

THE TRINITARIAN BIBLE SOCIETY'S NON-VPP STAND

(By Philip Tang and Lim Seng Hoo)

INTRODUCTION

The Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) claims that the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS) supports their KJV-VPP view: that the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Textus Receptus copies (apographs) underlying / used by the 1611 KJV Translators are the verbal plenary preserved, jot and tittle perfect and exact virtual photocopy of the Divine Originals (Autographa).

This however is sadly far from the truth. The only thing in common that the TBS holds with FEBC on the doctrine of Holy Scripture is its high regards for the KJV. As for the underlying Masoretic and Greek TR texts, the TBS regards this as being providentially preserved and therefore accurate and reliable. The TBS does not venture beyond this into making extreme, and erroneous, assertions on any of the forms of double inspiration, such as: -

- Ruckmanism: which teaches that the English of the KJV was inspired (i.e. the translators were inspired during their process of translation) so that in any matter of doubt, even doubts regarding conflicts between the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek TR vis-à-vis the English rendering, the Hebrew-Greek is to be corrected by the English.

Ruckmanism essentially holds that the English of the KJV is divinely inspired and perfect.

- VPPism: which necessarily teaches that the KJV Translators were inspired in their textual criticism or recognition of the Hebrew and Greek texts, so as to select all the very words down to the smallest jot and tittle that fully, exactly and perfectly replicated the Divine Original Autographs from among these texts. (NB: This despite the paucity of manuscripts/texts that were available to the Translators).

VPPism essentially holds that the Hebrew-Greek texts used by the KJV Translators are divinely inspired and perfect.

- There exists in the literature at times a hybrid view of the both, which asserts that both the English of the KJV is perfect, and the Hebrew-Greek of the KJV is also perfect.

This brief review includes examining and comparing one FEBC statement versus three TBS statements, enclosed as Appendices:-

- Appendix 1 “The Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of Sacred Scripture” [Official Statement on FEBC Website]
- Appendix 2 “The Trinitarian Bible Society’s Statement of Doctrine of Holy Scripture”
- Appendix 3 “The Received Text - A Brief Look at the Textus Receptus” by G. W. and D. E. Anderson, Trinitarian Bible Society
- Appendix 4 “Email explaining the necessity of the legal suit against TBS (Canada)” from David Cooke MA (Oxon) FCA, Accountant, Trinitarian Bible Society

NB: Throughout this article, the **new VPP extremities are highlighted in red**, and contrasted with the **traditional status quo as represented by the TBS in deep blue**.

I. VPP: PRESERVATION “PROVIDENTIA EXTRAORDINARIA”

Paragraph 2 of the FEBC Statement (Appendix 1) states: -

*“The “providential” preservation of Scriptures is understood as God’s special and not general providence. Special providence or **providentia extraordinaria** speaks of God’s **miraculous intervention** in the events of history and in the affairs of mankind in fulfilment of His sovereign will for the sake of His elect and to the glory of His Name. The divine preservation of the Canon (books) and Text (words) of Scripture comes under God’s special providence.”*

In contrast, the TBS Doctrine of Holy Scripture, [Appendix 2, (footnote 3)] states: -

*“The Trinitarian Bible Society recognises and receives the Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Received Texts as **providentially preserved** and authentic. In so doing, it follows the historic, orthodox Protestant position of acknowledging as Holy Scripture the Hebrew and Greek texts adopted and preserved by the Church. These texts had remained in common use in different parts of the world for more than fifteen centuries and they faithfully represent the texts used in New Testament times.”*

II. VPP: “KJV UNDERLYING TEXTS EXACT AUTOGRAPH REPLICA”

FEBC claims the KJV Translators were inspired in their textual recognition so that the texts that they used were/are an **exact replica** of the Divine Original Writings (Autographa). This fact was lost to the Christian world, until recognised by D A Waite, the best of all luminaries of “Textual Recognition” per paragraph 6 of the FEBC Statement [Appendix 1]: -

*“Knowing where the **perfect Bible is**, is a matter of textual recognition and **NOT** textual criticism. In the field of textual recognition, Burgon is good, Hills is better, **Waite is best.**”*

In contrast, the TBS Doctrine of Holy Scripture [Appendix 2, paragraph 7] states: -

*“The scope of the Society’s Constitution does not extend to the science of textual criticism and hence **the minor variations** between the printed editions of the Textus Receptus are not within the remit of the Society.”*

The TBS Doctrine of Holy Scripture [Appendix 2 WORD List] also defines: -

*“**Received Text:** The Byzantine text was the text underlying the earliest printed editions of the New Testament. The various editions of the Received Text, or Textus Receptus, of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries represented (**with a few very minor differences**) the Byzantine Text—type.”*

The TBS Doctrine of Holy Scripture, [Appendix 2, (footnote 4)] also states that the F H A Scrivener text of 1894 is a reconstructed (post-engineered) one: -

*The Greek Received Text is the name given to a group of printed texts, the first of which was published by Desiderius Erasmus in 1516. The Society believes that the **latest and***

best edition is the text reconstructed by F. H. A. Scrivener in 1894. This text was *reconstructed* from the Greek underlying the New Testament of the Authorised version.

Finally, “A Brief Look at the Textus Receptus” [Appendix 3] recognises TR variations: -

Are the variations between the editions of the Textus Receptus significant?

No. *These variations include spelling, accents and breathing marks, word order and other minor kinds of differences.* As it is stated in the preface to the Trinitarian Bible Society edition of the Textus Receptus, “The editions of Stephens, Beza and the Elzevirs all present substantially the same text, and *the variations are not of great significance and rarely affect the sense*”.

