

dazzle with their promise of keeping the Bible relevant, who could not, and cannot, understand the speech of Burgon and Hills.⁷⁰

Burgon and Hills were, in the best sense of the word, conservative by temperament, which meant they were also responsible scholars. They attempted to state their case as compellingly and with as much learning as their subject actually demanded. They were both experts in their field--no one has ever doubted this--whether one accepted their judgments, or not,

In the later half of this century, however, particularly in the United States among the anabaptist communities, what has emerged is a vulgar profanation of their effort,

A Society for Burgon?

A group of twice separated, fundamentalist Baptists, formed a society some years back calling it the "Dean Burgon Society." This was not a society in the usual sense of the word, "a voluntary association of individuals for common ends; *esp.*: an organized group working together or periodically meeting because of common interests, beliefs, or profession."⁷¹

The name would seem to imply that the common interest that brought together the members of this society would be an interest in Burgon and his views, in the same way that those who are members of the Audubon Society share a common interest in bird watching. If, however, in order to become a member of the Audubon Society one had also to agree to be a faithful member of and supporter of the Republican Party in the United States, or of the Tory Party in Great Britain, they would cease to *be just* a society interested in bird watching. They would now be a much narrower group, which would be better termed, "The Republicans, or Tories, for Bird Watching Society."

⁷⁰ Evidence of this can be found in typical publications, well-packaged for mass consumption, such as, P. W. Comfort, *Early Manuscripts and Modern Translations of the New Testament* (Wheaton, 190); P. W. Comfort, ed. *The Origin of the Bible* (Wheaton, 1992).

⁷¹ *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, s.v., "society."

This Burgon society is so organized that not only could Dean Burgon not be a committee member, he could not even be a member in any way of this society that, nevertheless, uses his name! It is organized more like a local, independent, Baptist Church, with which Burgon would never have been associated.

The irony is a profound one. A group that Burgon publicly called a sect, organized to use his name in a society to which he could not be a member.⁷² This is confounding in its own right, but it is the public platform of this organization, claiming that it represents Burgon's own views, which is the real scandal,

Burgon Against the Burgon Society

Within the pages of one recent collection of talks given by members of this organization, it was claimed, contrary to Burgon's own opinion, that,

The King James Bible does not “lag behind” any of the “recent translations because of its inferior textual basis. It has a *superior textual base!* We do not concur that the King James Bible is *inferior* in any way

Burgon certainly did. This statement does not reflect the position of John William Burgon. He spent a great deal of time deflecting attempts by his critics to paint him as someone who was advocating the perfection of the *textus receptus*. Again in reply to Bishop Ellicott, Burgon complained of unfair treatment in the following reply:

I should enter at once on an examination of your reply, but I am constrained at the outset to remonstrate with you on the exceeding unfairness of your entire method of procedure...., you labour to enlist vulgar prejudice against me:-- partly, by insisting that I am for determining disputed Readings by an appeal to the Textus Receptus, "--which (according to you) I look upon as *faultless*:--partly by exhibiting me in disagreement with Lachmann, Tischendorf and Tregelles. The irrelevancy of this later contention--*the groundlessness of the former*-- may not be passed over... (italics mine)⁷³

Elsewhere he had made his position clear:

⁷² I once pointed out this irony in a member of this group and was promptly told that had Burgon been alive today he would not be a member of the Anglican Church, but he would, instead, be a Baptist,

⁷³ *Burgon Revision Revised*, p, 372-373; Cf also, pp. 17; 107-1 OS.

Once for all we request it may be clearly understood that we do not, by any means, claim *perfection* for the Received Text. We entertain no extravagant notions on this subject. Again and again we shall have occasion to point out {e.g. at page]07) that the *Textus Receptus* needs correction.⁷⁴

In fact, Burgon cited one correction to the *textus receptus* he was ready to make immediately, and he chided the Revised Version committee for retaining this T.R reading jn the Revised Version!:

For, in not a few particulars, the "Textus Receptus" *does* call for Revision, certainly.... To mention a single instance;-- When our Lord first sent forth HIS Twelve Apostles, it was certainly no part of His ministerial commission to them to "raise the dead" ασθενουντας θεραπευετε, S Mathew x. 8). This is easily demonstrable. Yet is the spurious clause retained by our Revisionists.⁷⁵

