

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

by  
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Baptist History II

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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.<sup>1</sup>

Christ's church is an autonomous assembly of immersed believers, organized to carry out the Lord's work.<sup>2</sup> 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 catholic 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, all religious organizations which employ episcopal or presbyterian polity are not the Christ's churches. Those who teach baptismal regeneration, as does Catholicism and the major Protestant denominations,<sup>4</sup> are also cursed (Galatians 1:8-9), and cannot constitute the church.

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<sup>3</sup> 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, the each of the "elders" (*presbuteros*) is a "bishop" (*episkopon*).

<sup>4</sup> 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 Episcopalian 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

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),<sup>5</sup> 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,<sup>6</sup> 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*

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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).

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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)*,<sup>7</sup> the Hodges-Farstad text-type (commonly denominated the “Majority Text” (MT), a convention which will be followed here, although one not strictly accurate), or the modern critical text-type (CT), along with translations based upon 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,<sup>8</sup> a narrower focus on Reformation and post-Reformation Baptists will here be maintained. If Baptists universally<sup>9</sup> 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*

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<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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>).

<sup>9</sup> “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.

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.<sup>10</sup> Since verses employed in proof-text citations were considered the best to 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 confessions<sup>11</sup> 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 baptism<sup>12</sup> and references the *pericope adulterae* (John 7:53-8:11).<sup>13</sup> A contemporaneous

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<sup>10</sup> 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 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.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> Article #1, cited from pg. 25, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, William J. Lumpkin, Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1969 (rev. ed.).

Anabaptist book on church order likewise supports the long ending of Mark.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup> It references the long ending of Mark eight times,<sup>16</sup> cites Acts 8:37,<sup>17</sup> and supports, in the text of the confession, both the *TR* reading “the Son of the living God” (not the CT “Holy One”) in John 6:69<sup>18</sup> and the *TR* “of his flesh and of his bones” (omitted in the CT) in Ephesians 5:30.<sup>19</sup> 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,”<sup>20</sup> 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;<sup>21</sup> 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,<sup>22</sup> and employs the exclusively *TR* verse, Acts 8:37, as the sole support for baptism upon a confession of faith.<sup>23</sup> Some of John Smyth’s associates composed *Propositions and Conclusions concerning True Christian Religion* c. 1612, a work still referenced by

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<sup>13</sup> Article #6, pg. 28, *ibid*.

<sup>14</sup> *Discipline of the church, how a Christian ought to live (Ordnung der Gemein, wei ein Christ leben soll)*, 1527, article #9, pg. 34, *ibid*.

<sup>15</sup> pgs. 44-45, *ibid*.

<sup>16</sup> Article VII, XVI, XXV, XXIX, XXX, XXXI pg. 48, 52, 58, 59, 60, *ibid*.

<sup>17</sup> Article XXXI, pg. 60, *ibid*.

<sup>18</sup> Article VIII, pg. 49, *ibid*.

<sup>19</sup> Article XXIV, pg. 58, *ibid*.

<sup>20</sup> pg. 115, *ibid*.

<sup>21</sup> pg. 117, *ibid*.

<sup>22</sup> Article 5, pg. 118, *ibid*.

<sup>23</sup> Article 10, pg. 119, *ibid*.



English General Baptists in 1651, which also found its way to America.<sup>24</sup> This creed references 1 John 5:7 and twice writes out the verse in the text of the confession,<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup> It has been said that “perhaps no Confession of Faith has had so formative an influence on Baptist life”<sup>27</sup> as the Particular Baptist *Confession of Faith* of 1644. It cites Acts 8:37<sup>28</sup> and the long ending of Mark.<sup>29</sup> 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.”<sup>30</sup> It supports the Received Text declaration that Christ “washed [not the CT “loosed”] us from our sins in his own blood” in Revelation 1:5<sup>31</sup> and the *TR* reading “the Lord added to the church [not the CT “to them”]” in Acts 2:47.<sup>32</sup> 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,<sup>33</sup> and builds a doctrinal point solely on the exclusively *TR* Acts 8:37.<sup>34</sup> The 1654 Baptist confession *The True Gospel-Faith Declared According to the Scriptures* references the long ending of Mark.<sup>35</sup> The Baptist *Midland Association Confession* of 1655 quotes 1 John 5:7 in its text—it is the first verse referenced in the

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<sup>24</sup> pg. 123-124, *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Article 43, 61, pg. 131, 135, *ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Article 46, pg. 132, *ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> pg. 152, *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Article 39, pg. 167, *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Article 18, pg. 161 *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Article 40, pg. 167, *ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Article 52, pg. 168, *ibid.* The doctrinal point made in the confession is only clear if the *TR* reading is followed.