III. VPP: “THE PRESERVED APOGRAPHS ARE STRICTLY INERRANT”

Paragraph 3 and 4 of the FEBC Statement [Appendix 1] states: -

*“The Bible is not only infallible and inerrant in the past (in the Autographs), but **also infallible and inerrant today (in the Apographs).**”*

*“The infallible and inerrant words of Scripture are found in the faithfully preserved Traditional/Byzantine/Majority manuscripts, and fully represented in the Printed and Received Text (or Textus Receptus) that underlie the Reformation Bibles best represented by the KJV, and **NOT** in the corrupted and rejected texts of Westcott and Hort that underlie the many modern versions of the English Bible like the NIV, NASV, ESV, RSV, TEV, CEV, TLB etc.”*

In contrast, the TBS Doctrine of Holy Scripture, [Appendix 2, (footnote 4)] states: -

*“**Errors, omissions, and additions in particular manuscripts** do not impinge upon the qualities of Scripture, including inerrancy, because the errors are, in fact, **no part of inerrant Scripture.**”*

In other words, errors, omissions and additions exist in particular manuscripts but these are errors later introduced by the subsequent copying processes (copyists errors), which does not change the fact that the Original Autographs are without error.

IV. VPP: “THERE ARE NO ERRORS IN THE KJV”

Paragraph 5 of the FEBC Statement (Appendix 1) states implicitly of the KJV: -

*There are no mistakes in the Bible, period. **If there are "discrepancies" in the Bible, the "discrepancies" are only seeming or apparent, NOT real or actual.** Any inability to understand or explain difficult passages in the Bible in no way negates its infallibility and inerrancy, applying the faithful Pauline principle of biblical interpretation: "let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom 3:4). ”*

In contrast, the TBS Doctrine of Holy Scripture, (Appendix 2, footnote 3) states that the translation process must be uninspired (no second inspiration) and hence not absolute: -

*“Translations made since New Testament times must use words chosen by **uninspired men** to translate God’s words. For this reason **no translations of the Word of God can have an absolute or definitive status**. The final appeal must always be to the original languages, in the Traditional Hebrew and Greek texts (as defined in Note 1).”*

V. VPP: “NT AUTHORS NEVER QUOTED GREEK OT (SEPTUAGINT)”

FEBC claims that our Lord Jesus and the Apostles never quoted from the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint), which they viewed as corrupt. In “**Did Jesus and the apostles rely on the corrupt SEPTUAGINT?**” (The Burning Bush, July 2004), Prabhudas Koshy wrote: -

“The claim that Jesus and the New Testament writers always used the Septuagint to quote from the Old Testament is without biblical evidence. There was no need for Jesus and the New Testament writers to rely on the Septuagint to quote the Old Testament. Jesus Himself was the Author of the Holy Scriptures. He could quote Hebrew Scriptures and translate them infallibly into Greek. As far as the Apostles were concerned, the Holy Spirit was their Chief Aide who supervised their writing of the Scriptures.”

In contrast, the TBS Doctrine of Holy Scripture (paragraph 1. 7) states: -

*“Translations from the original languages are likewise to be considered the written Word of God in so far as these translations are accurate as to the form and content of the Original. Acts 8:32f, 15:14-18, Romans 15:8-12 **include Old Testament quotations rendered in Greek**, and yet they are still accorded the status of the Word of God by the Holy Spirit, as indicated by the usage of the expressions ‘scripture’ and ‘it is written’. The variants found in these and other quotations in the New Testament have a divine warrant.”*

VI. LEGAL SUIT BETWEEN TBS (UK) AND TBS (CANADA) DUE TO VPP

One of the sad outcomes of the VPP error was the necessity forced upon TBS (UK) to take up a civil suit against TBS (Canada), to safeguard the good name of the Trinitarian Bible Society from the excesses and error of Perfect KJV-VPPism. The court settlement resulted in TBS (Canada) changing its name to the Graceway Bible Society, whose subscribers include Dr Thomas Strouse and Dr Philip Stringer among others.

Dr Strouse, wrote in his “Biblical Defense for the Verbal, Plenary Preservation of God's Word”: -

*“My Sheep Hear My Voice.” Christ not only teaches that He will preserve the words of the Father, but also that **believers will hear His voice (John 10:26). Where is the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ? HIS VOICE IS HIS WORDS**. The Lord has given believers the means by which to verify the **“received words.”** Believers, indwelt with the Holy Spirit, “hear” and know which words are Christ's “received words.” Furthermore, according to John 10:5, **believers “know not the voice of strangers.” Consequently, believers not only recognize a “received text,” but believers also reject the voice of strangers (“rejected text”).** Applying the teaching of these verses to the version debate, one must conclude that the Lord has preserved His words in a “received text” and that believers will hear the voice of the Lord in this text. This is why Christians have*

maintained that the textus receptus is the voice of the Lord and that the variants in the modern versions are the voice of strangers.

Since John 10:26 states “But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you” and John 10:5, states that believers “know not the voice of strangers”, Dr Strouse can only mean that those who do not use the Textus Receptus are not our Lord’s sheep and lost! This would imply that our Chinese brethren who use the CUV and our Indonesian brethren who use the Alkitab are not regenerated. Dr Strouse’s works are published in “The Burning Bush” while the FEBC website has a direct link to Graceway’s website.

Dr Stringer believes in the ability of spirits taking complete possession of a person, to use as a robot to do things without the person being aware of it. In his article, “The Means of Inspiration”, Dr Stringer related a personal experience with an evil spirit and then applied this to biblical preservation.

“The mother claimed that the spirit would take her over and write out messages through her. She let me read some of them. They were full of blasphemy, obscenities, and attacks on the Lord Jesus. My visitation partner and I both became convinced that a spirit was really writing through her. My point is simple, Satan and demon spirits have the power to dictate their messages. The Lord has more power than they do... The Scripture is supernaturally preserved as God superintends the activities of faithful copyists and translators.”