Miller and Scrivener Against the Burgon Society

Moreover, Burgon's coadjutor, Edward Miller, in his little handbook made this same point clear. Referring in the school that he and Burgon belonged to as the "Sound School" of textual criticism, Miller remarked that,

it is unjust to insinuate that they [the 'Sound School'] are set against all revision of the Greek Text, They would not be Textualists at all if they were not ready to adopt what are really the verdicts upon all the evidence. "Again and again," says Dean Burgon. "we shall have to point out that the Textus Receptus needs correction". No one can reaii Dr Scrivener's "Plain Introduction," a work which every clergyman should possess and study, without observing that so stiff an adhesion to the Text received from the last three centuries has no place in his thoughts. Quotation or proof of so notorious a circumstance arc absolutely unnecessary⁷⁶

⁷⁴Ibid. p. 21.n.2 Elsewhere he affirmed unequivocally, "In not a few particulars, the "Textus receptus" *does* call for Revision, certainly..."(p. 107); He told Eillicott that he found it a useful standard for collation purposes ; he was "far.....from pinning my faith to it, I *eagerly* (emphasis mine) make my appeal *from* it to the three fold witness of Copies, Versions, Fathers, whenever its testimony challenged" (p 392)

⁷⁵Ibid., p, 107-108 This has further serious implications for this "Burgon Society" They have reams of very irresponsible publications criticising another group of fundamentalist restorationists, "the Majority Text Society" who, in a much more responsible manner, are, ironically, actually attempting to implement Burton's theories. The "Burgon Society" claims *they* are advocating Burgon's true position and not this "Majority Text Society" members of which have produced a revised edition of the Received Text according to the methods Burgon advocated. Like Burgon, this *Majority Text* rejects the above passage Z C Hodges and A. L. Farstad, *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text* (Nashville. 1982), p. 29. The facts speak for themselves as to who is actually carrying out Burgon's blueprint.

⁷⁶E. Miller, *A guide to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (London, 1886), p.60-61

Here we find that this Burgon society misrepresents Burgon's actual views and the views of those considered his allies, on a rather remarkable point.

Another interesting irony is that this organization has as one of its "Articles of Faith," that it will republish Burgon's works, and some of these have appeared, in a rather inferior fashion {merely photo-copied and bound at the spine), but to date, perhaps his *most* important work of all has yet to see the light of day. His *A Textual Commentary Upon the Holy Gospels, Largely from the Use of Materials, and Mainly on the Text, Left by the Late John William Burgon* Part I, St. Matthew, Division 1 I-XIV, This was Burgon's actual revision of the Textus Receptus.

The reason this has not appeared is because here would be tangible proof of the many corrections which Burgon had actually made to the T.R. before his death. He expressed in his *Revision Revised* that he wanted to be free from controversy around this subject so that he could get to his ultimate desire, the work of interpretation.

This textual commentary, therefore, was the first step in that direction because it provided Burgon with what he judged to be the bed-rock of textual certainty. That it differed from the T.R, in scores of places, is important in understanding his over all position and goal.

In the *Introduction* of this work Miller frankly admits that for the fourteen chapters of Matthew here treated, "on a small proportion of passages where we do not follow the Textus Receptus, Burgon and my self present results which are printed in spaced type, and are accounted for in the notes."⁷⁷

I have collated this revised edition of the T.R. produced by Burgon and Miller with another revision that appeared back in 1982, *The Majority Text*, which was an attempt to further the work that Burgon had begun. I also collated these two with the old T.R., discovering that Burgon and Miller differed from the T.R, sixty-one times in the

⁷⁷ E. Miller, *A Textual Commentary Upon the Holy Gospels* {London, 1899), p. vii.

space of just fourteen chapters. The M.T. differs from the T.R. fifty-four times in the same part of this Gospel. Burgon and Miller agree with the M.T. fifty-six times, but interestingly, Burgon disagreed with the M.T. nine times when it agreed with the T.R.

