

APPENDIX D - HISTORY OF TEXTS TRANSMISSION

It has been established that textual critics acknowledge that without a viable history of the transmission of the Biblical text, lower criticism is unworkable as the choice between variants becomes reduced ultimately to subjective conjecture (page 130). This was the reason Hort devised his genealogical-conflation theory and invented the Lucianic revision (page 120 ff.). It has also been noted that modern eclecticism is likewise doomed to failure as its proponents basically ignore this vital component (page 127). Yet incongruously, we have further documented from the citations of leading moderns that, without a history of the text, critical techniques are unable to determine and hence restore an "original" reading (page 146).

Remember, there is no actual recorded history regarding the transmission of the New Testament documents. We have the resulting manuscripts of that transmission and now are faced with the problem of attempting to work backward while seeking to establish a reasonable, logical history which would account for the present condition of those documents and their variants. This hypothetical reconstructed history must especially account for the fact that we have no extant mss of the Byzantine Textform predating A.D. 400 as this is the most common criticism charged against the TR/Majority Text position by the naturalistic critics.

Indeed this appears a formidable and valid objection since no physical data is available which might be used for refutation. As previously stated, all the extant early manuscript evidence comes from the arid Egyptian region and reflects the mixed types of text prevalent there during the second century.

The fact that the Church was experiencing great and prolonged persecution during the first few centuries under discussion forms the basis for understanding, unraveling, and explaining the current status of the extant mss data. Taking into account this single historical *fact* forms the setting for establishing a comprehensible solution and defense for the Byzantine (Syrian) texttype as well as the phenomenon present in the

other text "Families".¹ Toward achieving the above stated purpose, the foregoing is offered as a general historical framework.

Having been initially written in Koine or common Greek, the geographical region in which that language flourished and from whence the autographs originated would tend to act as a safe haven for the original wording. That region would center around Jerusalem (Gal.2:1-9; Acts 21:17-20 etc.), Syria (especially Antioch from whence Barnabas and Paul labored - Acts 11:25-26; 14:26-28; 15:35; 18:22-23 etc.) extending to the western portion of Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece.

Indeed, Antioch became Paul's home church from which he launched his three missionary journeys. As the Hebrew people were populous in this area and since most of the early Church was comprised of Jews who had received Jesus as the long awaited Messiah, these followers would have been especially jealous over the New Testament readings for such had been their culture and tradition regarding the Old Testament. Therefore, the manuscripts in this "inner" zone would maintain their purity as appeal to the apostles' autographs (or faithful copies of same) would have been possible for many years after their having been written.

Here a qualifying clarification is necessary to distinguish between that which we might label "Church manuscripts" and "Non-church manuscripts".² By "Church" manuscripts is meant those used by the early Churches during public worship and those prepared and distributed from local churches to individual Christians. The "Non-church" designation refers to documents prepared by individuals for personal use outside the church context proper. It is the former that this author defends as being that text to which God's preservation promises apply, not the "Non-church" copies which account for the numerous variant readings.

Conversely, when the early faithfully copied manuscripts of the autographs arrived in regions distant from their sources (in which the

¹ Maurice A. Robinson and William G. Pierpont, *The New Testament in the Original Greek According to the Byzantine/Majority Textform*, (Atlanta, GA: The Original Word Pub., 1991), pp. xxvi-xxxviii. Many of the insights included within this historical reconstruction were gleaned and adapted from the introduction of this work. Of course as the authors, like Pickering et al., are purely Majority Text advocates (vis-a-vis the *Textus Receptus*) and thus "limited restorationists" (shunning theological factors and providential preservation considerations as well, see his pp. xli-xlii), some disparities will be found between their approach and that of this author's.

² *Ibid.*, p. xxviii.

Hebrew mind-set regarding Sacred Writ was greatly diminished and the Gentile frame of reference prevailed), far less constraint would have existed against altering their wording in such locales. This proposal is substantiated by that which prevails even today. The Rabbis continue to safeguard the wording of the Hebrew text; yet, from the days of Marcion and Origen through those of Westcott and Hort unto the present, Gentile scholars – whether unregenerate or Christian conservative – continue to alter the wording of the New Testament, producing edition after edition.