In an email response on behalf of the Chairman, TBS, David Cooke MA (Oxon) FCA Accountant, Trinitarian Bible Society, explained the difference that the TBS (UK) had with their Canadian branch: -

However, in October 1984, a new General Secretary of TBS (Canada) was appointed, the Rev. R A Baker. In the following years, Mr Baker began gradually to distance himself and TBS (Canada) from Head Office, though the implications of this were not realised for some time. Throughout the early 1990s there was a recurring problem of Mr Baker circulating materials which were unscholarly and did not accurately reflect the position of the Society on textual matters. (The most notable example of this was his circulation of Gail Riplinger’s book, “New Age Bible Versions”).¹ On more than one occasion he promised to cease circulating such items, but it was afterwards discovered that he was continuing to do so.

Thus was the start of the problem, which led to the legal suit and the complete dissociation of the two organisations from each other.

CONCLUSION: It is unequivocally clear that the Trinitarian Bible Society stand is not the Perfect KJV - Verbal Plenary Preservation view promoted by FEBC.

¹ Authors Note: In “New Age Bible Versions”, Gail A. Riplinger signed off as G A Riplinger and explained in “The End Times Victorious Living Prophecy Newspaper”, “Daily during the six years in this investigation, the Lord miraculously brought to me the materials and resources much like the ravens fed Elijah. Each discovery was not the result of effort on my part, but of the directed hand of God so much so that I hesitated to even put my name on the book. Consequently I used G A Riplinger, which signifies to me God And Riplinger - God as Author and Riplinger as Secretary.” Amazing! And this book viciously attacked David Cloud, a fellow VPP proponent! Riplinger’s books are sold by the DBS website, “The Bible for Today” and at the Far Eastern Bible College Book Room.

APPENDIX 1: THE FAR EASTERN BIBLE COLLEGE STAND ON VPP

(Source: "The Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of Sacred Scripture" (FEBC Website))

The Far Eastern Bible College upholds the VPP of Scripture and believes in the following tenets:

- (1) God has supernaturally preserved each and every one of His inspired Hebrew/Aramaic OT words and Greek NT words to the last jot and tittle, so that in every age, God's people will always have in their possession His infallible and inerrant Word kept intact without the loss of any word (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33, John 10:35).
- (2) The "providential" preservation of Scriptures is understood as God's special and not general providence. Special providence or **providentia extraordinaria** speaks of God's **miraculous intervention** in the events of history and in the affairs of mankind in fulfilment of His sovereign will for the sake of His elect and to the glory of His Name. The divine preservation of the Canon (books) and Text (words) of Scripture comes under God's special providence.
- (3) The Bible is not only infallible and inerrant in the past (in the Autographs), **but also infallible and inerrant today (in the Apographs)**.
- (4) The infallible and inerrant words of Scripture are found in the faithfully preserved Traditional/Byzantine/Majority manuscripts, and fully represented in the Printed and Received Text (or Textus Receptus) that underlie the Reformation Bibles best represented by the KJV, and **NOT** in the corrupted and rejected texts of Westcott and Hort that underlie the many modern versions of the English Bible like the NIV, NASV, ESV, RSV, TEV, CEV, TLB etc.
- (5) **There are no mistakes in the Bible, period. If there are "discrepancies" in the Bible, the "discrepancies" are only seeming or apparent, NOT real or actual.** Any inability to understand or explain difficult passages in the Bible in no way negates its infallibility and inerrancy, applying the faithful Pauline principle of biblical interpretation: "let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom 3:4).
- (6) **Knowing where the perfect Bible is is a matter of textual recognition and NOT textual criticism.** In the field of textual recognition, Burgon is good, Hills is better, **Waite is best**.
- (7) The Chinese Union Version (CUV) is the "Word of God" for the Chinese people today since it is the best, most faithful, most reliable, and most accurate version among the Chinese versions presently available. Great care ought to be taken not to undermine our Chinese brethren's confidence in the CUV. Nevertheless, versions or translations are never superior to the inspired and preserved Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek Scriptures; thus there is a need to consult these original language Scriptures for clarity and fulness of meaning, and to compare Scripture with Scripture.²

² Authors Note: Paragraphs (4) and (7) above are self-contradictory and untrue. The CUV is not based on the TR. Dr Jeffrey Khoo on another occasion cited 15 verses (Matt 17:21, 18:11, 23:14, Mark 7:16, 9:44, 46, 11:26, 15:28, Luke 17:36, 23:17, John 5:4, Acts 8:37, 15:34, 24:7, 28:29) as being omitted from the NIV/Westcott & Hort but found in the CUV, whereas in fact, 13 are not in the CUV text but only in its margins (in brackets and smaller print preceded with "some old Mss contains ~"), while Mark 9:44 and 46 are omitted. Additionally, of the list of verses omitted in the NIV cited in pp 82–86 of Dr Khoo's book, "Kept Pure in All Ages", most, such as Col 1:2, 14, 2:2, 11, 1 Thess 1:1, 2 Thess 2:4, 1 Tim 2:7, 3:3, 4:12, 5:4, 16, 6:5, 7, 2 Tim 1:11, 1 Pet 1:22, 4:1, 14, 1 John 4:3, 5:7, Rev 1:8, 11, 5:14, 11:1, 17, 15:2, 16:5, 14, 21:24 are not in the CUV. To bring home the point, the CUV for 2 Sam 8:4 states 1,700 horsemen against the 700 horsemen of the KJV.