So not only does the Burgon society misrepresent Burgon, they have reprehensibly misstated the ease when they say the *Majority Text* does not represent the kind of revision Burgon himself was pursuing and wished to see brought to fruition,

Another talk found in the collection already referred to earlier celebrates the technique that gives oxygen to this group—the use of *ad hominem*. The platform of this organization is that anyone who differs from them religiously, qualifies for criticism on that basis if they also choose not to hold to the old Anglican Bible as perfect. Greek scholars are particularly held up for scorn, A few specimens will suffice:

Last year I spoke about the unorthodox theological and political views of Hort and Westcott. Since that time I have seen the DBS scolded by critics for engaging in ad hominem, or personal arguments.... Ad hominem arguments are often helpful and many times can shed light on why people, scholars included, behave as they do. Their exclusion {ie ad hominem arguments} is simply another way of limiting debate to Greek scholar, and harks back to the medieval idea that only the church hierarchy can interpret Scripture

Here we have someone who blatantly traffics in using an opponent's political or theological beliefs as a means of undermining the authority of their theory of textual criticism and then celebrates the act as a virtue.⁷⁸

The *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* has this to say about the use of *ad hominem*

fallacy. An argument which seems to be valid but really is not. There are many possible types of fallacy; traditional logicians have discussed the following ones:..., *argumentum ad hominem*, an argument that attempts to disprove the truth of what is asserted by smacking the asserter or attempts to prove the truth of what is asserted by appealing to the opponent's special circumstances,⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Here again it is perfectly evident that those in this group have never actually read the man whose name they use and abuse. I have never found a personal attack by Burgon on the theology or political views of any of his opponents. It was always the technical points of either theory or fact that he made the occasion of his rhetoric. Since none of the members of this organization have the training for such a task, *ad hominem* serves this purpose.

⁷⁹ *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, s.v. "Logical Terms, Glossary of."

The author in question is neither a text critic, nor an academically trained historian, nor a theologian; he is a medical doctor. And here we find another common practice among fundamentalists. They want to repudiate bona fide scholarship as the domain of unbelief, but they want to assume the stature of a scholar when making proclamation in favour of their own cause. In this author's case, we have another fallacy in operation--"(8) *argumentum ad verecundiam*. an argument in which an authority is appealed to on matters outside his field of authority."

Several serious errors of historical fact are found in this talk. A. Alexander is said not to have believed in *verbal* inspiration. He certainly did believe in verbal inspiration.

After admitting he had not consulted a particular translation, he says that "it is likely to omit 1 John 5:7 and to read 'He who was manifest in the flesh' in 1 Timothy 3:16."

This technique of guilty before tried is pursued throughout. The venerable Charles Hodge is guilty because in a review of Lachmann's Greek text, he expressed no alarm at certain omissions. Furthermore, Hodge, "noted without disapproval that Griesbach divided manuscripts.,,into classes." This is the use of another fallacy, "(7) *argumentum ad ignorantiam*, an argument that a proposition is true because it has not been shown to be false, or vice versa."

Perhaps the most telling insight on this authors confused judgement, is his disapproval of Hodge's criticism of the very obscurantism which Burgon himself opposed. While admitting that Hodge opposed the idea of revising the AV, our author is dismayed that Hodge said further that,

those who wish to retain the A. V. must "repudiate themselves, and discountenance in others, the habit of regarding the Authorized or any other version as precisely equal in authority to the ipsissima verba of the sacred oracles and still more the illiterate and indolent treatment of its very *inaccuracies* and *deficiencies* as part and parcel of the Christian revelation." We must instead continually compare "this exclusive version and acknowledged standard with the immediately inspired originals "

The author here is offended at Hodge's remarks because they are, in fact, directed at his own irresponsible position of wanting to hold that the KJV is perfect. He is doubly confused, however, because he then claims that Hodge's views just stated are "not consistent with the claim of the Westminster Confession," when in fact it is on the basis of the WCF that Hodge is making such a statement,

Another member of this society attempted to enlist Edward Hills as an advocate of this society's extreme views, in a separate talk printed and distributed by the Trinitarian Bible Society in Canada.⁸⁰

This work, titled, *Dr. Edward Freer Hills' Position on the KJV* is in fact, a serious misrepresentation of Hills's views. A series of secondary errors are found here: Griesbach is consistently spelled "Griesback"; John Owen is consistently called, "Owens"; Owen who died in 1683 is said to have dealt with "Griesback's [sic] claimed 30,000 variants," but Griesbach was not born until 1745. He claims that Theodore Beza did not want the A.V. revised, but Beza died in 1605, six years before the AV was even produced.