<sup>33</sup> Article 20, pg. 178, *ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Article 35, pg. 180, *ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Article 29, pg. 195, *ibid.*

Confession and the only one listed in support of Trinitarianism.<sup>36</sup> The 1656 *Somerset Confession*<sup>37</sup> cites Mark 9:44.<sup>38</sup> Early English Baptist confessions uniformly employ the Received Text.

Subsequent English Baptist confessions also unanimously support the *Textus Receptus*. The General Baptist *Standard Confession*,<sup>39</sup> written in 1660 and accepted by the denomination for many years subsequently, quotes only Mark 16:15<sup>40</sup> to support the universal preaching of the gospel, writes out 1 John 5:7 in its text,<sup>41</sup> and supports with Luke 24:51<sup>42</sup> 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,"<sup>43</sup> employs the language of and references 1 John 5:7 to prove Trinitarianism,<sup>44</sup> references the long ending of Mark three times,<sup>45</sup> supports the *TR*

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<sup>36</sup> Article 2, pg. 198, *ibid*.

<sup>37</sup> 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*.

<sup>38</sup> Article 42, pg. 214, *ibid*.

<sup>39</sup> 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.*

<sup>40</sup> Article 4, pg. 225, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, Lumpkin.

<sup>41</sup> Article 7, pg. 227, *ibid*.

<sup>42</sup> 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.

<sup>43</sup> 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.

<sup>44</sup> Chapter 2:3, pg. 253, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, Lumpkin.

reading “only begotten Son [not the CT “only begotten God]” in John 1:18,<sup>46</sup> supports the Christological doctrine of *communicatio idiomatum*<sup>47</sup> using only the *TR* readings “church 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.<sup>48</sup> 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.”<sup>49</sup> 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,”<sup>50</sup> 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,<sup>51</sup> more than any other verse mentioned. It references the

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<sup>45</sup> Chapter 7:2, 8:4, 19:2, pg. 253, 262, 291, *ibid*.

<sup>46</sup> 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.

<sup>47</sup> The doctrine of *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 original). The doctrine is amply illustrated in the Received Text verses the Confession quotes to prove it, Acts 20:28 and John 3:13.

<sup>48</sup> Chapter 29:2, pg. 291, *ibid*.

<sup>49</sup> pg. 246, *ibid*.

<sup>50</sup> Article 1, pg. 250, *ibid*.

<sup>51</sup> Article 3, 5, 24, pgs. 299, 300, 315, *ibid*.

*TR* “God [not the CT “who”] was manifest in the flesh” in 1 Timothy 3:16.<sup>52</sup> It uses the phrase “love of God . . . [who] laid down his life” in 1 John 3:16, found in the KJV-based Scrivener *TR*,<sup>53</sup> to prove the *communicatio idiomatum*, along with the *TR* readings of Acts 20:28 and John 3:13.<sup>54</sup> Acts 20:28 is also cited in two other places in the confession.<sup>55</sup> Mark 16:9-20 is referenced five times,<sup>56</sup> 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,<sup>57</sup> and Acts 8:37 is twice employed.<sup>58</sup> 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*,<sup>59</sup> while the more Calvinistic Philadelphia Association employed the *Second London Confession* of 1677,<sup>60</sup> 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.’”<sup>61</sup> 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,

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<sup>52</sup> Article 6, pg. 300-301, *ibid.* The verse does not prove the point made in the sixth article without the reading “God.”

<sup>53</sup> The Greek *tou 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.