APPENDIX 2: THE TBS STATEMENT OF DOCTRINE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

Preface: The Reformation Confessions such as the Westminster (1647), the Savoy (1658), and the London Baptist (1689), state regarding Scripture that **'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'** (WCF 1:8). With this the Society is in full agreement, believing that it accurately summaries the following doctrine:

1. Only the self-interpreting Holy Scripture is competent to define Scripture. The Scripture's witness to itself can be briefly summarised in the following propositions:
 - 1) The Bible is God's written revelation to mankind (Exodus 24:3-4; Psalm 119:43; Matthew 4:4)
 - 2) Through the process of inspiration (which has the meaning 'breathed out by God'), a supernatural power was exerted by the Holy Spirit upon certain chosen men, governing and directing them to write the very words of God, without admixture of error (1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21). This is not to deny that each of the biblical writers had a distinctive style *and* vocabulary, but it is to affirm that the divine superintendence was such that the end product (verbally inspired) was the very *Word* of God, and as such, absolute and pure truth (Romans 3:2; 1 Corinthians 14:37).
 - 3) **The supernatural power involved in the process of inspiration, and in the result of inspiration, was exerted *only* in the *original* product on of the sixty-six Canonical books of the Bible** (2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Peter 3:15-16).
 - 4) In conformity to God's purpose, promise, and command, **faithful and accurate copies were made (Deuteronomy 17:18; Proverbs 25:1) and, through God's special providential care, His Word has been preserved in all generations** (Psalm 119:152; Matthew 5:18; 24:35; Luke 16:17; 1 Peter 1:25). The professing people of God under the Old and New Testaments have been the appointed custodians of His Word (Psalm 147:19, 20; Romans 3:2; Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27), in a process sometimes referred to in textual criticism as 'ecclesiastical transmission'.
 - 5) The Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles received the preserved and standard Hebrew text of the Old Testament as *Scripture* (Luke 4:16-19, 21; 2 Timothy 3:16). This serves as our pattern for accepting the historically received text of the New Testament also as *Scripture* (1 Timothy 5:18 cf. Luke 10:7; 2 Peter 3:15-16).
 - 6) These texts of Scripture³ reflect the qualities of God-breathed Scripture, including being authentic, holy, pure, true, infallible, trustworthy, excellent, self-authenticating, necessary, sufficient, perspicuous, self-interpreting, authoritative and inerrant (Psalm 19:7-9, Psalm 119). They are consequently to be received as the Word of God (Ezra 7:14; Nehemiah 8:8; Daniel 9:2; 2 Peter 1:19) and the correct reading at any point is to be sought within these texts.⁴
 - 7) **Translations from the original languages are likewise to be considered the written Word of God in so far as these translations are accurate as to the form and content of the Original. Acts 8:32f, 15:14-18, Romans 15:8-12 include Old Testament quotations rendered in Greek**, and yet they are still accorded the status of the Word of God by the Holy Spirit, as indicated by the usage of the expressions 'scripture' and 'it is written'. **The variants found in these and other quotations in**

³ The Trinitarian Bible Society recognises and receives the Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Received Texts as **provisionally preserved and authentic**. In so doing, it follows the historic, orthodox Protestant position of acknowledging as Holy Scripture the Hebrew and Greek texts adopted and preserved by the Church. These texts had remained in common use in different parts of the world for more than fifteen centuries and they faithfully represent the texts used in New Testament times.

⁴ **Errors, omissions, and additions in particular manuscripts do not impinge upon the qualities of Scripture**, including inerrancy, because the errors are, in fact, no part of inerrant Scripture.

the New Testament have a divine warrant.⁵ In order to achieve the necessary accuracy in translation, the method to be followed should be that of formal equivalence, not dynamic equivalence. The translation should best reflect both the form and the content of the Original, by being as literal as is possible and as free as is necessary; that is, by translating the words, and following the arrangement and propositional content of the original text as much as is possible, and by being free of human invention, addition, and subtraction, except as is necessary.

2. As affirmed above, the Lord Jesus endorsed the preserved and standard Old Testament of His day as 'scripture' (Luke 4:17-21), regarding it as reliable to each particular word and incapable of being 'broken' ('loosed' or 'untied') because pure, uncorrupted, and therefore absolutely trustworthy (John 10:34-36). The Church has therefore rightly and necessarily regarded the historically recognised manuscripts of the Old Testament Hebrew and the New Testament Greek, as the verbally inspired Word of God written, complete in the sixty-six Canonical books.
3. The Constitution of the *Trinitarian Bible Society* specifies the textual families to be employed in the translations it circulates. The Masoretic Hebrew⁶ and the Greek Received⁷ Texts are the texts that the Constitution of the *Trinitarian Bible Society* acknowledges to have been preserved by the special providence of God within Judaism and Christianity. Therefore these texts are definitive and the final point of reference in all the Society's work.
4. The scope of the Society's Constitution does not extend to the science of textual criticism and hence **the minor variations between the printed editions of the *Textus Receptus* are not within the remit of the Society.** It necessarily follows that the *Trinitarian Bible Society* will not engage in textual criticism with a view to the alteration or emendation of the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Received Texts by the use of other Hebrew or Greek texts. Editorial policy and practice will observe these parameters.
5. In relation to "promoting and editing new translations, and selecting versions in Foreign languages 'the Constitution of the Society states. 'The aim shall be to produce or select versions whose textual basis is as close as possible to the Hebrew Masoretic and the Greek Received texts underling both the English Authorised Version and translations of comparable standing made from these texts into other European languages at the time of the Protestant Reformation'. Editorial policy and practice will conform to this aim.

Approved by the General Committee at its meeting held on 17th January 2005 and revised 25th February 2005

Signed:

M. H. Watts, Chairman
B. G Felce, Vice-Chairman
F. C. Farncombe, Vice-President
G. Hamstra, Vice-President
D. Oldham, Vice-President
C. A. Wood, Vice-President
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⁵ **Translations made since New Testament times must use words chosen by uninspired men to translate God's words. For this reason no translations of the Word of God can have an absolute or definitive status.** The final appeal must always be to the original languages, in the Traditional Hebrew and Greek texts (as defined in Note 1).

⁶ The Society accepts as the test edition of the Hebrew Masoretic text the one prepared in 1524-25 Jacob Ben Chayyim and known, after David Bloomberg the publisher as the Bloomberg text. This text underlies the Old Testament in the Authorized Version.