Finally, his most serious error is his attempt to claim Hills, like himself, believed the AV was superior to the original language texts:

The above statement of facts by Dr. Hills could explain how it could be possible when defending our English canon of Holy Scripture to have places called into question where our English will be held by faith to be superior to any Greek or Hebrew text.

This is a blatant falsehood, for which there is no justification. No text in any of Hills's works could be so misconstrued as to support this assertion. The Westminster Confession of Faith, the basis of all of Hills's arguments, maintains that always and only the original language texts, the Greek and the Hebrew, are normative for the Christian religion.

⁸⁰ This organization should not be confused with the Trinitarian Bible Society in England, The Canadian organization is a separate entity not under the responsible editorial authority of the English organization.

Hills was alive to this element attempting to use his published works to defend the indefensible and published a disclaimer putting distance between himself and his would be advocates:

Do we... "worship" the King James Version? Do we regard it as inspired, just as the ancient Jewish philosopher Philo (d. 42 A.D.) and many early Christians regarded the Septuagint as inspired? Or do we claim the same supremacy for the King James Version that Roman Catholics claim for the Latin Vulgate? Do we magnify its authority above that of the Hebrew and Greek Old and New Testament Scriptures? We have often been accused of such excessive veneration for the King James Version, but these accusations are false,... Admittedly this version [A.V.] is not absolutely perfect, but it is trustworthy,⁸¹

Furthermore, this is all the more insidious because the party subject to this abuse is no longer alive to defend himself,

Burton in the Hands of the Anabaptists

One of the saddest developments among the anabaptists on this subject has been the use of Burton's works to justify *their* cause.

On the cover of a reprint of Burton's *Inspiration and Interpretation*, a reference is made in bold letters to "Burton's Militant Fundamentalism," and on the inside it is said, "Burton shows himself as a Militant Fundamentalist." This phrase, "militant fundamentalist" is code language within the circle of the most extreme wing of fundamentalism and is worn as a badge of honour by those in this group.

Here, an attempt is made to claim that Burton is of the same pedigree as these American fundamentalists. That this high churchman and Dean of one of Britain's oldest cathedrals, should be so classed is a further indication of American fundamentalism's ethnocentrism.

Worst yet has been the compilation of many of Burton's works in a heavily edited, one volume work (published by another organization), titled, *Unholy Hands on*

⁸¹ Hills, *King James Versus Defended*, 4th ed, pp, 229-230.

the Bible. A wonderful review of this appeared shortly after its publication which revealed it to be an unconscionable mutilation of Burgon.⁸²

The following are the conclusions found in this review:

There are three main factors which force this reviewer not to recommend the present book under any circumstances., the volume fails utterly because of its multifarious **typesetting errors**, its **thoroughgoing revision** by the present editor, and in that editor's **introductory invective...**, Most editorial revisions...alter Burgon's original words, and cumulatively transform Burgon's unique contribution to New Testament textual criticism significantly. Burgon is clearly remolded by the hand of the editor, even to the order of his words.... Edward F. Hills fares no better in his own "Introduction,"..., Hills is reworked even more than Burgon in many places to Hills's detriment. The same disregard for the original integrity of authors is clearly seen there as well.⁸³

The saddest feature in all of this is that earnest students of this subject who might actually want to know the views of either Burgon or Hills, will rightly be so offended by these works that they would not consider the arguments of these genuine scholars for fear of the company they might have to keep,⁸⁴

⁸² M. A. Robinson, *Whose Unholy Hands on What?: A Review Article*, Dr. Robinson, a well trained textual critic who produced a major contribution on the scribal habits of the Byzantine scribes, "Scribal Habits among Manuscripts of the Apocalypse," Ph.D. Dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Forth Worth, TX, 1982, is Professor of New Testament at Southeastern Baptist Seminary. He is to be commended for taking the time to go over this material in detail.