<sup>54</sup> Article 7, pg. 301, *ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Article 6, 9, pg. 300, 303, *ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Article 9, 17, 18, 28, 31, pg. 303, 309, 310, 317, 321, *ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Article 10, pg. 304, *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Article 23, 28, pg. 314, 317, *ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> pg. 347, *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> pgs. 348-353, *ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> pgs. 352-353, *ibid.*

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 fundamentalist<sup>62</sup> General Association of Regular Baptist Churches<sup>63</sup> and the Landmark movement's American Baptist Association.<sup>64</sup> The Southern Baptist Convention also made it the basis for its influential 1925 statement of faith. The *New Hampshire Confession*<sup>65</sup> quotes Acts 8:37,<sup>66</sup> references the long ending of Mark,<sup>67</sup> accepts the Received Text version of Luke 22:19-20,<sup>68</sup> 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,<sup>69</sup> and the "made me (not CT, "you") free from the law of sin and death" in Romans 5:2.<sup>70</sup> 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.<sup>71</sup> American Baptist confessions continue the English Baptist practice of employment of the *Textus Receptus*.

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<sup>62</sup> 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.

<sup>63</sup> 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.*)

<sup>64</sup> "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*.)

<sup>65</sup> 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*.

<sup>66</sup> Article 15, pg. 557, Hiscox, *Principles and Practices*.

<sup>67</sup> Article 15, pg. 557, *ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Article 16, pg. 558, *ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Article 9, pg. 552, *ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Article 13, pg. 556, *ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Article 18, pg. 389, Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*.

For Continental, English, and American Baptists,<sup>72</sup> the Received Text was the Bible. The churches which confessed the faith of these documents affirmed it through their 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 establishment<sup>73</sup> 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,<sup>74</sup> as does the Particular Baptist *Somerset Confession* of 1656.<sup>75</sup> The 1660 *Standard Confession* employs the KJV<sup>76</sup> and includes

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<sup>72</sup> 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 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.*).

<sup>73</sup> This is not to deny that a period of transition from earlier Received Text Bibles (such as the Geneva) did not exist.

<sup>74</sup> 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*.

<sup>75</sup> 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.*

<sup>76</sup> The title page employs Acts 24:14, and numerous quotations are found throughout the text of the confession. See pgs. 224ff, *ibid.*

(as do many other confessions) the AV's traditional interpretation of *monogenes* as "only-begotten"<sup>77</sup> rather than the modern critical alternatives of "unique" or "one and only,"<sup>78</sup> which undermine the historic Trinitarian doctrine of the Son's eternal generation, namely, in the words of the *Orthodox Creed*, that He is "eternally begotten of the father."<sup>79</sup> The *Orthodox Creed* consistently quotes the KJV,<sup>80</sup> supports its view that *ha'alimah* in Isaiah 7:14 indicates Christ is born of a "virgin" not just a "young woman,"<sup>81</sup> 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.).<sup>82</sup> The confession supports that The *Second London Confession* of 1677 quotes 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.<sup>83</sup> The *New Hampshire Confession* indicates that the KJV "Jehovah" (Exodus 6:3, Psalm 83:18, Isaiah 12:2, 26:4) rather than the modern alternative "Yahweh" is the name of God,<sup>84</sup> in agreement with the traditional Hebrew OT, the second Rabbinic Bible of 1524-5 as edited by Ben Chayyim, literally translated,<sup>85</sup> rather than the current critical

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<sup>77</sup> Article 3, 4, pg. 225-6, *ibid*.

<sup>78</sup> See, e. g., the RSV, NRSV, NIV, ESV, NLT, etc. on John 3:16.

<sup>79</sup> Article 3, pg. 299, Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*.

<sup>80</sup> 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*.)

<sup>81</sup> 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.

<sup>82</sup> Article 4, pg. 299, *ibid*.

<sup>83</sup> 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*.

<sup>84</sup> Article 2, pg. 362, *ibid*.

<sup>85</sup> The idea that the pronunciation "Jehovah" originated when the vowels of *Adonai* were added to the Tetragrammaton, although widespread, is very dubious.

OT based on the Leningrad manuscript.<sup>86</sup> Baptist confessions reflect the translation choices of the 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

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<sup>86</sup> The Ben Chayyim text fully points the Tetragrammaton as *Yehowah* (יהוה), while the Hebrew CT removes the *cholem* (יהוה), 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 "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 a defense 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.