Regardless of motives, over time "popular" alterations and regional as well as personal "corrections" would have been combined in a continual process of scribal corruption. As the various altered mss were cross-corrected with others possessing differing readings, an admixture of texts would have resulted. Thus, in the first few centuries some localities experienced *uncontrolled* non-church types of copies which were widely distributed throughout those areas. These circumstances would have been further complicated due to ever increasing persecution to which the Church was subjected. This persecution would have effectively served as a barrier, hindering movement from region to region thereby cutting off vital controlling and correcting factors.

The reversal of such an uncontrolled process could only have been due to the existence of a protected original autographic text. Otherwise the result would have been that of a patch-work quilt of variant readings created by the individualistic scribes with no prevailing "majority" text ever coming to the fore. Such in fact was the very situation when Jerome was commissioned to attempt to make sense out of the Old Latin translation and produce a "standard text" in order to unify the Latin tradition.¹ Apart from a similar Byzantine revision (of which there is no historical evidence), the dominance of this textform cannot be satisfactorily explained by those who reject the TR as representing the original readings. Only the persisting existence of the autographic text for comparison against these corrupted manuscripts would have ever allowed order to have come out of such chaos.

Thus the proposed theory is that, due to the events and circumstances in which the New Testament documents were copied over the time span of the first three centuries, the original Text rapidly deteriorated into the various uncontrolled popular texts which prevailed in differing localities

¹ Robinson, *The New Testament in the Original Greek According to the Byzantine/Majority Textform*, *op. cit.*, p. xxix.

that were removed from the general Greek speaking Syrian area. Over the normal process of copying and re-copying during which scribal "improvements", "corrections", blunders, and cross-correlation changes from other exemplars added to the corruption process, these "popular" texts eventually would have developed into the distinctive local text forms which centered around the metropolitan regions. These became the birthplaces of differing "texttypes" such as the Western, Alexandrian, and Caesarean (if such an entity actually exists) as well as others which may have been produced but have long since vanished due to a moist climate hostile to their preservation.

The foregoing would have dramatically changed with the advent of Constantine (288-337 A.D.). Upon his granting the Church official endorsement and acceptance, the predominantly "local" nature of the scattered churches became permanently altered. Approval from the throne precipitated greater freedom to the individual Christians resulting in wider travel with greater communication and intercourse between the churches from region to region all across the Empire.

A natural consequence of this would have been the cross-comparison and subsequent correction of these local textforms once they could be compared to the faithful copies of the archetype which had been providentially preserved in the Syrian Churches – the very cradle of Christianity. Thus the archetype itself – the *Textus Receptus* – would then have been available on a major scale for correcting the various local texttypes.

This spontaneous "improvement" would have proceeded on a numerical and geographical scale far greater than ever before possible; nevertheless, it would have taken some period of time until the result would have fully manifested itself. Slowly yet inevitably, nearly all the manuscripts would tend toward a common and universally shared text. Still, some minor distinct readings would have remained yielding their own subgroups among the manuscripts. This "universal text" would have been the only one which could closely approach the common archetype from which all the local text forms had originated. This scenario views this emergent "Byzantine" (Syrian) text as being almost exclusively that of the "non-church" variety described previously whereas the archetype which gave it life is of the "Church manuscript" – namely, the autograph form itself.¹

¹ Herein lies the main conceptual difference between Robinson's theory of the transmission of the N.T. text and the present author's, cp. Robinson's p. xxxi.

The present theory envisions many more "non-church" copies resulting from the above described process than those in the Syrian churches themselves. The increasing number of manuscripts would slowly have overcome the influence of "local" texts to eventually become the dominant text of the Greek-speaking world. This accounts for both the origin and dominance of Byzantine/majority Textform as well as the fact that the Greek Church continues to use the *Textus Receptus* exclusively.

