scholar? Agnosticism and extreme feminism prove the agenda of the critic; a degradation of all things holy and pure in God's eyes!

(5) *Today's scholar assumes that our age possesses more light than in times past.* For sure we do have technical advancements that are unsurpassed by any other age but to say that we should throw 'faith' on the scrapheap and trust men's theories is a greater leap into the darkness. More manuscripts and fragments of old have been found but they attest to traditional type texts. The Dead Sea Scrolls do not tell us that there was another type of Hebrew text. It agrees with the traditional Masoretic text more than most want to admit. *The variances are a result of a cultic group withdrawing from society and mangling a traditional text into a form that agrees with their own personal beliefs.* From an archaeological vantage point the Dead Sea Scrolls are a great find but to go a step further and charge that it anti-dates the traditional Hebrew text is outlandish. There is not one carbon dating specialist that can tell you for sure what century any manuscript is from but they write books so dogmatically that none attempt any sound refutation of their arguments. The whole *dating system* is an unstable experiment. Most of the arguments used for our age having received 'more light' prove that we are in the dark on the text more now than at any other time. We have lesbians on committees for translating scripture, Sodomites are writing commentaries & Self affirming apostates chair councils and departments in universities of higher education. Our supposed step forward has taken us several steps backward. It is better to be a Near Eastern Guru who espouses a vague, albeit historic, philosophy than it is to be a Bible believing professor in most graduate departments.

We are in trouble and most can't see the root cause as the proliferation and misuse of Bibles that contain a Critical Apparatus. [8\[8\]](#)

Our Churches are dying, our preachers are unsure of themselves and of their ministry preparation, and multitudes are privately interpreting the Word of God according to their own gnostic beliefs. Accordingly, no one really knows for sure which Words of God are authentic and which are not.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

The 19th century gave birth to some of the world's greatest heretics. Darwin influenced biological science. Marx impacted political theory. Graf & Wellhausen dismantled faith in the Old Testament by supposing that the Hebrew scriptures were mainly myths neatly pasted together. But of all of them B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort forever changed the way we read the Greek New Testament. Sitting on the committee to revise the text of the English Bible they having created their own Greek Text, encouraged its usage as the basis for all changes to be made in the Revised edition of the English Bible. When it appeared in 1881, the world at large was amazed to see more than 5600 changes to their beloved text of scripture. [9\[9\]](#) Both of whom were avowed unbelieving men and lovers of all things profane, wrote

[7\[7\]](#) See I John 5:7 as a proof of this kind of textual theory.

[8\[8\]](#) A Critical Apparatus is a margin in the Bible, which is filled with readings from unreliable manuscripts and notes that say "Theses verses are omitted in the most ancient manuscripts." It records the modern scholars opinions of thousands of passages of scripture. *See the notes on John 5:3,4 in any modern version.

[9\[9\]](#) All of which were annotated by F.H.A. Scrivener in his 1881 edition of the N. T. in Greek.

numbers of books in which it appears that they were soundly Christian. One glimpse at the life and letters of either of these men and you quickly see that their biographers (their sons) reveal that their intentions were to subtly influence Christendom towards a liberal perspective. By omitting multitudes of doctrinal verses and by transposing numbers of others, they created a new Greek text that has formed the basis for all subsequent editions of the Bible for the past 120 years.¹⁰[\[10\]](#)

Men who wanted to dethrone the Received text have received the heretical beliefs of a few as genuine. So here we are now in the 21st century attempting to trace our steps as to what went wrong? Our error in turning from truth produced a corpus of literature written by persons who no longer revere God's Word as a holy item but only as a body of literature edited over a period of time by humans who were anything but objective. As you can see, our Christian writings have been taken over by sinners who claim *special revelation* concerning our own texts.

THE NEED FOR COMPARATIVE CRITICISM

Comparative criticism is the "process of investigation whereby we seek to trace the relative value and mutual connexion of the authorities upon which the Greek Text of the New Testament is based, whether they be manuscripts of the original, early versions, or citations by the Christian fathers." F.H.A. Scrivener. The department of textual criticism is valuable to the study of ancient texts. It investigates script types, spellings, papyri, parchments, vellums and other materials for writing. Providing greatly needed information for seeing how texts were variously & selectively maintained

