

The Canonicity of the Received Bible
Established from Reformation and Post-
Reformation Baptist Confessions

by

Thomas D. Ross

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I. Introduction and Presuppositions

The Bible teaches the verbal, plenary preservation of the inspired *autographa* (Psalm 12:6-7). Furthermore, it affirms the perpetual availability of the preserved words of God to every generation of believers (Isaiah 59:21). Israel was the guardian Scripture in the Mosaic dispensation (Acts 7:38, Romans 3:2), while the church has this responsibility in the New Testament (Matthew 28:18-20). The church, as the depository of God's words (1 Timothy 3:15), led by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13), recognized and received (John 17:8) the words of God as they were given her by Christ her Savior. Believers can have confidence that the words of Scripture, and, as a necessary consequence, the books of Scripture, and these alone, constitute the deposit of infallible revelation which forms their sole authority for faith and practice (2 Timothy 3:15-17) and upon which they will be judged (John 12:48) because the Spirit led the church to accept these words, and no others, as God's Word.¹

Christ's church is an autonomous assembly of immersed believers, organized to carry out the Lord's work.² The only universal "church" in the Bible is the Whore of Babylon, the one-world religious system which will dominate the Tribulation (Revelation 17)—although all believers constitute the universal family of God (Galatians 3:26), Christ's church is local and visible, and entered through water baptism (1 Corinthians 12:13). Churches are unaffiliated with any hierarchy, and the only officers are

¹ Since this work is a historical study, demonstration of the postulates stated in this paragraph will not be pursued further. See *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, ed. Kent Brandenburg (El Sobrante, CA: Pillar and Ground Publishing, 2003) for a book-length justification.

² For a detailed exposition of the ecclesiology developed in this paragraph, see *Landmarks of Baptist Doctrine*, vol. 4, Robert J. Sargent, Oak Harbor, WA: Bible Baptist Church Publications, 1990, pgs. 481-596. This doctrinal position has traditionally been termed *Landmarkism*.

congregationally elected pastors and deacons.³ Consequently, all religious organizations which employ episcopal or presbyterian polity are not the Christ's churches. Those who teach baptismal regeneration, as do Catholicism and the major Protestant denominations,⁴

³ Each church has ultimate power over its membership and other decisions (Matthew 18:15-18, 1 Corinthians 5). Only two church offices appear in Scripture (Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3). "Pastor" or "shepherd" (*poimen*), "elder" (*presbuteros*), and "bishop" or "overseer" (*episcopos*) refer to the same office; in 1 Peter 5:1-2, the elders (*presbuteros*) are to "feed" (*poimante*) the flock (*poimnio*), taking the "oversight" (*episkopountes*). In Acts 20:17, 28, Paul addresses the "elders" (*presbuteros*) of the church at Ephesus and exhorts them to take heed to the "flock" (*poimnio*) over which the Holy Spirit made them "overseers" (*episkopous*). In Titus 1:5-7, each of the "elders" (*presbuteros*) is a "bishop" (*episkopon*).

⁴ Catholicism affirms that "by Baptism *all sins* are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin" (section 1263, pg. 321, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Paulist Press: Mahwah, NJ: 1994. Emphasis in the original.) and that "The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation" (section 1257, pg. 320, *Catholic Catechism*). Martin Luther called baptism "a new birth by which we are . . . loosed from sin, death, and hell, and become children of life, heirs of all the gifts of God, God's own children, and brethren of Christ" (Luther, *Works*, 53:103). Martin Luther composed the Lutheran *Small Catechism*, which affirms that "baptism effects forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and grants eternal salvation to all who believe, as the Word and promise of God declare." (IV). The Anglican and Episcopal confession of faith, the *39 Articles of Religion*, states in Article 27 that "baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened [made Christians by baptism], but it is also a sign of Regeneration or new Birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church: the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed." If baptism is a "seal" of forgiveness of sin, it is the way that sins are forgiven. One is "baptized, and born again" (Article 15). Furthermore, the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* (New York, NY: Church Pension Fund, 1945, pgs. 270, 280) commands the priest to pray, immediately before baptism, "Give thy Holy Spirit to this child, that he may be born again, and be made an heir of everlasting salvation," and, after administering the water, to thank God that He was pleased "to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thy own child, and to incorporate him into thy holy Church." John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was an Anglican priest, and the Anglican *39 Articles*, which taught salvation by baptism, were endorsed by him and his denomination. Commenting on John 3:5, Wesley affirmed, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit—Except he experience that great inward change by the Spirit, and be baptized (wherever baptism can be had) as the outward sign and means of it [he cannot enter into the kingdom of God]." He states here that baptism is the means of the new birth. He also declared, "It is certain our Church supposes that all who are baptized in their infancy are at the same time born again; and it is allowed that the whole office for the baptism of infants proceeds upon this supposition" (pg. 128, *The Theology of John Wesley*, William R. Cannon, New York, NY: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1946). His brother, the Methodist hymn-writer Charles Wesley, wrote against the Baptists, "Partisans of a narrow sect/ Your cruelty confess/ Nor still inhumanly reject/ Whom Jesus would embrace./ Your little ones preclude them not/ From the baptismal flood brought/ But let them now to Christ be saved/ And join the Church of God." (*Charles Wesley's Journal*, 18 October 1756, 2:128). John Calvin, essentially the founder of Presbyterian and Reformed churches, that "God, regenerating us in baptism, ingrafts us into the fellowship of his Church, and makes us his by adoption" (*Institutes*, 4:17:1), and the Reformed *Second Helvetic Confession* states that "to be baptized in the name of Christ is to be enrolled, entered, and received into the covenant and family, and so into the inheritance of the sons of God . . . to be cleansed also from the filthiness of sins . . . God . . . adopts us to be his sons, and by a holy covenant joins us to himself . . . all these things are assured by baptism. . . . We condemn the Anabaptists, who deny that newborn infants of the faithful are to be baptized" (Article 20).

are also cursed (Galatians 1:8-9), and cannot constitute the church. Since only believer's (Acts 2:38, 8:36-38, Mark 16:16) immersion (Romans 6:3-5, Colossians 2:12) is New Testament (NT) baptism, societies practicing infant "baptism" are not the Lord's congregation. Furthermore, since the Son of God promised His church succession from the time of her founding (John 1:35ff.) until the end of the age (Matthew 16:18), and only the church has the authority to baptize (Matthew 28:19),⁵ religious assemblies without any historical affiliation with the line of Christ's churches likewise are not the body of Christ. These Biblical ecclesiastical stipulations necessitate the conclusion that only among the churches now denominated "Baptist" is found the congregation of the Lord,⁶ for only they teach His doctrine and possess a succession from the Jerusalem church founded by the Savior to the present.

Since Baptist churches are Christ's churches, an examination of text-type they have historically approved will solve, for those who accept Divinely mandated bibliological and ecclesiological presuppositions, the current controversy over the correct original language texts of Scripture and their respective English translations. Since the Holy Spirit has led Christ's churches and people to accept the genuine words of God and reject corruptions (John 17:8, Revelation 22:18-19), Baptist acceptance of the *Textus*

⁵ God gave John the Baptist direct heavenly authority to immerse (Matthew 21:23-27). John baptized those who were received the gospel under his ministry, including the apostles and other believers from which Christ organized His church. In Matthew 28:17-20, the Lord Jesus gave the Great Commission, including the authority to baptize until the end of the age, to the church. He never gave this command to any other individual or institution, so no one can administer genuine baptism apart from the authority of an already constituted congregation.

⁶ Of course, this does not posit a succession of the name "Baptist," only of the assemblies so denominated today—they have received different names historically, from "Christians" in the first century to "Anabaptists," "Cathari," "Waldenses," and others. This also does not mean that every assembly assuming the label "Baptist" is a true church (2 Corinthians 11:14).

Receptus (TR),⁷ the Hodges-Farstad text-type (commonly denominated the “Majority Text” (MT), a convention which will be followed here, although one not strictly accurate),⁸ or the modern critical text-type (CT),⁹ along with translations based upon

⁷ The reference to the text-type known today as the *Textus Receptus* or Received Text is here meant. The fact, often mentioned by opponents of the *TR*, that the phrase did not come into existence until the seventeenth century is irrelevant. One could as well assert that there were no human beings in England until the last few centuries because, until the requisite stage of development of the English language, *homo sapiens* were called something else.