⁷ The Greek Received Text is the name given to a group of printed texts, the first of which was published by Desiderius Erasmus in 1516. The Society believes that the **latest and best edition** is the text reconstructed by F. H. A. Scrivener in 1894. This text was **reconstructed** from the Greek underlying the New Testament of the Authorised version.

WORD LIST

Ancient Versions: For example, the Septuagint, Peshitta Coptic (Sahidic or Thebaic and Bohairic), Ethiopic, Old Latin (Vetus Italia), and Vulgate, produced in the first few centuries of the Christian era.

Apographs: Copies of the original and inspired manuscripts. The Trinitarian Bible Society (following the Traditional Text of the Protestant Church) regards the **Masoretic Hebrew and Greek Received texts as the best representatives of the Autographs.**

Autographs: The original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts written by the inspired writers, which are now unavailable.

Byzantine: The Byzantine era is 312-1453 AD. The texts produced by Erasmus, Beza, etc., which in time became known as forms of the Received Text, were to a very great extent derived from the Byzantine family.

Complutensian Polyglot: The Polyglot Bible, conceived in 1502 by Francisco Ximenes de Cisneros (1437-1517) and produced at Alcala (Latin: Complutum) in Spain, was an edition in which the Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin Vulgate texts appeared side by side. The fifth of the six volumes contained the text of the New Testament in Greek and a Greek glossary with Latin equivalents. This was printed in 1514 (as the first printed Greek New Testament), but the Polyglot was not actually published until 1520 and then not generally circulated until 1522.

Critical texts: Text constructed without adequate regard to the historical place given to manuscripts and particular readings within the Church of God, and relying on a few old, but nevertheless unrepresentative, manuscripts and readings which have lain in obscurity for many centuries. Critical texts are such as the Westcott/Hort or Nestle/Aland texts, both of which rely heavily upon Codex Sinaiticus, Aleph-01 (4th Cent.) and Codex Vaticanus, B - 03 (4th Cent).

Dynamic equivalence: The principle of translation that attempts to recreate on the reader of the receptor language the impact the original text had on the original recipients, without being bound literally to reproduce the words as nearly as possible. (The translator then assumes the role of interpreter, to determine the thought intended in the original. This often results in an interpretative paraphrase that has little or no relationship to the original language text.) While all translations may need to employ dynamic equivalence to a limited extent, the *Trinitarian Bible Society* rejects the extensive and unnecessary use of this method of translation.

"Ecclesiastically transmitted": Scripture adopted (i.e. recognised and acknowledged) and preserved by the Church as the true and authentic text, as was the Hebrew Old Testament text used in the synagogues of our Lord's time (and later preserved by the Masoretes) and the Greek New Testament text, acknowledged by the Greek Church: throughout the Byzantine period (312-1453 AD), and long after, and preserved in the overwhelming majority of existing Greek manuscripts. The printed editions of the Greek text, commencing with **Erasmus in 1546 although based on a relatively small group of available manuscript have been found faithfully to reflect the great majority of these manuscripts. Erasmus first edition included, in a few cases, readings from the Latin Vulgate. This was largely due to the fact that some of the Greek manuscripts available to him were incomplete (e.g. his manuscript of Revelation was missing its last six verses),** in Erasmus fourth edition in 1527, however, he made use of the Complutensian Polyglot which contained an edition of the Greek text based on a number of other Greek manuscripts and, in the light of the Complutensian, his Greek New Testament was thoroughly revised. **However, a few readings taken from the Latin, for which there are now no extant Greek manuscripts, have always been included in the various printed editions of the Received Text.**

Eclectic: By definition 'selecting what is considered best from various sources', but in practice, it usually means heavy dependence on Aleph and B. The differences between the Critical texts and the Eclectic texts are based very largely on noting more than the editor's subjective considerations.

Extant Copies: **Copies of the Greek manuscripts that have survived until the present time. Although the extant copies are of various ages, completeness and accuracy, the great majority of them (over**

90%) agree with the traditional form of the New Testament found in the printed editions of the Received Text.

Formal equivalence: The principle of translation that accepts *every* word of Holy Scripture as being of divine origin and therefore takes into account *every* word in the original language to ensure that as far as possible the grammar, the form, the vocabulary and the syntax of the Hebrew and Greek are followed in the translation ('As literal as possible, as free as necessary'). The Society believes this is the only acceptable method of translation.

Infallible/Inerrant The word 'infallible' means 'not liable to prove false, erroneous, or mistaken', while 'inerrant' means 'free from error' or 'unerring'. Historically, Protestant theologians have used the former term to affirm that Scripture is absolutely truthful and trustworthy. The words apply, in the first instance, to the Autographs, and then to the true Text providentially preserved *within* the Masoretic Hebrew and Greek Received Texts. In modern usage the terms are often used interchangeably, both declaring that God's written Word is wholly and completely true.

Inspired: The Greek is *theopneustos*, 'breathed out from God' (2 Timothy 3:16). Scripture is of Divine origin and authorship, the product of the Divine breath, inspiration is 'plenary' (from the Latin, *plenus*, meaning 'full'), which signifies that inspiration is complete and entire, so that the Scripture as a whole is the Word of God ('all *scripture*'). Inspiration is also 'verbal' (from the Latin, *verbum*, meaning 'word'), which signifies that the very words of Scripture are God-given, ensuring that His Truth has been correctly and properly communicated. 'I...will put my words in his mouth' (Deuteronomy 18:18; cf. 2 Samuel 23:1, 2). 'And he said unto me. Write: for these words are true and faithful' (Revelation 21:5; cf. Jeremiah 30:2).

Majority Text: A text based on the majority of manuscript witnesses. *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, edited by Zane C. Hodges and Arthur L. Farstad (1982), is a modern example of the Majority text. Although close to the Received Text, there are a number of differences and some of these are significant (e.g. John 7:53-8:11; Acts 8:36, 37). Furthermore, as no detailed collation of all surviving manuscripts has taken place, the exact majority text cannot yet be determined; and even if one day that became possible, the resultant text could only be provisional and tentative, because the discovery of further manuscripts might change minority readings to majority readings, or vice versa. The doctrine of providential preservation, however, teaches that the Church is and always has been in possession of the true text of Scripture.