FAST FACTS ON F.H.A. SCRIVENER, VICAR OF HENDON

Dr. F.H.A. Scrivener was known to be a judicious textual scholar. Born 9/29 in the year 1813, he died (10/30) in the year of our Lord, 1891. He was educated in Southwark (1820-1831). He then studied four years of theology in Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1835 he became a teacher in the King's school in Sherborne, Dorset. Later in 1838 he began 7 years of service in Cornwall, afterwards, in 1846 he became headmaster (rector) of a school in Falmouth. By 1872 his labors had earned him a lifetime annuity of 100 pound. In 1874 The university of Oxford conferred upon him the D.C.L. His classical based studies more than equipped him for the task that would become his lifelong obligation, the study of Holy Scripture. During his lifetime he distinguished himself as the premier Greek New Testament editor of his day. Rivalled perhaps, only by Tischendorf. He edited a number of Greek texts; *Novum Testamentum Graecum textus Stephanici 1550* was issued in 1872. The Greek text underlying the AV1611 with the alterations of the ERV committee was published in 1881. Prior to these publications he had already furthered the work of the study of MSS with his various supplements and collations. In 1845 he issued "a supplement to the authorized English version of the New Testament: Being a critical illustration of its more difficult passages from the Syriac, Latin and earlier English versions. Between the years 1853 & 1864 he collated more than 70 Greek MSS. Majuscule and Minuscule types. His textbook called "A plain introduction to the criticism of the New Testament: For the use of biblical students" was and continues to be the gold standard for those who value the traditional text and hold a high estimation of its worth to the Church of Jesus Christ. Published in 1861, it went forth thru 3 more editions, (1874, 1883 and finally the fourth edition of 1894 edited by Edward Miller).¹¹[\[11\]](#)

Book Review: Misquoting Jesus: the story behind who changed the Bible and why by Bart Ehrman 2005 & Misquoting Truth: A guide to the fallacies of Bart Ehrman's Misquoting Jesus by T.P. Jones 2007

Bart Ehrman's book chronicles his born-again experience and his subsequent descent into agnosticism. He claims that the fundamentalists who claim inspiration and inerrancy for scripture did not prepare him for the frontal attacks on scripture that were leveled against him in undergraduate and graduate institutions. In researching the history of the texts he discovered that the bible is made up of many MSS that often differed from one another in many places. So he came

¹⁰[\[10\]](#) The New King James version is based upon the Majority Greek Text and differs some from the popular critical text of bible societies of today.

¹¹[\[11\]](#) One should give a close reading to the 'introduction' of "An exact transcript of the CODEX AUGIENSIS" if one desires to see his methodology applied. This codex is a Greco-Latin manuscript of Paul's epistles in a Cambridge library.

to the conclusion that these variances could be reconciled. His book is chapter after chapter of supposed evidences that prove that the Bible of Christianity is an untrustworthy document and that no one can say that they actually possess the 'Real Words of God.' Being a believer in the Aleph and the 'B' texts he thinks that the textus receptus is a mixed text reflecting the early biases of the majority church. This has led him to believe that textual emendations are in order throughout the whole of the Bible. The flyleaf of the hardcover edition has this written on the back:

- The King James Bible was based on corrupted and inferior manuscripts that in many cases do not accurately represent the meaning of the original text.
- The favorite Bible story of Jesus' forgiving the woman caught in adultery (Jn 8:3-11) doesn't belong in the Bible. The inside of the book is no easier. He is in his attacks on those who believe that they can trust scripture in any form. This book eventually became a bestseller here in a nation where people used to treat scripture as a document worthy of reading. Because many of America's universities and seminaries have now bought into this critical judgment of Bible texts, pulpits are unloading these ideas on the people. Into this foray entered T.P. Jones in an honest attempt to appreciate Ehrman's critical acumen while deprecating his critiques where appropriate. Unfortunately, if one reads Jones' book he will be standing side by side with Ehrman. For Jones himself is certain that the only thing that matters is that essentially the story of Jesus is true, not necessarily all the particular details revealed by the authors of the Gospels & Epistles. He even has a chapter entitled "The truth about Significant changes in the New Testament." After I read it I had to look at the cover again to make sure that I was reading a book written by a First Baptist Pastor. He lists dozens of passages that he 'feels' are inaccurate and wrong. He even goes as far as to give his personal judgments on the text of scripture which is confusing and just plain weird. At the end of his chapter on misquoting Jesus he asks this question "Have the New Testament manuscripts changed over the centuries? Without a doubt!" (pg 77) Here is a man who is not even sure that what he preaches from is actually historical.

***I believe that the two of these men are essentially the same. Ehrman affirms that he is a happy agnostic and Jones shows us that he is a Christian skeptic (at least on textual matters). Both of them are under the impression that two radically corrupted and neglected texts like Sinaiticus & Vaticanus are the older and original documents and should be used to correct all other texts of the Bible. Their weakness is their low view of God's Providence. Should I suppose that God can preserve the people of Israel, maintain a believer's salvation, prophesy things yet to come, and at the same time believe that His Church can not weed out bad texts and words. In the early Church there were many forms of early Christianity. The great mass of these beliefs passed away with their depraved texts that had been manipulated textually to agree with their doctrinal beliefs. The rediscovery of ancient texts is not always helpful for the body of Christ. Sure the paleographer and the epigraphist smiles with relief that he/she may advance the science of archaeology but the MSS were neglected for a good reason.