⁸ The phrase “Majority Text” is inaccurate because no actual collation of all Greek manuscripts (MSS) has ever been made. Although over 5,000 NT MSS are extant, both the Hodges-Farstad text and the Robinson-Pierpont text are based on the apparatus of von Soden, which was a collation of only a few hundred MSS. Furthermore, von Soden’s collation is of very questionable accuracy. As “Majority Text” advocate Wilbur Pickering states, “Once upon a time I was led to believe that von Soden’s work was basically reliable. This was important because his work underlies both the Hodges-Farstad and Robinson-Pierpont editions of the Majority Text. However, the *Text und Textwert* collations demonstrate objectively that not infrequently Soden is seriously off the mark. Maurice Robinson’s collations of the *Pericope Adulterae* demonstrate objectively that Soden is very seriously wrong there. With reference to Soden’s treatment of codex 223 . . . 27% error is altogether too much, and what is true of MS 223 may be true of other MSS as well. . . . For myself, I must reconsider the evidence for the whole New Testament” (*Hebraious: Introduction to the book of Hebrews in a new collation*, Wilbur Pickering). Later in the introduction to his new collation, Pickering also states, “If complete collations ever become available . . . [I estimate the following] margin of error . . . in my [new] apparatus.” The actual Majority Text does not exist, and the different printed editions that go by the title disagree with one another. Furthermore, there are places where the printed “Majority Text” follows a minority of Greek MSS. Pickering, in his translations at <http://walkinhiscommandments.com>, documents that in 2 Timothy 3:7, the *Textus Receptus*, the Hodges-Farstad, the Robinson-Pierpont, and the modern critical texts all read Μωϋσεϊ with c. 30% of Greek MSS, while Μωϋση has c. 60% of Greek MSS (and Μωσει has c. 10%). Here a majority variant is not found in any printed text. Pickering likewise documents that in Ephesians 5:21 the *Textus Receptus* follows about 70% of MSS with the reading ἐν φόβῳ Θεοῦ, while both the CT/UBS and both editions of the printed “Majority” text, Hodges/Farstad and Robinson/Pierpont, contain ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ, which has about 30% support (while two other readings have very limited MSS support).

Pickering similarly comments on the book of Revelation: “Very early on (probably within the II century) three main independent lines of transmission developed, and then a variety of variations within those streams. Thus there are some 150 variant sets where no reading receives even 50% attestation, and another 250 sets where the strongest numerical attestation falls below 60%. In those 400 places to speak of a ‘majority’ text is not convincing[.]” Pickering sets forth his own preferential criteria, and then concludes that he is “not aware of a single translation based upon [what Pickering thinks is the best/closest to “Majority/Original” text of Revelation].” The *Textus Receptus* tends to follow the largest of these three divisions in Revelation, but that grouping does not always represent the actual majority of MSS. Hoskier declared, concerning the *TR* text of Revelation: “I may state that if Erasmus had striven to found a text on the largest number of existing MSS [manuscripts] in the world of one type, he could not have succeeded better” (cited on pg. 16, J. A. Moorman, *When the KJV Departs from the “Majority” Text*, 2nd ed. Collingswood, NJ: Bible For Today, 1988). Moorman concludes, “Here then is a powerful example of God’s guiding providence in preserving the text of Revelation” (*ibid*, pg. 26). Nonetheless, in Revelation the *Textus Receptus* is in a variety of places follows what is less than 50% of the Greek MSS.

Thus, one who follows a printed “Majority Text” instead of the *Textus Receptus* is following a text that does not represent the actual majority of Greek MSS, which are yet uncollated. Furthermore, the “Majority Text” has not been translated into the languages of the world and received as the Word of God by Baptist churches, as has the *Textus Receptus*. There are practically no translations in any language that have been made from the “Majority Text,” which was not even in print in Greek until the 1990s. Like the

these original language sources, will tell the believer where he may find the perfect Bible God has promised him.

While an examination of pre-Reformation Baptist groups such as the Waldenses is also pertinent to this study,¹⁰ a narrower focus on Reformation and post-Reformation

critical Greek text of the United Bible Society, the “Majority Text” is not a certain, stable text with specific and certain readings, while the *Textus Receptus* is both certain and stable. Thus, in the 1-2% of places where the Hodges-Farstad/Robinson-Pierpont texts differ from the *Textus Receptus*, they do not fit the model of Scripture for the preservation of the text. (cf. also the article “Errors in the King James Version? A Response to William W. Combs of Detroit Baptist Seminary,” Jeffrey Khoo. *The Burning Bush* (15:2, July 2009) 101-127 for an examination of the “best” examples of places where the TR or the KJV contains alleged textual or translational errors.)

⁹ It is noteworthy that the critical text sometimes follows readings that are not found in any known Greek MS on the face of the earth, so that it not only rejects the Biblical presupposition of the availability of Scripture (Matthew 4:4; Isaiah 59:21; Revelation 22:18-19) but even the fundamental fact of verbal, plenary preservation itself (Psalm 12:6-7; Matthew 24:35). In Luke 3:33, the *Textus Receptus*, with 99%+ of MS evidence, reads τοῦ Ἀράμ. If one rejects the 99% + of MSS evidence, there are single MSS that give 6 alternative readings. The CT puts together the first part of Aleph’s reading and the first part of B’s reading to create something in no Greek MSS anywhere, τοῦ Ἀδμὶν τοῦ Ἀρνὶ. It then rejects the 99%+ reading as corrupt. It also creates a new person (who in the world is “Arni”?). Thus, the CT position is not even consistent with the Biblically insufficient view that all of God’s words are preserved somewhere in at least one Greek manuscript. Note also Acts 16:12, where the *Textus Receptus* follows the large majority of MSS in reading πρώτη τῆς, while the CT πρώτης has no MSS support whatsoever.

¹⁰ Pre-reformation Baptists used the *Textus Receptus*. See *Rome and the Bible: Tracing the History of the Roman Catholic Church and its Persecution of the Bible and of Bible Believers*, David Cloud, Oak Harbor, WA: Way of Life Literature, 1997, 2nd ed., pgs. 29-30, *Crowned With Glory and Honor*, Thomas Holland, chapter 3, “Testimony Through Time”; *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, Benjamin Wilkinson, chapter 2, “The Bible Adopted by Constantine and the Pure Bible of the Waldenses,” *Answers to Objections to Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, Benjamin Wilkinson, chapter 3, “The Itala and the Bible of the Waldenses,” Robert L. Webb, *The Waldenses and the Bible*, Carthage, IL: Primitive Baptist Library, n. d. (available at <http://members.aol.com/dwibcl/waldbib.htm>). The Waldensies, for example, believed that “John, 1 Epistles 5:7, [wrote], There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one” (“Exposition on the Creed, Confirming the Articles Thereof by Express Passages of Scripture,” *History of the Old Albigenes Anterior to the Reformation*, Jean Paul Perrin, Book 3, Chapter 3, pg. 331. elec. acc. in the AGES Christian Library Series, Vol. 20, *Biblical and Church History Collection*. Rio, WI: 2006). The Paulician document *The Key of Truth* quotes Acts 8:37 (pg. 77, Fred C. Conybeare, ed. and trans., *The Key of Truth* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1898), cited on pg. 77, *I Will Build My Church: The Doctrine and History of Baptists*, Thomas M. Strouse, 3rd ed. Newington, CT: Emmanuel Baptist Theological Press, 2001). The Waldenses employed the *Textus Receptus* text type, as evidenced by the *Codex Teplensis* (pgs. 78-79, *I Will Build My Church*, Thomas Strouse). The Albigenes used the European Old Latin type of text, which is a largely TR translation (and not, as much of the African Old Latin, part of the allegedly extant “Western” family) rather than the Catholic Latin Vulgate in the Middle Ages, as evidenced by the 13th century Old Latin Codex C (cf. “Latin Version, the Old,” T. Nicol, in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (gen. ed. James Orr. Orig. pub. Eerdmans, 1939; elec. acc. *Online Bible For Mac* software, Ken Hamel). While validation is impossible in the 21st century, it is noteworthy that certain Anabaptists of the sixteenth century affirmed that they had in their possession the autographs of some New Testament books: “[W]e have information, that even at the present day there are brethren and Christians at Thessalonica, who agree with the [Anabaptists] in all articles of religion, also in baptism, two of whom were yet in the time of our fathers, with the brethren in Moravia, and then also in the Netherlands, and communed with the brethren, who expressly declared that

Baptists will here be maintained. If Baptists universally¹¹ used one of the three text-types mentioned above from the inception of the Protestant age for centuries subsequently, this text must constitute the preserved Word of God. The Lord having promised His church the perpetual availability of the inspired oracles, and the Holy Spirit having secured their perpetual acceptance by the saints, the church cannot have neglected the true text of the Bible for hundreds of years.