Manuscripts: Originally written on papyrus or vellum. The Greek manuscripts are divided into those known as Uncials, written in capital letters, and Minuscules or Cursives, written in small, joined handwriting.

Masoretic: From the Hebrew, *masorah*, transmission. The Masoretes (Jewish scholars and scribes) were active from 500 AD (some think much earlier) to about 1000 AD and it was their purpose to hand on the Hebrew Text of the Old Testament as they had received it. One Masoretic text was edited by Jacob Ben Chayyim for the second rabbinic Bible published by Daniel Bloomberg in Venice in 1524-25". This is the text underlying the Authorised Version.

Old Latin: The Old Latin translation was undertaken considerably before that of the Latin Vulgate so closely associated with Jerome (c. 342-420). The Old Testament was translated from the Septuagint the New was one of the earliest translations of the Greek (quoted by Tertullian [d. c.220] and Cyprian [d. c 258]) It is available only in fragments today.

Providential Preservation: See Westminster Confession of Faith 1:8—'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 authentical (Matthew 5:18)...'. As taught in Psalm 117:2 and Matthew 24:35, etc., God has preserved His Word through the ages. The professing people of God under the Old and New Testaments have been His instruments in its preservation (Psalm 147:19, 20; Romans 3:2).

Received Text: The Byzantine text was the text underlying the earliest printed editions of the New Testament. The various editions of the Received Text, or *Textus Receptus*, of the sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries represented (with a few very minor differences) the Byzantine Text—type. Erasmus edited five editions of the New Testament text from 1516 to 1535, and others were produced by Estienne (the Latin form of his name is Stephanus), Beza and Bonaventure and Abraham Elzevir. The phrase 'Received Text' comes from the Preface to Elzevirs' second edition (1633). This title has been used over the centuries to classify all the printed editions of the Greek text of the same provenance.

Textus Receptus: See Received Text.

Translations: The rendering of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures in other languages which, when accurate, are to be received as the Word of God.

Approved and signed by the General Committee at its meeting held on 17th January 2005.

APPENDIX 3: THE RECEIVED TEXT - A BRIEF LOOK AT THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS

By G. W. and D. E. Anderson

In seeking translations for publication, the aim of the Trinitarian Bible Society is to produce or select versions of the New Testament "whose textual basis is as close as possible to the ... Greek Received" text.¹ "The Society uses the form of the Greek text of the New Testament known as the Textus Receptus or Received Text."²

These statements in the introductory material of the Trinitarian Bible Society are well known to most of our supporters. However, questions have arisen over the years regarding the meaning and purpose of the Society's stance on the Greek text. We would like to examine some of these questions, in the hope of helping our supporters understand better the Society's stand.

What is the importance of the Greek Text?

The question which puzzles some of our supporters is why we need to concern ourselves with the Greek text at all. We have the English Authorised Version -- an excellent Bible in a language understood by millions around the world -- whereas Greek is not a worldwide language and the Greek of the New Testament is known only to a few scholars. So why do we need the Greek text?

God in His providence chose to have the New Testament written in Greek. As the translators of the Authorised Version so aptly wrote, the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New "are the two golden pipes, or rather conduits, where through the olive branches empty themselves into the gold. ... These tongues, therefore, (the Scriptures, we say, in those tongues,) we set before us to translate, being the tongues wherein God was pleased to speak to his Church by his Prophets and Apostles."³ The Westminster Divines, too, recognised the importance of the original language texts, stating that it was these texts, which "being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical",⁴ are to be translated into other languages. It is because God moved men to write His New Covenant Word in Greek that we concern ourselves with the text in this language.

Is there only one Greek text?

No. The various books of the New Testament were written individually and copied to be circulated amongst the churches of the ancient world. In time God moved men to combine these books into a single volume, the New Testament. This volume and its parts were copied and recopied by hand for centuries. Many manuscripts have been found over the centuries in areas of the ancient Greek-speaking world, and a few, less reliable, manuscripts have been discovered in Alexandria, Egypt.

By the time of the development of the printing press in the mid-15th century, there were many handwritten manuscripts available. Over the next centuries, numerous men set about collecting, combining and comparing the manuscripts in order to have one complete Greek New Testament text to print. One of the earliest of these is the text we know of as the Textus Receptus or Received Text.

This work has not stopped, and today scholars are continuing to collect and collate manuscripts in an effort to produce what they believe to be a better Greek text. The most recent of these is the work, based upon the less reliable manuscripts, published through the United Bible Societies; this is commonly called the Critical Text. For a number of reasons, expounded in other publications of the Society (see [below](#)), we reject the Critical Text and use the Textus Receptus as the basis for our translation work.

What is the Textus Receptus?

Today the term Textus Receptus is used generically to apply to all editions of the Greek New Testament which follow the early printed editions of Desiderius Erasmus. Erasmus of Rotterdam (1469?-1536), a Roman Catholic humanist, translated the New Testament into Latin and prepared an edition of the Greek to be printed beside his Latin version to demonstrate the text from which his Latin came. Erasmus used six or seven Greek manuscripts (the oldest being from the 10th century), combining and comparing them in a

process in which he chose the correct readings where there were variants. **On several occasions he followed the Latin and included some of its readings in his text.** This edition was published in 1516. There was great interest in this Greek text, and it is the Greek text for which the volume is remembered. This New Testament was the first published edition of a Textus Receptus family New Testament.