Covenant, presence, loue, blessing and protection: Heere are the holy Oracles as in the side of the Arke, surely kept & purely taught.”<sup>87</sup> As the *autographa* was placed in the ark of the covenant (Deuteronomy 31:26) and perfectly preserved for Israel, so the 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

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

dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope.<sup>88</sup> 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, [into which their] faith is finally resolved,”<sup>89</sup> 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.”<sup>90</sup> The text “unto which nothing at any time is to be added”<sup>91</sup> 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,<sup>92</sup> 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

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<sup>88</sup> Article 1:8, pg. 251, *ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Article 1:10, pg. 252, *ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Article 26:9, pg. 287, *ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> Article 1:6, pg. 250, *ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> 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.

it is the Word of God.”<sup>93</sup> 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 confirmed by the “Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our Hearts.”<sup>94</sup> 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 Baptist<sup>95</sup> *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.”<sup>96</sup> The Received Text available in that day, both as found in the original languages and reproduced in the King James Bible, constituted the preserved Word of God, which was 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

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<sup>93</sup> Article 1:4, pg. 250, *ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> Article 1:6, pg. 250, *ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> 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.*).

<sup>96</sup> Article 37, pg. 324-325, *ibid.*

heresies of Rome.”<sup>97</sup> These available scriptures “are [note the present tense] given by the inspiration of God”<sup>98</sup>; they are identical with the autographs and still exude the very breath of God.<sup>99</sup> 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.”<sup>100</sup> Textual critics do not sit in judgment upon the *Textus Receptus*; Divine preservation of the common Bible is presupposed, and all men must submit to it. Furthermore, Scripture, when in the “mother tongue” is still “God’s word,”<sup>101</sup> so saints without knowledge of the original languages still have it available to them, and are able to judge Biblical “faith and practice.”<sup>102</sup> 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.

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

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<sup>97</sup> pg. 297, *ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Article 37, pg. 326, *ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> 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.

<sup>100</sup> Article 37, pgs. 324-325, *ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *ibid.*

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,”<sup>103</sup> 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.”<sup>104</sup> 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,<sup>105</sup> Luke 22:19-20, missing in only one very poor Greek MSS,<sup>106</sup> Luke 24:51, omitted in only two Greek MSS of thousands,<sup>107</sup> John 1:18, where “Son” is found in thousands of MSS and altered in but seven,<sup>108</sup> John 3:13, where “which is in heaven” is contained in “at least 99.9% of all manuscripts”<sup>109</sup> etc.)<sup>110</sup> 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.

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<sup>103</sup> See the comments on Mark 16:9-20, pg. 103, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Bruce M. Metzger, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

<sup>104</sup> 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.

<sup>105</sup> Note on Mark 9:44, 46, *Textual and Translational Notes on the Holy Gospels*, J. P. Green, Sr.

<sup>106</sup> Note on Luke 22:19-20, *ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> Note on Luke 24:51, *ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> Note on John 1:18, *ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Note on John 3:13, *ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> 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 ekklesia 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).

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 minority<sup>111</sup> of Greek MSS,<sup>112</sup> 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.<sup>113</sup> 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 early translations),<sup>114</sup> it is quoted with absolute confidence, as part of the preserved *Textus Receptus*. No confession ever criticizes or questions a Received Text or

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<sup>111</sup> "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).

<sup>112</sup> 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.

<sup>113</sup> 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*.

<sup>114</sup> See note on 1 John 3:16, pg. 971, *The Interlinear Bible: Hebrew, Greek, English*, ed. Jay P. Green, Sr., 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

Authorized Version rendering.<sup>115</sup> 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.”<sup>116</sup> 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* 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

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<sup>115</sup> 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.

<sup>116</sup> 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*.

availability of Scripture, and identified that matchless treasure with their common Bible, 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.<sup>117</sup> 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] 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."<sup>118</sup> If the CT, and the modern versions stemming from it (NIV, NASV,

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<sup>117</sup> 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*.

<sup>118</sup> 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. Professing fundamentalists who continue to employ the King James Version, and even profess 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, plenary 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.



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,<sup>119</sup> 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 Jude<sup>120</sup> combined.<sup>121</sup> 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 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.<sup>122</sup> 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 their absolute confidence in the *TR*, as evidenced in their confessions, even when it varied from the modern *MT*, believers should continue to follow the Received Text in the 1% 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

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<sup>119</sup> pg. xii, *Defending the King James Bible*, D. A. Waite, Collingswood, NJ: Bible For Today Press, 1999.

<sup>120</sup> 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?

<sup>121</sup> 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.

<sup>122</sup> 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).

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 that the allegation, sometimes trumpeted by CT proponents who ought to know better,<sup>123</sup> 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.

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<sup>123</sup> 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](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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