Allusion has been made within the body of this study that scribes are assumed by critics to tend to alter the text being copied into readings with which they are more familiar. Such harmonizing was not a major factor among Byzantine-era scribes as may be proven by comparing the extant N.T. documents themselves. Were this type of alteration widespread, how does one account for the numerous often obvious and sensitive places left completely unchanged. Citing from his own Ph.D. dissertation on the subject of scribal habits, Maurice Robinson states:¹

"Byzantine-era scribes as a whole were less inclined to gratuitously alter the text before them than simply to perform their given duty. It was the earlier scribes in some locales who, during the uncontrolled 'popular' era of persecution and the initial years of Imperial 'freedom,' felt more at liberty to deal with the text as they saw fit.

This suggested transmissional history exposes the fallacy of the maxim "oldest is best". Again, it is not the age of the manuscript itself. The issue is the age and reliability of the **text** contained within the manuscript – that is the real substance of the matter. Robinson is correct when he reminds us that:²

¹ Robinson, *The New Testament in the Original Greek According to the Byzantine/Majority Textform*, *op. cit.*, p. xxxiv. Robinson continues adding that if the Byzantine readings in the early Fathers which are being summarily dismissed by the critics were legitimately included, the Father's overall text would be seen as being more Byzantine than is currently acknowledged by these scholars – exactly as Burgon contended a century ago. Burgon was ignored because he used "uncritical" editions of the Fathers. Today's "critical" editions eliminate distinctive Byzantine readings in places where they are unconfirmed by direct comment. Robinson states that were this practice not implemented, the Fathers' writings would be recognized as containing many more Byzantine readings than current opinion allows. The present reconstruction of the history of transmission would account for the presence of a Byzantine Textform in the writings of the 5th-century Fathers.

² Robinson, *The New Testament in the Original Greek According to the Byzantine/Majority Textform*, *op. cit.*, pp. xxxvi-xxxvii.

"Most early manuscripts in existence today have been affected by the uncontrolled nature of textual transmission which prevailed in their local areas, as well as by the persecutions which came continually against the church. The whole matter of early copying practices is hypothetical, regardless of which textual theory one prefers. We know nothing beyond what can be deduced from what survives. In the early papyri, we may have only *personal* copies, and not those which were generally used by the churches themselves. Also, the papyri all come from a single geographic area, and reflect a good deal of corruption, both accidental and deliberate."

Moreover, it is reasonable to presume that most early copies – many having been made directly from the autographs themselves – would have been as accurate as care would permit. In particular, the Churches in the general Syrian region would not have knowingly allowed defective copies to have been sent forth. The persecution would have engendered deep abiding commitment resulting in the appearance of responsible, dedicated scribes. Thus the first and second copying generations would have yielded faithful reproductions of the sacred deposit.

In view of the existing confused status of the surviving Greek papyrus and uncial MSS, the herein contained general reconstruction of the history of textual transmission seems not only justified but demanded. Only the continual process of manuscript comparison and cross-correction carried out over the centuries would have succeeded in "weeding out" the early scribal corruption and conflicting variant readings. The increased cross-cultural travel and communication which followed Constantine's formal act of tolerance and legitimization of Christianity would have had the natural effect of slowly purging from the manuscripts the conspicuous as well as the less obvious early adulterations. This course would have resulted in a truly "older" and purer text. Such a process would not have been possible unless the basic text of all the Greek manuscripts had been essentially "secure".

After the 9th century the production of most uncial MSS ceased and were systematically replaced by the miniscule style. These predominated until the invention of printing. This "copying revolution" resulted in the destruction of hundreds of previously-existing uncial MSS once they had been copied in cursive script.

Standard Bearers' Browser

Louis M Kole

Vision

Standard Bearers is dedicated to presenting the Biblical and Historical doctrine of Inerrancy; teaching the Bible is **100%** pure; inerrant in the **copy** which we hold in our hands today. Our goal is to strengthen the faith of Pastors, Teachers and Laymen in the authenticity and authority of the **100%** pure, inerrant Word of God, knowing ~ "So then faith cometh by hearing, hearing by the word of God." (Roman 10:17).

Share

Prayerful consider using the resources contained in the *Standard Bearers' Browser* (next two pages) for: your Sermon preparation, Bible Study class, to forward to others and post to your Social media. For more, go to the *Standard Bearers'* home page (www.standardbearers.net) for an overview of the Biblical and Historical Doctrine of Inerrancy. For another quick read (7 pages) see my paper, *Retaking the Hill of Biblical Inerrancy: The Next Reformation~ The Westminster Confession Rejection of the Chicago Statement*.