Professor Robinson has also co-edited a critical edition of Burgon's *Traditional Text*, M A. Robirtson and W. G. Pierpont, *The New Testament in the Original Greek According to the ByzantineiMajority Textform* (Atlanta, 1991). Unlike the *Majority Text*, however, this work can boast having had as its editor a seasoned text critic in Professor Robinson. The Introduction, the work of Professor Robinson, is the most compelling theoretical work treating the Byzantine text type I have read on the subject since the days of Burgon and Huskier, it can be obtained from: The Original Word, P.O. Box 799. Roswell GA 30077.

⁸³ Robinson, *Whose Unholy Hands on What?l* pp. 2; 5; 6.

⁸⁴ Responsible works have appeared in print by careful laymen, but they tend to be produced on this side of the Atlantic (U.K.). For a delightful model of such work see the prize winning brief, accurate and well documented layman's introduction to the life and thought of Burgon, Douglas W. Taylor, "The Words of Inspiration; John William Burgon and the Traditional Text of the New Testament," in *The Evangelical Library Bulletin* 88 (Spring 1992);8-17.

The AV Superior to the Greek and Hebrew Texts: Trent Revisited

Another group of anabaptists in California calling themselves the “Tychonian Society”, advocates geocentricity and, "that the KJV 1611 is the inspired Bible, correcting any Greek or Hebrew text or manuscript".⁸⁵

Furthermore, the president of this organization, who boasts a Ph.D., tells us that in reality Erasmus was,

actually born and raised a Bogomilc [a medieval separatist group] (in modern terms, a Baptist,) and there is no record of his having converted to Catholicism. On the contrary, his powerful arguments against Catholicism are entirely consistent with his Bogomile upbringing.... The Reformers had little love for millennial “Anabaptists” as Erasmus's group came to be known.⁸⁶

This man may have a doctorate, but it must be in fiction writing. Here Erasmus is transformed into a millenarian separatist. There is no clearer evidence than that for Erasmus's inextricable attachment to the Roman Catholic Church, his having been ordained a priest in this Church 1492 and having died within her bosom in 1536. The Roman Church was not in the habit of offering Cardinal's hats to medieval heretics such as the Bogomils.

A Profile of Fundamentalism

The question naturally emerges, how can so much misinformation on such commonly established points of fact be held and publicly advocated in print by fundamentalists?

⁸⁵ *Bulletin of the Tychonian Society* 53 (Spring 1990):27.

⁸⁶ *Bulletin of the Tychonian Society* 54 (Summer 1990):40, A Baptist missionary to Nepal once sent me a pamphlet he had written for publication where he argued that Erasmus was a "Protestant," and not a Roman Catholic. When I told him he was in error and that the pamphlet should not be published because of this and several other problems I was called, "a Protestant Pope," and in so many words told to mind my own business- Why Erasmus is subject to so much abuse I can little understand. Anyone interested in finding the truth of his life should consult the sources in footnote 8.

Again, James Barr's assessment seems on target. He characterizes much of fundamentalism as "a pathological condition of Christianity."⁸⁷ He further explains what this means:

In this respect, though we have not tried to *explain* fundamentalism from psychological causes, we cannot but observe that it may in certain situations have psychological *results*. Where the band of doctrinal purity is drawn tight enough, freedom and spontaneity can easily and quickly be lost. Lack of contact with non-conservative Christians produces a marked in-group mentality. Suspicion of unorthodox and non-evangelical tendencies becomes marked. Free exchange of ideas with those outside the group comes to be lost, because all ideas are immediately measured according to whether they appear to favour the group's ideology or not....It is, in fact, not surprising if an ideology so powerful and so exclusive as the fundamentalist one should have its effects on the personality. I do not suggest that this necessarily happens; but surely few with experience will doubt that it does sometimes happen,⁸⁸

Barr observed on another occasion that,

because of the peculiar character of fundamentalism, it is unlikely that any more than a tiny minority of fundamentalists will ever be able to hear a contrary voice at all, since the nature of the movement and its organizations is to prevent them from doing so.⁸⁹

What this means, therefore, is that if the leaders of this movement assert something as a fact, and an authority in the field, who may not be a fundamentalist, says the contrary, the fundamentalist leader will be believed and the authority rejected.