II. Baptist Confessions employ the *Textus Receptus*

Confessional documents indicate, in a unique way, the universally held beliefs of those who adopt or employ them. Since Baptists accept Scripture as the only legitimate foundation for faith and practice, the dogmatic affirmations of their confessions are often conjoined with proof-texts. These references, along with textual allusions found within confessional statements themselves, illumine the textual position of the confessing churches.¹² Since verses employed in proof-text citations were considered the best to

they still preserved in good condition, at Thessalonica, the originals of St. Paul's two epistles to the Thessalonians. Likewise, that many of their brethren were still living, scattered here and there in Ethiopia, Greece and other oriental countries, as well as other Christians, who, like them, were preserved by God, and remained in the same doctrine, and the true practice of baptism, constantly from the beginning of the apostles to this time. . . . They stated further that the church of God at Thessalonica had remained unchanged in faith from the time of the apostles, and that they still preserved in good condition the letters which the apostle Paul wrote to them with his own hands" (Pg. 366, *The Bloody Theater or Martyr's Mirror*. Thieleman J. Van Braght, trans. Joseph F. Sohm. 2nd. Eng. ed. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1999).

¹¹ "Universal" usage of a text-type, as employed in this paper, does not mean that every single Baptist, from the smallest toddler to the most seasoned saint, in every part of the globe, held to precisely the same textual view. It refers to general, comprehensive, or ubiquitous textual use. The sense of the word is similar to that in which one might speak of "universal" acceptance of the principles of gravity, or of a round earth; such views are generally accepted by mankind, despite the possibility that certain savages on remote islands know nothing of them.

¹² Sometimes confessions cite verses where variants between the *TR*, *CT*, and *MT* are found, but nothing contextually indicates which of the three is employed. References of this sort have not been

substantiate the dogma then confessed, citations of uniquely *TR*, *MT*, or *CT* variants, or allusions to distinctive textual readings within the body of the confession, indicate ecclesiastical acceptance of the canonicity of the text-type employed. If a particular verse or passage was not universally accepted, it would not appear in confessional literature—undisputed verses could easily be substituted. It will be seen that Baptist confessions¹³ from both the Reformation and post-Reformation eras employ only the *Textus Receptus*, rather than the *CT* or *MT*, indicating the universal acceptance of this text in this era of church history.

Early Continental Anabaptist churches employed the *Textus Receptus*. The widely accepted *Schleitheim Confession* of 1527, the foundation for a number of later Anabaptist confessions, employs the “long” ending of Mark (16:9-20) as a proof text against infant baptism¹⁴ and references the *pericope adulterae* (John 7:53-8:11).¹⁵ A contemporaneous Anabaptist book on church order likewise supports the long ending of Mark.¹⁶ The *Waterland Confession* of 1580, constructed by immersionist Mennonites, cites 1 John 5:7 as one of only two verses listed in Article two on Trinitarianism, demonstrating a strong assumption of its authenticity, and cites the verse again in the next article.¹⁷ It references the long ending of Mark eight times,¹⁸ cites Acts 8:37,¹⁹ and supports, in the text of the

adduced as evidence in this study. However, once the textual basis for a confession has been established, such references are legitimately assumed to employ the Biblical text-type elsewhere quoted.

¹³ Naturally, mention of a confession in this composition does not indicate its absolute doctrinal harmony with the position of the author of this paper. Only lower criticism is currently at hand.

¹⁴ Article #1, cited from pg. 25, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, William J. Lumpkin, Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1969 (rev. ed.).

¹⁵ Article #6, pg. 28, *ibid.*

¹⁶ *Discipline of the church, how a Christian ought to live (Ordnung der Gemein, wei ein Christ leben soll)*, 1527, article #9, pg. 34, *ibid.*

¹⁷ pgs. 44-45, *ibid.*

¹⁸ Article VII, XVI, XXV, XXIX, XXX, XXXI pg. 48, 52, 58, 59, 60, *ibid.*

¹⁹ Article XXXI, pg. 60, *ibid.*

confession, both the *TR* reading “the Son of the living God” (not the CT “Holy One”) in John 6:69²⁰ and the *TR* “of his flesh and of his bones” (omitted in the CT) in Ephesians 5:30.²¹ The Received Text was the Bible of Reformation era Continental Anabaptism.

Early English Baptists also employed the *Textus Receptus*. Thomas Helwys, the early English General Baptist, composed what is often “judged the first English Baptist Confession of Faith,”²² the 1611 *Declaration of Faith of English People Remaining at Amsterdam in Holland*. The first sentence of the first article quotes and references 1 John 5:7;²³ the Trinitarianism derived from this exclusively *TR* verse is the fountain from which the rest of the confession flows. It also cites the long ending of Mark twice,²⁴ and employs the exclusively *TR* verse, Acts 8:37, as the sole support for baptism upon a confession of faith.²⁵ Some of John Smyth’s associates composed *Propositions and Conclusions concerning True Christian Religion* c. 1612, a work still referenced by English General Baptists in 1651, which also found its way to America.²⁶ This creed references 1 John 5:7 and twice writes out the verse in the text of the confession,²⁷ and cites only Mark 16:9 to support Christ’s ascension to the right hand of God after His resurrection, demonstrating absolute confidence in the long ending of Mark.²⁸ It has been said that “perhaps no Confession of Faith has had so formative an influence on Baptist

20 Article VIII, pg. 49, *ibid*.

21 Article XXIV, pg. 58, *ibid*.

22 pg. 115, *ibid*.

23 pg. 117, *ibid*.

24 Article 5, pg. 118, *ibid*.

25 Article 10, pg. 119, *ibid*.

26 pg. 123-124, *ibid*.

27 Article 43, 61, pg. 131, 135, *ibid*.

28 Article 46, pg. 132, *ibid*.

life”²⁹ as the Particular Baptist *Confession of Faith* of 1644. It cites Acts 8:37³⁰ and the long ending of Mark.³¹ It supports the *TR* reading validating the Deity of Christ in Acts 20:28, “church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”³² It supports the Received Text declaration that Christ “washed [not the CT “loosed”] us from our sins in his own blood” in Revelation 1:5³³ and the *TR* reading “the Lord added to the church [not the CT “to them”]” in Acts 2:47.³⁴ The General Baptist associational confession of 1651, *The Faith and Practice of Thirty Congregations, Gathered According to the Primitive Pattern*, employs 1 John 5:7,³⁵ and builds a doctrinal point solely on the exclusively *TR* Acts 8:37.³⁶ The 1654 Baptist confession *The True Gospel-Faith Declared According to the Scriptures* references the long ending of Mark.³⁷ The Baptist *Midland Association Confession* of 1655 quotes 1 John 5:7 in its text—it is the first verse referenced in the Confession and the only one listed in support of Trinitarianism.³⁸ The 1656 *Somerset Confession*³⁹ cites Mark 9:44.⁴⁰ Early English Baptist confessions uniformly employ the Received Text.

²⁹ pg. 152, *ibid.*

³⁰ Article 39, pg. 167, *ibid.*

³¹ *ibid.*

³² Article 18, pg. 161 *ibid.*

³³ Article 40, pg. 167, *ibid.*

³⁴ Article 52, pg. 168, *ibid.* The doctrinal point made in the confession is only clear if the *TR* reading is followed.