To revive the lost texts is essentially to revive a lost 'brand' of Christianity that was viewed as heretical early on. The Jehovah's witnesses are a sect of so-called believers who use a text called the New World translation. But their Bible is not proof of an alternate Greek and Hebrew Text only of a manipulation of 'words' to justify their dogmas. Why should the Church allow books like Ehrman's and Jones to go on and on without reply? We need soundness in our studies and we need to defend the 'Eternal Preservation of God's Holy Word.' Ps 119:89 is our shield against the unbelieving scholars who work to undermine the faith of a disciple of Christ. In the end I believe that I should stick with Greek, Hebrew & Aramaic words that have an antiquity that goes far beyond today's critical text of 1881.

A CRITIQUE OF THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS:

{Some notes on various historical & textual problems }

In the year 1910, A Jewish scholar named Solomon Schechter published two texts he called 'Fragments of a Zadokite work.' He had discovered these texts among the 220,000 fragments in an old Geniza of the Ben Ezra Synagogue. He had bought the total of these in Egypt (in the Old Cairo area) and shipped them to England for later research and study. Among the fragments were some texts that dealt with a small sect of Jews in Damascus. The texts became known as the Damascus documents even though relatively little information was given concerning their origins. What was understood though, was, the fact that they were pious, isolationist, and had separated from the majority religion of the Jews of their day feeling that they were not true to the 'spirit' of Judaism. About fifty years after the discovery of the Damascus texts the Dead Sea scrolls came to light. These are writings that were found in the Negev desert of Southern Israel. The region contains multiple caves which are easily discernible from a distance and in these caves were discovered small clay jars & pots that contained old scrolls. The story of the findings of the materials can be summed up by simply saying that some bedouin shepherds, while searching for their stray animals came upon the cave and after having thrown a stone inside and heard a sound of something breaking, later ventured within only to see the remnants of old containers filled with scrolls and fragments strewn all over the floor. These scrolls were quickly brought to the attention of scholars of great repute and W.F. Albright, in less than five minutes, fixed their date of composition to approximately 150BC or so. Based upon the paleography (writing styles) and other factors he saw these as texts that could revolutionize the way we read the Bible. The writings contain scriptures from every book of the bible excepting Esther and there are many commentaries on various books as well as, scrolls that outline specific points of interest concerning their own sect. ie. Ritual purifyings, initiations, eschatological beliefs and so on. Hailed as the Greatest Manuscript discovery of the century, these writings have been very influential in the study of the Old Testament for scholar and laymen alike. Though scholars claim to have studied them critically I believe that based upon their own

publications we are dealing with a sectarian cult (and I use the word cult in the classical Latin sense *cultus* meaning *worship*) that believed that all others were wrong and that they represented the true Israel. Having stood at the ruins of the Qumran and studied the publications for years here are just a few of the problems that can be recognized in their Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic scrolls:

- (1) They do not call themselves Essenes as Josephus and Philo say.
- (2) They accept and use apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings.
- (3) They have laws and traditions that have no basis in the O.T.
- (4) They are exclusive in the sense that you cannot reveal their secrets to anyone. In Jesus' day Jews wanted proselytes.
- (5) Their eschatology was non-traditional.
- (6) Their texts differ greatly from the traditional majority texts of the Hebrews. (4Qsam and Nahash of I Sam 10 for example.
- (7) They considered themselves to be the true Israel and all others to be lost.
- (8) God never advocated community withdrawal from the Temple liturgy even when sin persisted in the O.T.
- (9) There are no historical dates, persons mentioned or colophons on MSS by which one may factually fix a Qumranic time frame.
- (10) In forbidding marriage they were out of step with the frist mitzvah of the Jews to be fruitful and multiply.
- (11) It is difficult to reconstruct their history because they say very little about their origins and their copies of scrolls differ amongst themselves.
- (12) Their (own) scrolls were treated as though they were as inspired as the Torah and other old testament books.
- (13) They practiced ritual purities not prescribed by O.T. Law. Pure/impure foods in and outside of the community, initiations of various kinds.
- (14) They annuled the right of temple usage to supposed Jewish people.
- (15) They utilize Jer. 31:31-34 (New Covenant) in a renewed sense of reviving the Old Covenant of the ancient fathers. Inthis way they set aside Torah for their own documents. Torah was not set aside until Christ's death.
- (16) They were not interested in the tradition of the elders of Judaism nor did they record their sayings or doings.

These are only a few of the reasons that I find the Dead Sea sect and their scrolls to be heretical in contrast to mainstream Judaism. To use their MSS to correct the Masoretic text is equivalent to using Mary Baker Eddy's commentaries & writings to correct our New Testament Greek passages and English renditions.