The term was first used, however, to refer to the edition of the Greek New Testament published by the Elzevirs in 1633. The preface to this edition, written by Daniel Heinsius, includes the Latin phrase "textum ... receptum". Because of this, the 1633 edition became known as the "Textus Receptus" or the Received Text. This term has been expanded to include numerous editions of the Greek New Testament which come from the same Byzantine textual family representing the majority of the handwritten Greek manuscripts before the 16th century.

It needs to be remembered that the editions included in this family of Greek New Testaments were printed volumes. The Greek texts which preceded them were all hand-copied manuscripts which were in turn copied from copies for many hundreds of years. **No two of the well over 5,000 manuscripts which are known today agree 100% with each other. In other words, the Textus Receptus was not printed from one manuscript alone.**

How many editions of the Textus Receptus are there?

There were **approximately thirty distinct editions of the Textus Receptus made over the years. Each differs slightly from the others.** There have been over 500 printings.

Why are various editions called 'Erasmus', 'Stephens', etc.?

Numerous men during the past four centuries have produced editions of the Textus Receptus; these editions bear their names and the years in which they were published. These include:

- the work of Stunica as published in the Complutensian Polyglot (printed in 1514 but not circulated until 1522);
- the Erasmus editions of 1516, 1519, 1522, 1527 and 1535;
- the Colinaeus edition of 1534 which was made from the editions of Erasmus and the Complutensian Polyglot.
- the Stephens editions (produced by Robert Estienne, who is also called Stephanus or Stephens) of 1546, 1549, 1550 and 1551;
- the nine editions of Theodore Beza, an associate of John Calvin, produced between 1565 and 1604, with a tenth published posthumously in 1611;
- the Elzevir editions of 1624, 1633 (the edition known for coining the phrase "Textus Receptus") and 1641.

Stephanus is best remembered for his edition of 1550. It followed the Erasmus editions of 1527 and 1535 and was the first edition to include marginal variant readings, which were collated from fourteen manuscripts and the Greek New Testament of the Complutensian Polyglot. It became one of the best known editions of the Textus Receptus. Called the "Royal edition", it was very popular in England and is still published today in the United States in the form of an interlinear which is sometimes referred to as the "Berry" text. This is a misnomer because George Ricker Berry simply added the "Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament" and a chapter entitled "New Testament Synonyms" to the edition of the Stephens 1550 text.

One of the most important editions of the Textus Receptus is the Beza edition of 1598. This edition, in addition to the Stephens 1550 and 1551 editions, was used as the Greek basis of the Authorised Version of 1611. Beza collated and used numerous Greek manuscripts and printed editions in his work, and incorporated Jerome's Latin Vulgate and his own Latin and Greek text along with textual annotations.

Are the variations between the editions of the Textus Receptus significant?

No. **These variations include spelling, accents and breathing marks, word order and other minor kinds of differences.** As it is stated in the preface to the Trinitarian Bible Society edition of the Textus Receptus, "The editions of Stephens, Beza and the Elzevirs all present substantially the same text, and the variations are not of great significance and **rarely affect the sense**".⁵

Which edition of the Textus Receptus does the Trinitarian Bible Society print?

In the latter part of the 19th century, F. H. A. Scrivener produced an edition of the Greek New Testament which reflects the Textus Receptus underlying the English Authorised Version. This edition, published posthumously in 1894, is currently published by the Society.

How does the Scrivener edition differ from the other editions of the Textus Receptus?

F. H. A. Scrivener (1813-1891) attempted to reproduce as exactly as possible the Greek text which underlies the Authorised Version of 1611. However, **the AV was not translated from any one printed edition of the Greek text. The AV translators relied heavily upon the work of William Tyndale and other editions of the English Bible. Thus there were places in which it is unclear what the Greek basis of the New Testament was.** Scrivener in his reconstructed and edited text used as his starting point the Beza edition of 1598, identifying the places where the English text had different readings from the Greek. He examined eighteen editions of the Textus Receptus to find the correct Greek rendering, and made the changes to his Greek text. When he finished he had produced an edition of the Greek New Testament which more closely underlies the text of the AV than any one edition of the Textus Receptus.

How many differences are found between the Scrivener text and the Stephanus and Beza texts?

There are approximately **190 differences between the Scrivener text and the Beza 1598. There are 283 differences between the Scrivener text and the Stephanus 1550.** These differences are minor, and pale into insignificance when compared with the approximately 6,000 differences -- many of which are quite substantial -- between the Critical Text and the Textus Receptus.

What is the position of the TBS regarding the Textus Receptus?

As formalized in the amendment to our Constitution in 1992, it is our aim to "produce or select versions whose textual basis is as close as possible to the Hebrew Masoretic and the Greek Received texts underlying both the English Authorised Version and translations of comparable standing made from these texts into other European languages at the time of the Protestant Reformation". This statement continues our long-held belief in the superiority and excellence of the Textus Receptus. We look to God to help us continue this testimony in the coming years of the new millennium.

Where does this leave us today?

We can have the confident assurance that the Word of God as it is found in **the Textus Receptus New Testament is a trustworthy representation of the text** as originally given. God has provided that many generations of believers have printed editions of the Greek text and Bibles translated from them. For the most part, the Textus Receptus follows the Greek manuscripts which were in widespread use for centuries. God continued to preserve His New Testament by guiding His people to use a text which, although in a printed form, nevertheless is God's holy Word from eternity. May Christians reject the modern Greek texts and the versions which follow them and use the Textus Receptus Greek New Testament and the Authorised Version, which God has blessed for many centuries!

¹ The Constitution of the Society, p. 1.

² An Introduction to the Society's Principles, p. 3.

³ The Translators to the Reader (London: TBS, 1998), pp. 24-5.

⁴ Westminster Confession of Faith 1.8.

⁵ The New Testament: The Greek Text Underlying the English Authorised Version of 1611, p. ii.

