

Affirming and defending  
the meaning of 'BY HIS  
SINGULAR  
CARE AND  
PROVIDENCE'

BY ELIJAH THOMAS CHACKO

A vindication of the Traditional Text,  
the Authorised Version and the power  
and faithfulness of Almighty God and  
the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
even the Incarnate Word, in preserving  
the Written Word.



*While his convictions are strongly expressed in this discourse, the writer confesses that it is not done in entire denial of the sincerity and profession of those who may not altogether agree with him. If the tenor of this writing is such that it seems so impassioned, this is so because of the writer's belief, the purpose of convincing his readers and the vital importance of the subject matter.*

*In establishing the facts for this article, the writer is indebted to Mr. Zephaniah Soh who had assisted him in extensive reading and research. The writer is also much thankful to the Lord for The Trinitarian Bible Society whose aims and activities, which are principally linked to the cause espoused herein, are worthy of our most ardent prayers and support. It is the persuasion of the writer that no one should state his views on this matter without first studying carefully the life and definitive works of John William Burgon.*



BEHIND the crucial controversy concerning the English Bible version is the issue relating to the Greek manuscripts underlying these versions. The great debate pertains not so much to the versions as to the sources from which they were translated.

Fenton John Anthony Hort (1825–1892) and Brooke Foss Westcott (1825–1901) were prominent in the promotion of the Revised Version but their real success lies in the manner they undermined the New Testament text that gave us the Authorised Version (the King James Version) while promoting and extolling the Alexandrian Text (which came mainly from the family of manuscripts represented as Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus).

The contention of Hort and Westcott was that the Alexandrian Text is superior to the Traditional Text (also known as Textus Receptus or Received Text). The crux of their case was the former is more ancient in antiquity and therefore more accurate. The argument that antiquity is invariably linked to accuracy is certainly open to question. For we have the evidence of history that the church as a whole rejected the manuscripts of the Alexandrian Text in the 4th century after the first advent of our Lord.

But I think Hort's and Westcott's proposition is shred to smithereens when we realise that the manuscripts they championed had the Papacy's endorsement. For the Sinai manuscript came from St. Catherine's Monastery and the Vatican manuscript came right from the Vatican Library.

The great fall of mankind started with the devil casting aspersion on the Word of God: 'Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?' (Genesis 3:1). The Antichrist continues to perpetuate the devil's assault on the Word of God. Hence the introduction of Alexandrian Text and at the same time, the subtle undermining of the Traditional Text.

The Traditional Text is also known as the Majority Text. This is because the manuscripts that came under its scope comprises about 90% of the extant New Testament Greek manuscripts. Now we affirm that whereas the autograph of the Inspired Word is no more in existence, God has providentially undertaken the safe-keeping of His Word for the benefit of all generations in the course of history. This He did primarily by the mutual attestation of the many manuscripts which were copied from the original directly inspired manuscript. The prevalent copies of the Majority Text bore mutual witness to the individual manuscripts and joint witness to the text itself, so that though there could have been minor errors in the individual copies, which might have been incurred in the process of copying, yet the text itself was absolutely untainted. The greatness of the number of extant copies contributed to the prevention of the intrusion of any error whatsoever and thereby the keeping of the perfect authenticity of the text. It is by this very means that God has chiefly preserved the purity of the Holy Scriptures against the ravages of time.

Hence the words of the Westminster divines who spoke of the preservation of the Word of God: 'The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic' (The Westminster Confession Of Faith, ch. I:VIII). The words '**by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages**' are particularly significant. For they underscore the fact that the Blessed God, Who has graciously granted to us His Written Word, had also undertaken the preservation and keeping of His Word throughout all ages. We remember the testimony of the Psalmist in the Old Hundredth: 'His truth endureth to all generations'. Now this is specially reassuring and comforting when we realise that the devil is wont to assail the Writ-

ten Word with all his might and craft. But the text that God has maintained is the Traditional Text and this is vindicated by history itself. This is the instrument wielded mightily in the Reformation and in the Golden Age of the Puritans. For this is the text that was the basis of the versions of the New Testament used by Martin Luther, John Calvin, William Tyndale, the Reformers and the Puritans. The New Testament of the Authorised Version of 1611 (the King James Version) is also produced from the Traditional Text.