³⁵ Article 20, pg. 178, *ibid.*

³⁶ Article 35, pg. 180, *ibid.*

³⁷ Article 29, pg. 195, *ibid.*

³⁸ Article 2, pg. 198, *ibid.*

³⁹ The title page represented the document as “A Confession of the Faith of Several Churches of Christ in the County of Somerset, and of some Churches in the Counties neer adjacent.” pg. 203, *ibid.*

⁴⁰ Article 42, pg. 214, *ibid.*

Subsequent English Baptist confessions also unanimously support the *Textus Receptus*. The General Baptist *Standard Confession*,⁴¹ written in 1660 and accepted by the denomination for many years subsequently, quotes only Mark 16:15⁴² to support the universal preaching of the gospel, writes out 1 John 5:7 in its text,⁴³ and supports with Luke 24:51⁴⁴ the doctrine (not explicitly stated in CT narrative, with Mark 16:19 and Luke 24:51 eliminated, a tremendous doctrinal change) of Christ’s ascension into heaven after His forty days of post-resurrection appearances. The Particular Baptist *Second London Confession of Faith*, originally printed in 1677 and often reissued from that time to the modern era, the “most influential confession among Particular, Calvinistic, or Reformed Baptists since that time . . . the Confession held by most Reformed Baptist churches today,”⁴⁵ employs the language of and references 1 John 5:7 to prove Trinitarianism,⁴⁶ references the long ending of Mark three times,⁴⁷ supports the *TR* reading “only begotten Son [not the CT “only begotten God]” in John 1:18,⁴⁸ supports the Christological doctrine of *communicatio idiomatum*⁴⁹ using only the *TR* readings “church

⁴¹ The confession was originally entitled *A Brief Confession or Declaration of Faith, Set forth by many of us, who are (falsely) called Ana-Baptists, to inform all Men (in these days of scandal and reproach) of our innocent Belief and Practise; for which we are not only resolved to suffer Persecution, to the loss of our Goods, but also Life it self, rather than to decline the same.*

⁴² Article 4, pg. 225, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, Lumpkin.

⁴³ Article 7, pg. 227, *ibid.*

⁴⁴ Article 22, pg. 231, *ibid.* Since the CT only leaves unchallenged Acts 1:9, which does not explicitly state Christ ascended into heaven, any confession that states the doctrine of Christ’s ascension forty days after His resurrection is teaching a peculiarly Received Text doctrine.

⁴⁵ Quoted from the introduction to the confession, pg. 669, in *The Trinity Hymnal, Baptist Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformed Baptist Church of Grand Rapids, 2004). This hymnal, and thus the confession bound with it, is very much in use today.

⁴⁶ Chapter 2:3, pg. 253, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, Lumpkin.

⁴⁷ Chapter 7:2, 8:4, 19:2, pg. 253, 262, 291, *ibid.*

⁴⁸ Chapter 2:3, pg. 253, *ibid.*; the Confession states “the Son is Eternally begotten of the Father,” and proves it with John 1:14, 18.

⁴⁹ The doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* is “by reason of the Unity of [Christ’s] Person, that which is proper to one nature, is sometimes in *Scripture* attributed to the Person denominated by the other nature” (*Second London Confession*, 8:7, pg. 262, *ibid.*, italics and capitalization reproduced from the

of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” and “Son of man, which is in heaven” in Acts 20:28 and John 3:13, and supports the necessity of a profession of conversion before baptism using only the *TR* verses Mark 16:16 and Acts 8:37.⁵⁰ This striking affirmation of the Received Text is compounded through the affirmation in the introduction that care has been taken “to affix texts of scripture in the margin, for the confirmation of each article in our Confession; in which work we have studiously endeavored to select such as are most clear and pertinent for the proof of what is asserted by us.”⁵¹ No doubt whatever was felt about peculiarly *TR* readings—they could be the “most clear and pertinent” verses for doctrine. Indeed, since to “Holy Scripture . . . nothing at any time is to be added,”⁵² the churches which issued the confession would have rejected the 7% deviation in the CT and the c. 1% in the MT as serious error; such alterations would certainly not have been a “non-issue” or “preference” not worth fighting about. The General Baptist *Orthodox Creed* of 1679 writes out 1 John 5:7 in the text and references it five times,⁵³ more than any other verse mentioned. It references the *TR* “God [not the CT “who”] was manifest in the flesh” in 1 Timothy 3:16.⁵⁴ It uses the phrase “love of God . . . [who] laid down his life” in 1 John 3:16, found in the KJV-based Scrivener *TR*,⁵⁵ to prove the *communicatio idiomatum*, along with the *TR* readings of

original). The doctrine is amply illustrated in the Received Text verses the Confession quotes to prove it, Acts 20:28 and John 3:13.

⁵⁰ Chapter 29:2, pg. 291, *ibid*.

⁵¹ pg. 246, *ibid*.

⁵² Article 1, pg. 250, *ibid*.

⁵³ Article 3, 5, 24, pgs. 299, 300, 315, *ibid*.

⁵⁴ Article 6, pg. 300-301, *ibid*. The verse does not prove the point made in the sixth article without the reading “God.”

⁵⁵ The Greek *tu Theou* is absent from the MT and the CT. It is not italicized in the 1611 KJV, but appears in italics in the 1769 revision almost universally in use today. It appears in the *Textus Receptus* as edited by Scrivener and conformed to the Authorized Version.

Acts 20:28 and John 3:13.⁵⁶ Acts 20:28 is also cited in two other places in the confession.⁵⁷ Mark 16:9-20 is referenced five times,⁵⁸ Mark 9:46 (without also referencing v. 48, which is found in both the CT and *TR*; the exclusively Received Text reading was deemed sufficient) appears,⁵⁹ and Acts 8:37 is twice employed.⁶⁰ English Baptist confessions employed the Received Text of Scripture.

Baptists in America depended upon English Baptist confessional material, which supported the Received Text. Early American General Baptists appear to have acknowledged the 1660 *Standard Confession*,⁶¹ while the more Calvinistic Philadelphia Association employed the *Second London Confession* of 1677,⁶² which “influenced Baptists generally and has been perhaps the most influential of all confessions. Local church covenants still reflect its outlook and summarize its doctrines. . . . it [was] often referred to in America as ‘the Baptist confession.’”⁶³ The only possible American confessional competitor to the *Second London Confession*, as printed by the Philadelphia Association and others subsequently, is the *New Hampshire Confession of Faith* of 1833, which received a very wide circulation through its inclusion in both Edward Hiscox’s and J. M. Pendleton’s church manuals, and was adopted, with minor changes, by groups such as the fundamentalist⁶⁴ General Association of Regular Baptist Churches⁶⁵ and the

⁵⁶ Article 7, pg. 301, *ibid.*

⁵⁷ Article 6, 9, pg. 300, 303, *ibid.*

⁵⁸ Article 9, 17, 18, 28, 31, pg. 303, 309, 310, 317, 321, *ibid.*

⁵⁹ Article 10, pg. 304, *ibid.*

⁶⁰ Article 23, 28, pg. 314, 317, *ibid.*

⁶¹ pg. 347, *ibid.*

⁶² pgs. 348-353, *ibid.*

⁶³ pgs. 352-353, *ibid.*

⁶⁴ The word “fundamentalist” is here employed of those who would accept it as a self-designation. It is employed descriptively, not as either a compliment or a pejorative.

Landmark movement's American Baptist Association.⁶⁶ The Southern Baptist Convention also made it the basis for its influential 1925 statement of faith. The *New Hampshire Confession*⁶⁷ quotes Acts 8:37,⁶⁸ references the long ending of Mark,⁶⁹ accepts the Received Text version of Luke 22:19-20,⁷⁰ refers to the *TR* "being justified by faith, we have peace (not the CT reading "let us have peace") with God" in Romans 5:1,⁷¹ and the "made me (not CT, "you") free from the law of sin and death" in Romans 5:2.⁷² Other original American Baptist confessional material, such as the 1923 fundamentalist *Articles of Faith of the Baptist Bible Union of America*, also employs Received Text readings such as the long ending of Mark and Luke 24:51.⁷³ American Baptist confessions continue the English Baptist practice of employment of the *Textus Receptus*.

For Continental, English, and American Baptists,⁷⁴ the Received Text was the Bible. The churches that confessed the faith of these documents affirmed it through their

⁶⁵ pg. 382, *ibid.* The Conservative Baptist Association in 1947 also stated that their "brief and simple confession . . . is but a re-affirmation of the substance of the historic Philadelphia and New Hampshire Confessions of faith." (pg. 383, *ibid.*)

⁶⁶ "This body reaffirm[s] its acceptance of the New Hampshire confession of faith; so long held by our American Baptist people" ("Doctrinal Statement of the American Baptist Association," appearing first in their year book of 1944, quoted from pg. 378, Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*.)