Conference

For a group presentation by [Dr. Floyd Nolen Jones, Ph.D, Th.D.](#) on: **The Biblical & Historical Doctrine of Inerrancy, The Identity of the Text of the New Testament, Chronology of the Old Testament, Creation & Evolution or Science & the Bible**, please contact me at, louis.kole@standardbearers.net.

Exhort

You **can** know for yourself the identity of the **100%** pure; inerrant, preserved **copy** of the Word of God by the aid of the Holy Spirit; the *Author* and *Superintendent* of the Word of God. This is the promise of God and the witness of the saints.

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew [it] unto you." (John 16:13-14)

"But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." (1 John 2:27)

Francis Turretin¹ 1623-1687 (brackets and emphasis mine):

*"By **original** texts, we do not mean the **autographs** [originals] written by the hand of Moses, of the prophets and the apostles, which certainly do not now exist. We mean their **apographs** ² [perfect copy, 'authentical'; genuine original] which are so called because **they set forth to us the word of God in the very words of those who wrote under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit.**"³*

Hymn ~ *Come, Gracious Spirit- Heavenly Dove!*

God bless,

Louis M Kole *Standard Bearers*
louis.kole@standardbearers.net

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." (Revelation 3:11)

¹Gerstner, called Turretin, "the most precise theologian in the Calvinistic tradition." *Turretin on Justification*' an audio series by John Gerstner (1914-1996) a Professor of Church History at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and Knox Theological Seminary.

² Apograh means "a perfect copy, an exact transcript". This is the same witness of the authors of the Westminster Confession when they described their copy of the Word of God as 'authenticial', which Webster's 1828 dictionary defines as "having a genuine original".

³ Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992 reprint), 1:106, See also Robert Barnett, "Francis Turretin on the Holy Scriptures," a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Dean Burgon Society held at Calvary Baptist Church, Ontario, Canada, in 1995.

Resources

Enjoy the following works provided by *Standard Bearers* on the Biblical and Historical doctrine of Inerrancy.

Dr. Floyd Nolen Jones

- [Works of Dr Jones](#)

This is a PDF portfolio of all the [Works of Dr. Jones](#) listed below except the charts from his Chronology of the Old Testament. Please allow a moment for this PDF portfolio to open.

- [Analytical Red Letter Harmony of the 4 Gospels: A Return to the Historical Text](#)

- [The Septuagint: A Critical Analysis](#)

- [Chronology of the Old Testament: A Return to the Basics](#)

In this book, [Dr. Jones](#) provides a systematic framework of the chronology of the Bible from Genesis through the life of Christ and it comes with a CD containing 14 chronology charts. In addition, a set of full-size prints can be obtained at: [A&E-The Graphics Complex](#) (713) 621-0022; 4235 Richmond Avenue, Houston, Texas 77027; Reference Quote Number: IQ9209 (Floyd Jones Charts).

Excerpts from Dr. Jones' [Chronology of the Old Testament](#)

◇ [Jehoiachin \(Jeconiah\) Age 8 or 18? ~ Chapter 6 \(p.202\)](#)

- [Chronology Charts](#) by Dr. Jones

This is a PDF portfolio of all the Charts by [Dr. Jones](#) from his book, [Chronology of the Old Testament](#). Please allow a moment for the PDF portfolio to open.

Individual Charts by Dr. Jones from, [Chronology of the Old Testament](#)

◇ [Chart 1 ~ Creation to Jesus Christ](#)

◇ [Chart 2 ~ Jacob's Age Determined](#)

◇ [Chart 3 ~ 430 Years Sojourn](#)

◇ [Chart 3A ~ The 4 Generations of Genesis](#)

◇ [Chart 3B ~ Scenarios for Judah's Family in Egypt](#)

◇ [Chart 3CDEF ~ Jacob and Judah](#)

◇ [Chart 4 ~ Judges to the First 3 Kings](#)

◇ [Chart 4AB ~ Judges Tested by Judah's Lineage](#)