APPENDIX 4: TBS EXPLANATION OF LEGAL CASE AGAINST TBS (CANADA)

Emmanuel Church <contact@salisburyemmanuel.org.uk> wrote:
From: "Emmanuel Church" <contact@salisburyemmanuel.org.uk>
To: "Philip Tang" <philiptangkh@yahoo.com>
Subject: RE: Justification of using legal means to solve problems of the Church.
Date: Thu, 13 Apr 2006 16:22:05 +0100

Dear Mr Tang

Thank you for your e-mail of 31 March addressed to our Chairman, which has been referred to me, as I was heavily involved in the matter of the problems with our former branch in Canada.

Set out below is the substance of a Statement that was issued by ourselves at the conclusion of the legal process in Canada, which I believe answers your first question.

With regard to the second question, you will see from the paragraph below beginning "Though unpleasant . . ." that we do not believe that our action in using legal means in this specific case should in any way be used to seek to justify individuals within a church context going to law with one another. Such a situation is precisely the situation envisaged by I Corinthians 6. If there are trouble-makers in the church, they should be dealt with by the due disciplinary process of the local church as set out in Scripture in such passages as Matthew 18.15-20 and II Thessalonians 3.14, 15.

We hope that these comments are helpful to you.

With Christian greetings

David Cooke MA (Oxon) FCA
Accountant, Trinitarian Bible Society

Statement re Canada

In 1968, Trinitarian Bible Society formed a branch in Canada, known as TBS (Canada). For the following 16 years, the relationship between TBS (Canada) and the UK Head Office remained a very cordial and constructive one.

However, in October 1984, a new General Secretary of TBS (Canada) was appointed, the Rev. R A Baker. In the following years, Mr Baker began gradually to distance himself and TBS (Canada) from Head Office, though the implications of this were not realised for some time.

Throughout the early 1990s there was a recurring problem of Mr Baker circulating materials which were unscholarly and did not accurately reflect the position of the Society on textual matters. (The most notable example of this was his circulation of Gail Riplinger's book, "New Age Bible Versions".) On more than one occasion he promised to cease circulating such items, but it was afterwards discovered that he was continuing to do so.

In 1995 the Society realised that the provisions of the new Charities Act 1993 would require us in future to consolidate into our annual accounts the accounts of its overseas branches, including Canada. Accordingly, the Society's accountant wrote to all of the branches in late 1995 advising them of this and requesting them in advance to be prepared to supply copies of their accounts for 1995 to Head Office as soon as possible. All of the other branches complied as requested, but TBS (Canada) responded to the effect that they were not a branch of the Society and would not supply the figures requested!

Following correspondence with Mr Baker, the Society advised TBS (Canada) at a meeting in May 1996 that, to avoid further confusion, it would be necessary for TBS (Canada) to make certain changes to ensure that the lines of responsibility of the branch to Head Office were clearly understood. Shortly afterwards, the

Society received a 7-page threatening letter from lawyers acting for TBS (Canada), demanding that we supply them with the Canadian mailing list, and warning us that they would take legal action against us if we continued to act in Canada, other than through themselves.

The decision to terminate our relationship with TBS (Canada) was taken in September 1996, and a new branch was begun, headed up by Mr Gary den Boer. In October of that year, we learned that TBS (Canada) had registered both their name and that of the Society as their trademarks in Canada! This placed the Society in an impossible position: we were faced with three unpleasant alternatives:

1. We could agree to only operate in Canada through TBS (Canada), an organisation in which we no longer had any confidence;
2. We could cease operating altogether in Canada;
3. We could challenge the decision by the Trade-mark Registrar to register our name as the property of TBS (Canada).

Though unpleasant, the third alternative seemed to be the only one realistically open to us. Certain supporters have raised the question of I Corinthians 6 in this connection, and to this the Society's General Committee gave careful consideration. However, it was concluded that while on a personal level it is plainly important to seek to apply the principle contained in that passage of Scripture, the situation here was very different. The Committee members are the trustees of the assets of the Society, and, having been placed in such a position of trust, it would be both unscriptural and illegal not to take steps to seek to recover a most important asset of the Society which had been effectively "stolen" from us – the Society's name. We were advised that the only way the decision of the Trade-mark Registrar could be challenged was by applying to the Federal Court, naming TBS (Canada) and the Trade-mark Registrar as defendants. After repeatedly urging TBS (Canada) to withdraw their unlawful registering of our name - to no avail - we reluctantly did this, seeking the recovery of our name and our costs, but not seeking any punitive damages.

In response, TBS (Canada) launched a frivolous claim in the Provincial Court, suing the Society for C\$6,000,000 for alleged defamation and breach of fiduciary duty. We had no alternative but to defend the Society against this action, until such time that TBS (Canada) agreed to withdraw it.

Once the Society lodged a defence against the Provincial Court action, TBS (Canada) professed an interest in reaching a settlement, and negotiations commenced. The negotiation process was very tortuous, with a number of set-backs along the way, but we are pleased to announce that at a meeting in Toronto on **18 July 2001 an agreement was reached, which in essence gave the Society, after some time delay, all that we had sought in our Federal Court action (with the exception of the recovery of costs), while giving TBS (Canada) nothing of what it had sought in its Provincial Court action.**

The settlement agreement was subject to the membership of TBS (Canada) agreeing at their Annual Meeting in October 2001 to change their name to something that would not be confusingly similar to ours. This they did: we understand that they will now operate under the name GraceWay Bible Society with effect from 31 August 2002. Under the terms of the agreement, they will also be entitled to use a sub-title, "Formerly known as The Trinitarian Bible Society (Canada)" for a further two years.

Throughout this whole sad business, the Society was concerned to preserve its good name (Proverbs 22.1), which was felt to be one of the most valuable assets that the Society owns. The legal action was taken with great regret, but with a concern for justice and with an eye to the future prosperity of the work in Canada. This work is now being carried on by our new branch based in British Columbia under the efficient leadership of Mr Gary den Boer, and we are thankful at the way the work has continued to progress in recent years.