⁶⁷ The edition employed is found on pgs. 543-563 of *Principles and Practices for Baptist Churches*, Edward T. Hiscox, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, n. d. (formerly entitled *New Directory*). While this is one very influential printing of the confession, it cannot be assumed that every printing of the confession included these verse references (the version reprinted in Lumpkin's *Baptist Confessions of Faith* pgs. 361-367 includes none at all). Nevertheless, useful information about American Baptist views is still provided. The history of the confession, including the general and early inclusion of proof-texts, is discussed on pgs. 538-542 of Hiscox's *Principles and Practices*.

⁶⁸ Article 15, pg. 557, Hiscox, *Principles and Practices*.

⁶⁹ Article 15, pg. 557, *ibid.*

⁷⁰ Article 16, pg. 558, *ibid.*

⁷¹ Article 9, pg. 552, *ibid.*

⁷² Article 13, pg. 556, *ibid.*

⁷³ Article 18, pg. 389, Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*.

⁷⁴ Detailed examination of Baptist confessions from other lands will not be pursued in this study. They often demonstrate dependence upon earlier English or American Baptist material, and consequently favor the Received Text; for example, the "Brazilian Baptists, one of the largest and most vigorous of the younger Baptist groups, have long acknowledged the New Hampshire Confession of Faith" (pg. 421, *ibid.*), a *TR* confession. Independently composed confessional material also employs the Received Text; for

confident and constant proof-texting and quotation from distinctively *TR* readings. No hint of controversy over any such reference appears, and the CT and MT are entirely absent. This unanimous confessional testimony evidences a universal Baptist acceptance of the *TR* for the hundreds of years from the Reformation era to modern times.

III. Baptist Confessions support the supremacy of the King James Version

In addition to their support of the *Textus Receptus*, Baptist confessions support the supremacy of the English Authorized Version. Confessional material after the composition and establishment⁷⁵ of the KJV in the seventeenth century employs this English Bible. The General Baptist 1651 *Faith and Practice* follows the AV in its citations of verses found within the confession,⁷⁶ as does the Particular Baptist *Somerset Confession* of 1656.⁷⁷ The 1660 *Standard Confession* employs the KJV⁷⁸ and includes (as do many other confessions) the AV's traditional interpretation of *monogenes* as "only-begotten"⁷⁹ rather than the modern critical alternatives of "unique" or "one and only,"⁸⁰ which undermine the historic Trinitarian doctrine of the Son's eternal generation,

example, the Russian churches associated with Ivan Prokhanov that joined the Baptist Union in the 1940s employed a confession that repeatedly quotes the long ending of Mark (pg. 423, 426, 429, *ibid.*), supports the *TR* reading "church of God" in Acts 20:28 (pg. 428, *ibid.*), and employs the exclusively Received Text Acts 8:37 as the sole support for an important doctrinal affirmation about baptism (pg. 426, *ibid.*).

⁷⁵ This is not to deny that a period of transition from earlier Received Text Bibles (such as the Geneva) did not exist.

⁷⁶ Ezekiel 43:11, Matthew 5:16, and Hebrews 3:6 are quoted and follow the KJV verbatim. Romans 12:18, found on the title page, seems to paraphrase. See pgs. 174, 176, Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*.

⁷⁷ 1 Peter 3:15, Matthew 10:32, and Acts 17:11, on the cover, are verbatim, as is Isaiah 8:20 (except for word/rule). See pg. 203, *ibid.*

⁷⁸ The title page employs Acts 24:14, and numerous quotations are found throughout the text of the confession. See pgs. 224ff, *ibid.*

⁷⁹ Article 3, 4, pg. 225-6, *ibid.*

⁸⁰ See, e. g., the RSV, NRSV, NIV, ESV, NLT, etc. on John 3:16.

namely, in the words of the *Orthodox Creed*, that He is “eternally begotten of the father.”⁸¹ The *Orthodox Creed* consistently quotes the KJV,⁸² supports its view that *ha’almah* in Isaiah 7:14 indicates Christ is born of a “virgin” not just a “young woman,”⁸³ and its rendering of *mimey ‘olam* in Micah 5:2 as a prediction that the Son of God is “from everlasting,” rather than a created being “from ancient times,” the Arian, Unitarian, and modern critical translation (see NIV, ESV, RSV, NRSV, etc.).⁸⁴ The *Second London Confession* of 1677 quotes and supports the KJV, accepting translational features such as the imperative “search” rather than an indicative “you search” in John 5:39 and the Lord Jesus as “author and finisher of our faith” in Hebrews 12:2.⁸⁵ The *New Hampshire Confession* indicates that the KJV “Jehovah” (Exodus 6:3, Psalm 83:18, Isaiah 12:2, 26:4) is correct, rather than that the modern alternative “Yahweh” is the name of God,⁸⁶ in agreement with the traditional Hebrew OT, the second Rabbinic Bible of 1524-5 as edited by Ben Chayyim, literally rendered,⁸⁷ rather than the current critical OT based on the Leningrad manuscript.⁸⁸ Baptist confessions reflect the translation choices of the

⁸¹ Article 3, pg. 299, Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*.

⁸² E. g. 1 John 3:16, “love of God,” article 7, Job 9:33, “any daysman betwixt us” Article 17, etc. (pgs. 301, 308, *ibid.*)

⁸³ Article 5, pg. 300, *ibid.* Without a Messianic view of Isaiah 7:14 as a prophecy of Christ’s virgin birth, rather than a declaration concerning the normal conception of a child in Isaiah’s day, the verse would not relate to the argument of the article.

⁸⁴ Article 4, pg. 299, *ibid.*

⁸⁵ The title page quotes Romans 10:10 and this section of John 5:39. Hebrews 12:2 is referenced in chapter 14. Note also 1 Timothy 2:1-2 in chapter 24. See pgs. 241, 269, 284, *ibid.*

⁸⁶ Article 2, pg. 362, *ibid.*

⁸⁷ The idea that the pronunciation “Jehovah” originated when the vowels of *Adonai* were added to the Tetragrammaton, although widespread, is very dubious.

⁸⁸ The Ben Chayyim text fully points the Tetragrammaton as *Yehowah* (יהוה), while the Hebrew CT removes the *cholem* (יְהוָה), leaving *Yeh-wah*, which, as it obviously is missing a vowel, is more open to critical emendation to an alternative pronunciation. It should be mentioned that no Hebrew MSS in existence actually points the Name as “Yahweh.” For one who maintains Biblical presuppositions, it is inconceivable that God would allow the correct pronunciation of His Name to be lost (cf. Exodus 3:15, Psalm 9:10, Proverbs 18:10, Joel 2:32, etc.), so the pointing actually in the Hebrew text must represent the correct pronunciation, *Yehowah* or *Jehovah* (see “Appendix: The Vocalization of the Tetragrammaton” in

King James Version, as they do its textual basis, the *TR*. Indeed, since God, who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will (Ephesians 1:11), did not see fit for any English CT or MT versions to gain acceptance, or probably even come into existence, among the churches of God, in the centuries after the Reformation when Baptist confessions were constructed, it could hardly have been otherwise. Baptist confessions support the English Authorized Version.

III. Baptist Confessions affirm the verbal, plenary preservation of the *Textus Receptus*

In addition to the original and English language texts quoted in Baptist confessions, direct statements about the doctrine of preservation can inform the believer about the view Christ's churches in past centuries would maintain if confronted with the modern textual controversy. The influential Particular Baptist *True Confession* of 1644 states that to the "Church [Christ] hath made the promises, and giuen the seales of his Covenant, presence, loue, blessing and protection: Heere are the holy Oracles as in the side of the Arke, surely kept & purely taught."⁸⁹ As the *autographa* was placed in the ark of the covenant (Deuteronomy 31:26) and perfectly preserved for Israel, so the

"Evidences for the Inspiration of the Hebrew Vowel Points," Thomas D. Ross, <http://faithsaves.net>; "Jehovah," Scott Jones, <http://www.lamblion.net/Articles/ScottJones/jehovah1.htm>; "Who is this Deity Named Yahweh?" Thomas Strouse, <http://www.deanburgonsociety.org/CriticalTexts/yahweh.htm>, and *The Name of God YeHoWaH, which is Pronounced as it is Written, I_Eh_oU_Ah: Its Story*, Gérard Gertoux, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2002, for defenses of the traditional rendering of the Tetragrammaton). Satan is the one who wishes men deny or doubt the Name of God. The difference between the Old Testament *Textus Receptus*, the 1524-5 Rabbinic Bible edited by Ben Chayyim, and the current critical Hebrew OT, adopted in 1937 and the standard for modern Bible versions, is explained on pgs. 27-28, *Defending the King James Bible*, D. A. Waite, Collingswood, NJ: Bible For Today Press, 1999. It should be noted that, strictly speaking, both the Hebrew *TR* and CT are editions of the Ben Asher Masoretic Text, a point not clearly brought out in the source here listed.