Hence the nefarious audacity of Hort and Westcott to assert that they have a version to replace the Authorised Version and a more accurate text than the Traditional Text. Undeniably it smacks of the devil's artifice. That Hort and Westcott had papish inclination is not difficult to establish. Consider some of their very own beliefs. 'The pure Romish view seems to be nearer, and more likely to lead to, the truth than the Evangelical' (Hort on 6th July 1848). 'I have been persuaded for many years that Mary-worship and Jesus-worship have very much in common' (Hort wrote to Westcott on 17th October 1860). 'I am inclined to think that such a state as Eden (I mean the popular notion) never existed' (Hort). 'Evangelicals seem to me perverted rather than untrue' (Hort wrote to Westcott on 23rd September 1864). 'I wish I could see to what forgotten truth Mariolatry bears witness' (Westcott on 17th November 1865). 'No one now, I suppose, holds that the first three chapters of Genesis, for example, gives a literal history — I could never understand how any one reading them with open eyes could think they did' (Westcott on 4th March 1890).<sup>\*</sup> Hence it is strange to behold that many who claim themselves to be evangelicals unashamedly espouse the Alexandrian Text and the principles thereof as set forth by these two heretics.

While the Revised Version failed to replace the Authorised Version, the devil continued his warfare to

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<sup>\*</sup> *All these quotations are from the individual autobiographies.*

destroy the Holy Scriptures by increasing the popularity of the Alexandrian Text. But realising that many have already discovered the unreliability and corruption of this new text, the devil has now adopted a new strategy. The name of this new game is Eclecticism.

Now the proponents of Eclecticism claim that the authentic text can be discovered by a process of selection from both the Traditional Text and the Alexandrian Text by a certain system of principles. Most of these principles are subjective in nature. Indeed it is not difficult to see why those who used them contradicted one another on so many accounts in the operation of these principles. That the Eclectic system introduces a subjective element into what should solely be an objective study categorically makes it untenable. The resultant effect is that the Eclectic system has effectively eroded the strength of some of the major doctrines in the Scriptures.

More significantly, Eclecticism upholds the principal assumption of those who introduced the Alexandrian Text. And that view is that the New Testament church has been without a truly accurate text of the New Testament throughout the greater span of its history. The Alexandrian Text, according to Hort and Westcott, was lost in the 4th century and only discovered in the 19th century. Most assuredly this remark is a blatant fabrication.

In any case the basis of recommendation of the Alexandrian Text by its patrons virtually amount to saying that the Traditional Text is defective. It also suggests that the Reformers and Puritans and the 18th century Revivalists were employing a faulty instrument. But most of all, it is a denial of Almighty God's ability to maintain the Word of God for all generations. Advocates of Eclecticism are actually denying and disparaging God's goodness, power and wisdom in keeping the extant manuscripts of the New Testament entirely without error, as what the Westminster divines aptly put it, 'by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical'.

Wherefore it is doubtless that those who subscribe to versions of the Bible translated by the employment of the Eclectic system are actually helping to perpetuate the malice and rage of the devil which he began in Eden and which brought about so great a ruin on this earth. The New American Standard Version (NASV), the New International Version (NIV), the Revised Standard Version (RSV), the Living Bible (LB), the Good News Bible (GNB) and the New English Bible (NEB) are notorious examples.

It needs to be added that in all these versions, the eclectic principle has been employed even for the Old Testament translation. Whereas the original text for the Old Testament has always been the Hebrew Masoretic Text, modern translations have introduced two other texts, namely, the Greek Septuagint (LXX) and the Latin Vulgate. The latter, of course, is introduced by the courtesy of the Antichrist.

It has become a vogue amongst some Bible expositors and sadly, even from the Reformed constituency, to compare passages of the Scriptures from the Authorised Version with the English versions translated by the use of the Alexandrian Text or the Eclectic system and then cast the former as of inferior quality. This, I say, without any hesitation, is a devious but efficient maintenance of the malignant offence that the devil first launched at Eden.

Lest we ourselves are taken up by the snare Eve succumbed to in the garden of Eden, it is extremely vital for us to understand and confirm these matters, though it might be so laborious. For it is a subject pertaining to our life, yea, our eternal life. For the devil does seek stealthily to take the inscripturated Word from us. For if the Word of God is taken away from us, then what hope do we have in this world? **W**



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