◇ [Chart 5 ~ Kings of the Divided Monarchy](#)

◇ [Chart 6 ~ Creation to Creator](#)

◇ [Chart 7 ~ 390 Years Confirmed](#)

- [Which Version is the Bible?](#)

Excerpts from Dr. Jones' [Which Version Is The Bible?](#)

◇ [Mark 16 last Verses ~ Chapter 2 \(p.30\)](#)

◇ [The 1881 Revision ~ Chapter 3 \(p.49\)](#)

◇ [How Princeton Was Corrupted ~ Chapter 8 \(p.186\)](#)

◇ [How the Conservative Seminaries Were Corrupted ~ Chapter 8 \(p.189\)](#)

◇ [The Criticism Today: The Age of Miniscules ~ Chapter 9 \(p.202\)](#)

◇ [Pericope De Adultera John 8 ~ Appendix A \(p.219\)](#)

◇ [The Johannine Comma 1John 5 ~ Appendix B \(p.231\)](#)

◇ [Examples of Modern Criticism ~ Appendix C \(p.241\)](#)

◇ [History of Texts Transmission ~ Appendix D \(p.247\)](#)

Standard Bearers' Browser

Louis M Kole

Louis Kole

- [Works of Louis M Kole](#)
This is a PDF portfolio of **all** the papers by Louis Kole listed below. Please allow a moment for this PDF portfolio to open.
- [How We Know The Bible Is True: 100% Pure, Inerrant](#) (home page)
~ *The Biblical and Historical Doctrine of Inerrancy*
- [Retaking the Hill of Biblical Inerrancy: The Next Reformation](#) (overview-a must read)
~ *The Westminster Confession **Rejection** of the Chicago Statement*
- [A Call To Revival: Restoring the Foundations](#) ("hath God said?")
~ *If the Foundations Be Destroyed What Can the Righteous Do?*
- [The Fear of The Lord: Restoring the Biblical Doctrine of Inerrancy](#) (flagship paper)
~ *The Fear of Man verses the Fear of the Lord*
- [God's Standard Bearers: The Josiah Initiative](#) (state of our witness)
~ *Witnesses to the 100% Pure Copy of Word of God*
- [Divine Preservation: How We 'Lost' the Doctrine of the Divine Preservation of the Word of God](#) (how we erred)
~ *3 Centuries of Sound Doctrine ~ Eradicated in 3 Generations of Neglect*
- [The Josiah Initiative: Countering The Assault Upon the Inerrancy of the Word of God](#) (a call to action)
~ *How are the Mighty Fallen and the Weapons of War Perished!*
- [The 'Lost' Doctrine: Can A Doctrine 'Die' Which Is a Fundamental Truth of the Faith?](#) (lesson from the Reformation)
~ *The 1000 Year 'Death and Rebirth' of the Doctrine of Justification by Grace Alone*

Dr. Jeffrey Khoo

- [Can Verbal Plenary Inspiration Do Without Verbal Plenary Preservation?: The Achilles' Heel Of Princeton Bibliology \(FEBC\)](#)

Dr. Edward F Hills

- [Scholasticism Versus the Logic of Faith ~ Excerpt from A History of My Defence of the King James Version \(FEBC\)](#)
- [The King James Version Defended](#)

More

- [Bible audio](#)
- [Songs ~ Hymns of Worship from the Standard Bearers' play list](#)
- [Bible teaching ~ Audio by Dr Floyd Nolen Jones](#)
- [Bible teaching ~ TV by Dr Floyd Nolen Jones from the Standard Bearers' channel](#)
- [Bible teaching ~ TV by Dr Charles Stanley](#)
- [Bible resources ~ Blue Letter Bible digital Bible and study tools](#)
- [Dictionary ~ Noah Webster's 1828 Digital dictionary](#)
- [Devotional ~ Oswald Chamber's My Utmost for His Highest](#)

Hymn ~ *We Rest on Thee, Our Shield and Our Defender!*

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." (Rev 3:11)

Note:

Should you find a broken link in any of the above, go to the [Standard Bearers'](#) Home page and look under the name of the respective author to access the referenced work.