⁸⁹ Article 18, pg. 87, *ibid.* Spelling is given as found in the text of the confession without any updating to modern parlance.

confession states that the church has, by God’s grace, perfectly preserved the Word of God. Furthermore, the church has not just “surely kept” the Word, but also “purely taught” it—the preserved text was that which was in use among the people of God. Confessional presuppositions of verbal, plenary preservation, perpetual availability, and the church as the New Testament guardian of Scripture are consistent only with the *TR* textual position. Neither the CT nor the MT even claim to be perfectly preserved. The CT was not in use for hundreds of years, but is allegedly a restoration of a purer text than that received by the churches from (at least) the Reformation era to the nineteenth century. The MT text form was also not available and in use for centuries since the *TR* was the only Greek text coming from the printing press and being translated into multitudes of languages to feed the flock of God. The doctrine of preservation presented in the *True Confession* of 1644 is consistent only with the Received Text position.

The eminent *Second London Confession* of 1677 contains a powerful affirmation of the preservation of Scripture. It states:

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; so as in all controversies of Religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them. But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have a right unto, and interest in the scriptures, and are commanded in the fear of God to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every Nation, unto which they come, that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope.⁹⁰

The confession promises that God would keep His Word “pure in all Ages.” The “Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit” originally in inspiration is that “Scripture so delivered,

⁹⁰ Article 1:8, pg. 251, *ibid.*

[into which their] faith is finally resolved,”⁹¹ preserved perfectly to the time of the composition of the confession in the available text daily lived by and suffered for. This expression of preservation in the *Second London Confession* rejects the restorationist philosophy undergirding the CT, along with the (lesser degree of) corruption the MT presupposes in the text received by the churches. It also rejects the Ruckmanite affirmation of direct inspiration or preservation of a translation (and the view of the Latin Vulgate held by then current counter-Reformation Catholicism), since it is the Greek and Hebrew language copies which are perfectly preserved, not an allegedly superior Latin or English translation—indeed, the confession proves church democracy with Acts 14:23 and the command to “see the original.”⁹² The text “unto which nothing at any time is to be added”⁹³ is the Hebrew and Greek Received Text. Although translations are not authorities superior to the original languages, they nevertheless are “the Word of God . . . the Scriptures.” The confession affirms, as does the Bible,⁹⁴ that God’s Word accurately translated is still authoritative Scripture, still the Word of God. Finally, since the confession declares that “the Church is finally to appeal unto [the Scriptures],” it evinces a fideistic or presuppositional bibliology: “The Authority of the Holy Scripture . . . dependeth . . . wholly upon God . . . the Author thereof; . . . it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.”⁹⁵ The Scripture is not established by the prior and superior authority of textual criticism; the perfectly preserved and available text of Scripture, the *Textus Receptus* quoted in the confession, sits in judgment upon textual criticism. This is

⁹¹ Article 1:10, pg. 252, *ibid.*

⁹² Article 26:9, pg. 287, *ibid.*

⁹³ Article 1:6, pg. 250, *ibid.*

⁹⁴ For example, in 1 Timothy 5:18, Paul translates Deuteronomy 25:4 from Hebrew into Greek, then quotes Luke 10:7, and calls both his translated quotation and the untranslated original language “scripture.” It is also noteworthy that his translation here employs formal equivalence, not dynamic equivalence.

⁹⁵ Article 1:4, pg. 250, *ibid.*

confirmed by the “Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our Hearts.”⁹⁶

The available Scripture, in use in the original languages and in translation for the whole body of the people of God, is the infallibly preserved deposit of God’s truth, and the Holy Spirit’s guidance of the priesthood of believers, not the ratiocinations of a handful of textual critics or seminary professors, confirms this pure and available common text, this Received Text, in their hearts.

The 1679 General Baptist⁹⁷ *Orthodox Creed* contains a powerful affirmation of the preservation of Scripture in the *TR* and its English representation, the Authorized Version. It affirms that “we have the scriptures delivered to us now . . . by the holy scriptures we understand, the canonical books of the old and new testament, as they are now translated into our English mother-tongue, of which there hath never been any doubt of their verity, and authority, in the protestant churches of Christ to this day.”⁹⁸ The Received Text available in that day, both as found in the original languages and reproduced in the King James Bible,⁹⁹ constituted the preserved Word of God, which was

⁹⁶ Article 1:6, pg. 250, *ibid.*

⁹⁷ It should be noted that not all General Baptists were Arminians; they would simply have universally rejected the limited (“particular”) atonement position of the Particular Baptists. This General Baptist confession, for example, affirms that “those that are effectually called, according to God’s eternal purpose, being justified by faith do receive such a measure of the holy unction, from the holy spirit, by which they shall certainly persevere unto eternal life.” (Article 36, pg. 324, *ibid.*)

⁹⁸ Article 37, pg. 324-325, *ibid.*

⁹⁹ The New King James Version, in addition to eliminating the *thee/thou/thy* and *ye/you* distinction between second person singular and plural found in the King James Bible and in the Hebrew and Greek original language texts, does not always follow the Authorized Version in its textual and translational choices. For example, in Isaiah 9:3, the KJV reads, “Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy,” while the NKJV states the exact opposite: “You have multiplied the nation/ And increased its joy.” In Judges 5:13, the KJV reads: “Then he made him that remaineth have dominion over the nobles among the people: the LORD made me have dominion over the mighty,” while the NKJV states: “Then the survivors came down, the people against the nobles/ The LORD came down for me against the mighty.” The KJV follows the actual Hebrew text and Jewish tradition in considering the two instances of הָרַד as apocopated forms from הִרְדִּיר , hence the translation “have dominion,” while the NKJV translation “came down” is based upon an amendment of the Hebrew text to הָרַד , “come down.” While the KJV in 2 Corinthians 2:17 states: “For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God,” the NKJV affirms: “For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God.” The KJV understands the verb $\kappa\alpha\pi\eta\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\omega$ in the way the Vulgate, Gothic,

universally received by Baptists and by the wider family of God, “all true Protestants [who hold] the fundamental articles of the Christian religion, against the errors and heresies of Rome.”¹⁰⁰ These available scriptures “are [note the present tense] given by the inspiration of God”¹⁰¹; they are identical with the autographs and still exude the very breath of God.¹⁰² The confession also stated that “the authority of the holy scripture [defined as the KJV] dependeth not upon the authority of any man, but only upon the authority of God.”¹⁰³ Textual critics do not sit in judgment upon the *Textus Receptus*; Divine preservation of the common Bible is presupposed, and all men must to submit to it. Furthermore, Scripture, when in the “mother tongue” is still “God’s word,”¹⁰⁴ so saints without knowledge of the original languages still have it available to them, and are able to judge Biblical “faith and practice.”¹⁰⁵ The universal priesthood of believers is not divided into a high-priestly inner sanctum whose members, on account of their scholarship and knowledge of languages, are alone able to interpret the Word, and a plebeian laity unable to understand the Bible and therefore dependent upon their overlords’ scholarly pontifications.

and Syriac versions do, as *adulterantes verbum Dei*, corrupting or adulterating the Word of God, as the *κάπηλος* in Isaiah 1:22 (LXX) corrupted or adulterated wine with water (admittedly, the *κάπηλος* tended to do so for unjust gain), or as Lucian records philosophers corrupted their lessons like a *κάπηλος* (*φιλόσοφοι ἀποδίδονται τὰ μαθήματα ὡς περ οἱ κάπηλοι, . . . δολώσαντες καὶ κακομετροῦντες*, see BDAG); the translation in the NKJV changes the emphasis of 2 Corinthians 2:17 dramatically. The NKJV is not merely an English language update of the Authorized Version, and those who agree with Baptist confessional declarations that there is no doubt about the accuracy of the KJV would not be able to make the same affirmation about the NKJV.

¹⁰⁰ pg. 297, *ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Article 37, pg. 326, *ibid.*

¹⁰² Consider Christ’s statement in Matthew 4:4, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”—“proceedeth” (*ekporeuomai*) is a present participle, suggesting continuing action. Inspiration (as product, not process) applies to preserved copies as much as to the autographs, and, in a derivative sense, to accurate translations. Compare the article “Are Accurate Copies and Translations of Scripture Inspired?” at <http://faithsaves.net>.

¹⁰³ Article 37, pgs. 324-325, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*

Baptist confessions affirm that God has perfectly preserved His originally inspired Word in the Received Text and the King James Version. Modern Baptists who do the same hold the historic position. The bibliology of CT and MT advocates is entirely absent from Baptist confessional literature.

IV. The textual basis for Received Text readings cited in Baptist Confessions

The textual evidence for *TR* readings cited in Baptist confessions varies greatly. Some of the citations, such as Mark 16:9-20, which “is present in the vast number of witnesses,”¹⁰⁶ have very strong support, even on the grounds of secular textual criticism. MT advocates would agree with the *Textus Receptus* and Baptist confessions in verses such as 1 Timothy 3:16, where the reading “God” is in “the great majority of the Greek copies.”¹⁰⁷ Confessional literature citing verses common to the *Received Text* and MT (others include Mark 9:44, 46, missing in but nine MSS and present in over 2,000,¹⁰⁸ Luke 22:19-20, missing in only one very poor Greek MSS,¹⁰⁹ Luke 24:51, omitted in only two Greek MSS of thousands,¹¹⁰ John 1:18, where “Son” is found in thousands of MSS and altered in but seven,¹¹¹ John 3:13, where “which is in heaven” is contained in

¹⁰⁶ See the comments on Mark 16:9-20, pg. 103, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Bruce M. Metzger, 2nd ed. New York, NY: American Bible Society, 1994. For textual-critical defense of the authenticity of these verses, see *The King James Version Defended*, Edward F. Hills, Des Moines, Iowa: Christian Research Press, 1996, pgs. 159-168, and the study *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark*, John William Burgon, Collingswood, NJ: Dean Burgon Society, reprint of 1871 ed.

¹⁰⁷ Pg. 33, “God—was manifest in the flesh,” Terence H. Brown, pgs. 24-41 of *True or False?* ed. David Otis Fuller, Grand Rapids, MI: Grand Rapids International Publications, 1973.

¹⁰⁸ Note on Mark 9:44, 46, *Textual and Translational Notes on the Holy Gospels*, J. P. Green, Sr.

¹⁰⁹ Note on Luke 22:19-20, *ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Note on Luke 24:51, *ibid.*

¹¹¹ Note on John 1:18, *ibid.*

“at least 99.9% of all manuscripts”¹¹² etc.)¹¹³ eliminates any claim that the CT is the historic text of God’s churches; unfortunately, this would not usually concern its advocates, who approach textual criticism with atheistic and restorationist presuppositions.

However, the *Textus Receptus* and the Baptist confessions which affirm its preservation vary at times from the MT as well as the CT. The Johannine comma (1 John 5:7), although represented in a small minority¹¹⁴ of Greek MSS,¹¹⁵ is ubiquitous in Baptist confessions, often as the sole basis for doctrinal conclusions. Acts 8:37 is very frequently quoted in confessions without any hint of doubt concerning its sufficiency for doctrine, although absent from the MT.¹¹⁶ Confessional establishment of doctrine using 1 John 3:16’s phrase “love of God,” as found in the KJV, is striking. Although “of God” is absent from the MT, and, indeed, at least 95% of Greek MSS (although it has support in

¹¹² Note on John 3:13, *ibid.*

¹¹³ Other references quoted in confessional literature which contain textual material common to the *TR* and *MT* against the *CT* include John 6:69, 7:53-8:11, Acts 2:47, 20:28 (in the reading *idiou haimatos* but not in the *TR* *ekkleisia tou Theou*), Romans 5:1 (versus the Westcott-Hort text in v. 1), Ephesians 5:30, 1 Tim 6:5 (both retain “from such withdraw thyself,” but the *MT* and *CT* have other variants from the *TR* in the verse), and Revelation 1:5 (both *TR* and *MT* have “washed” against the *CT*, but the *MT* changes “loved” to “loves” with the *CT*).

¹¹⁴ “The passage is absent from every known Greek manuscript except eight” (note on 1 John 5:7-8, Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, pg. 647) of the c. 500 Greek MSS which include 1 John (only 14 of which predate the ninth century), but it is apparently cited by patristics as early as A. D. 200 and is found in the great body of Old Latin and Latin Vulgate MSS. Removing the verse also creates problems in the Greek grammatically (“‘And These Three Are One’ A Case For the Authenticity of 1 John 5:7-8 Rooted in Biblical Exegesis, Jesse M. Boyd, <http://www.ovrind.com/Bible/casefor1john57.html>; see also *An Inquiry Into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, Frederick Nolan, London, R & R Gilbert, 1815, chapter 4).

¹¹⁵ Since, upon believing presuppositions, manuscript evidence exists to testify to the perpetual availability of the perfectly preserved Bible, printed editions also contribute to a proper view of textual evidence, since their acceptance in the church evinces God’s approval of their readings. Considering that countless copies of the *Textus Receptus* have been printed and employed by the saints in Greek and in translations worldwide, in an important sense 1 John 5:7, and every other Received Text variant in the minority in (currently available) Greek MSS, is a majority reading. The promise of perpetual availability also answers the question about which edition of the *TR* to follow in the (few) instances where variations occur—the Received Text as edited by Scrivener, the exact Greek text underlying the King James Bible, is the version in use, and so should be followed.

¹¹⁶ It is found in the uncial E, many Greek miniscule MSS and early translations (Latin Vulgate, Old Latin, Syriac, Coptic, and Arminian) and its content receives patristic confirmation in the second century. See note on Acts 8:37, pgs. 315-316, Metzger, *Textual Commentary*.

early translations),¹¹⁷ it is quoted with absolute confidence, as part of the preserved *Textus Receptus*. No confession ever criticizes or questions a Received Text or Authorized Version rendering.¹¹⁸ When the Received Text deviates from the MT, historic Baptist creeds still follow the *TR* and the English Bible produced from it, the KJV.

V. Conclusion

The true churches of Jesus Christ, against which the omnipotent Savior promised the gates of hell would never gain victory (Matthew 16:18), and which, for the last centuries, have been designated “Baptist,” uniformly and confidently employed the *Textus Receptus* and the English King James Version in their confessional documents as the certain and infallible basis for their faith. Those who formulated, propagated, and employed every Baptist confession composed from the Reformation era to modern times declared their faith in the Received Text and its English translational counterpart as “the text now received by all, in which [is] nothing changed or corrupted.”¹¹⁹ No indication of controversy or question concerning this text appears anywhere, and churches unhesitatingly employed verses absent in the modern CT and MT but preserved in the *TR*

¹¹⁷ See note on 1 John 3:16, pg. 971, *The Interlinear Bible: Hebrew, Greek, English*, ed. Jay P. Green, Sr., 2nd ed. Lafayette, IN: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1986. It is “found in the Latin Vulgate, and in the Genevan versions, and in one [Greek] manuscript” (*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, on 1 John 3:16), as well as being “favoured by the Syriac version . . . and the Ethiopic version” (note on 1 John 3:16, *An Exposition of the Old and New Testament*, John Gill, orig. pub. 1809). The paucity of Greek MSS evidence doubtless explains the italicization of the phrase in the 1769 KJV.

¹¹⁸ This does not mean, of course, that material written before the production and acceptance of the Authorized Version somehow still quoted it, or that paraphrase or adaptation of Biblical quotations did not at times take place.

¹¹⁹ A translation of the Latin sentence *Textum ergo habes, nunc ab omnibus receptum, in quo nihil immutatum aut corruptum damus*, found in the preface to the 1633 Greek text printed by the Elzeviers, from which the term *textus receptus* came. See pg. 9, Metzger, *Textual Commentary*.

to establish doctrine, often without the support of any texts shared by these three modern textual competitors. The CT and MT are text forms entirely absent from Baptist confessional life. Baptists affirmed the verbal, plenary preservation and perpetual availability of Scripture, and identified that matchless treasure with their common Bible,¹²⁰ crystallized in the Authorized Version and its original language equivalents.

These facts should settle the modern textual and translational controversy for every believer. The church of God, for hundreds of years, loved, believed, confessed, preached, practiced, and suffered for that common, available Bible now set aside by those who accept the CT.¹²¹ Since the Holy Spirit led Christ's churches to accept the *Textus Receptus* as the true text, it must be the Word of God. If the CT is correct, God's people, for hundreds of years, universally established their beliefs and practices from a human or Satanic corruption, from "the Greek text, reproduced in all early printed editions, [that]

¹²⁰ Historians recognize that the *TR* was identified with the autographs by both Baptists and even the general body of Protestantism. The *Textus Receptus* "was also the Bible of the Middle Ages and much more, since it was independent of interpretation by Popes, councils, canon lawyers or university doctors. In one sense both Zwingli and the radicals were uncritical about the Bible in that they made no attempt to go behind the received Hebrew and Greek texts to original manuscripts, and were not concerned that alternative readings were possible — quite the contrary, there was but one text . . . Zwingli and the Anabaptists . . . both accepted the received text, and both agreed that tradition, the hierarchy and any human authorities, however ancient or eminent, must give way to the Word. . . . [the Baptists defended what this unbelieving historian calls] narrow and uncompromising bibliolatry" (Pg. 172-173, *Zwingli*, G. R. Potter. London: Cambridge University Press, 1976). One of the editors of the modern CT stated, "It is undisputed that Luther used the Greek *Textus Receptus* for his translation of the German New Testament in 1522 and all its later editions (although the term itself was not yet in use at the time). . . . [So did] all the translators of the New Testament in the 16th century (e.g., the Zürich version). All the translations of the 17th century, including the King James version of 1611, the "Authorized Version," were also based on this text. Thus the New Testament of the church in the period of the Reformation was based on the *Textus Receptus*. It is equally undisputed that in the 16th or 17th century (and for that matter well into the 18th century) anyone with a Greek New Testament would have had a copy of the *Textus Receptus*. . . . Finally it is undisputed that from the 16th to the 18th century orthodoxy's doctrine of verbal inspiration assumed this *Textus Receptus*." ("The Text Of The Church?" Kurt Aland. *Trinity Journal*, 8:2 (Fall 1987), pg. 131). In fact, the "*Textus Receptus* . . . in this period . . . was regarded as preserving even to the last detail the inspired and infallible word of God himself" (pg. 11, *The Text of the New Testament*, Kurt & Barbara Aland, trans. Erroll Rhodes. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989). This "this Byzantine text was regarded as 'the text of the church' . . . from the 4th . . . century" (pg. 143, "The Text of the Church?" Aland.)

¹²¹ Since the people of God rejected the CT for centuries, one might, to highlight its antithesis with the old received Bible, call it the *Textus Rejectus*.

was disfigured . . . by the accumulation over the centuries of myriads of scribal alterations . . . some of considerable consequence.” This “corrupt Byzantine form of text that provided the basis for almost all translations of the New Testament into modern languages down to the nineteenth century” hoodwinked the saints—the Spirit not guiding them into all truth—so that they accepted the “blatant errors of the Textus Receptus” as God’s Word and “reprinted in edition after edition . . . this debased form of the New Testament text.”¹²² If the CT, and the modern versions stemming from it (NIV, NASV, NRSV, ESV, NLT, etc.) is correct, Jehovah (or, rather, the God who allowed His Name to be lost), for hundreds of years, allowed His church to employ a Greek text which is 7% corrupt, one containing nearly 10,000 errors,¹²³ the approximate length of the entire book of Revelation, or of 2 Thessalonians, Titus, Philemon, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John and Jude¹²⁴ combined.¹²⁵ If the CT is the best NT text, even today the saints cannot “live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4), for

¹²² Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, pgs. 9-10. At least the theological modernist Metzger is honest enough to brazenly affirm his belief that the text employed by the people of God for centuries is corrupt and filled with scribal alterations, and, accordingly, worthy of abandonment. Professed fundamentalists who continue to employ the King James Version, and even assert their love for it, while they share Metzger’s view of the Greek Received Text, are monumentally inconsistent. Should not an English version which faithfully renders a corrupt, debased Greek text be immediately rejected and warned against, not preached from and loved? Let institutions such as Bob Jones University, Calvary Baptist Theological Seminary, Central Baptist Seminary, Maranatha Baptist Bible College, and Northland Baptist Bible College cease to halt between two opinions. If the CT is right, follow it—embrace the modern versions and repudiate the historic Baptist Bible as a debased corruption. But if the KJV is right, then follow it—embrace the *TR* and reject the modern Greek and English texts. Thousands of changes cannot be inconsequential if the autographs were verbally, plenarily inspired—only the original reading can engender celestial fire from the breath of God—variants, of necessity, if they bring any fire whatever, carry it from the abyss.

¹²³ pg. xii, *Defending the King James Bible*, D. A. Waite, Collingswood, NJ: Bible For Today Press, 1999.

¹²⁴ If texts and versions are simply a matter of personal preference, not of vital doctrine, would a modern Marcion who cut out from the New Testament the Revelation, or the ten other books here listed, be a non-issue?

¹²⁵ Statistics were obtained by a search of the *Textus Receptus* using *Accordance* Bible software. Ten thousand is higher than the number of Greek words in the Revelation or the combination of other books mentioned.

its proponents do not even claim to have restored a perfect Bible. If the CT is right, God's promises about the preservation of Scripture have failed, and the *autographa* was errant and fallible.¹²⁶ If God is true, the CT is not; if the CT is, the God of the Bible does not exist.

Since Christ led His church, by the Spirit, to an absolute confidence in the *TR*, as evidenced in her confessions, even when it varied from the modern MT, believers should continue to follow the Received Text in the 1-2% of the NT where the two differ. Furthermore, confessional affirmations should also make it clear to the eyes of faith that the English Authorized Version, rather than its modern non-CT competitors (NKJV, MKJV, etc.) should be retained. In short, Baptist confessions, when considered in light of Bible promises of verbal, plenary preservation, perpetual availability, and the church as the guardian of the Word in the dispensation of grace, require that believers affirm the perfection of the Hebrew and Greek *Textus Receptus* that underlies the English King James Bible and affiliate themselves with the KJV-only side in the modern textual controversy. The Lord is there.

Furthermore, churches and allegedly Baptist associations and para-church institutions which employ any of the traditional Baptist confessions in their doctrinal statements are inconsistent when they discard the traditional Greek New Testament or adopt modern English versions. Either their confession or their practice is in error, and they should give up the one or the other at once. Baptist confessions also make it obvious

¹²⁶ Even apart from the failure of Divine promises of preservation evidencing a fallible Bible, the CT contains clear errors. For example, it affirms in Matthew 1:7-8 that Asaph, rather than king Asa, is the ancestor of Christ, and its Matthew 1:10 places Amos, rather than king Amon, in His genealogy. The CT, in Mark 1:2, affirms that "Isaiah the prophet" wrote the book of Malachi (see 3:1).

that the allegation, sometimes trumpeted by CT proponents who ought to know better,¹²⁷ that the KJV-only position is an innovation or a deviation from orthodoxy is utter nonsense. The classical Baptist tradition follows the Received Text, in the original and in English. Advocates of the CT and MT, or translations made from them, have, at that point, fallen away from the historic Baptist faith.

¹²⁷ For example, “All writers who embrace the KJV-only position have derived their views ultimately from Seventh-day-Adventist missionary, theology professor, and college president, Benjamin G. Wilkinson (d. 1968) [through his] *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated* [written in 1930].” “‘Roots’ of the KJV Controversy: The Unlearned Men: The True Genealogy and Genesis of King-James-Version-Onlyism,” Doug Kutilek, http://www.kjbbn.net/root_of_the_kjv_controversy.htm. Wildly false assertions of this nature reveal the unlearned (or disingenuous) character of their advocates.

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