

BOOK REVIEW

AN ENQUIRY INTO THE INTEGRITY OF THE
RECEIVED TEXT.

by

Rev. Frederick Nolan

Publ. Bible for Today, U.S.A.

REVIEWED BY RAYMOND A. KEMP.

Originally published in 1815, now photocopied in A4 format, edgebound with card covers, this work is now available in the UK from :

THE HIGHLAND BIBLE BOOKSHOP, LOHCARRON, ROSS-SHIRE,
IV54 8YD SCOTLAND, price £18.50 plus p & p.

Not insignificantly, the last issue of the *British Reformed Journal* contained two important articles relating to the importance of Scripture - one to its Inspiration, the other to its Preservation. The contemporary orthodox view of the *Providential Preservation* of Scripture (as expressed in the Reformed Creeds) was highlighted and elucidated by Burgon, and later expressed through Edward F. Hills *et al*, the supporters of the Traditional Text type. Therefore, the modern debate has been immensely influenced by last century colossi : Burgon, Miller, Scrivener, Hoskier, on one side; Westcott, Hort, and Ellicott on the other. But the Rev. Frederick Nolan held the orthodox line years before, and had demonstrably proven that the *Textus Receptus* or *Received Text* was the genuine text of the autographs. His research, originally an answer to the disciples of Griesbach, has a timeless relevance, the passage of time reveals little that is innovative or metamorphic in the line of argument.

The renowned Presbyterian theologian, R.L.Dabney, who recognized Nolan's scholarship and importance, quoted him extensively in his "The Doctrinal various Readings of the New Testament Greek" (*Discussions*, Vol I pp.350-398), especially in recognizing that there was a case for maintaining the *Johannine comma* (1 John 5:7), a text with only minority Greek support. Nolan, in more than forty pages, gives the classic response: excise the *comma* and a grammatical nightmare arises, the entire passage is up-set; therefore the case for its inclusion is immensely strengthened. But - *why* does the passage appear in the Latin manuscripts and not in Greek manuscripts? Here, the inestimable worth of Nolan's *Inquiry* is manifested - he details carefully how certain texts became corrupted in the first place, and explains, for instance, that the Greek church was riddled with numerous strains of heresy, a prevalent one being *Sabellianism* - which said that the persons of the Trinity were one and the same - hence the deliberate omission of the *comma*. The Latin church, untouched by Sabellianism, retained the text.

Dabney declared: "The acute and learned Irish divine, Nolan, in his *Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate* (Nolan's original title), a work which defends the received text with matchless ingenuity and profound learning...(the object being) to prove the Byzantine family of codices, which approaches most nearly to the commonly received text, the oldest and purest."

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They Today?" mentions six major documents produced by the Westminster Assembly, the *Confession of Faith*, two *Catechisms*, (Larger and Shorter), the *Sum of Saving Knowledge*, the *Directory for the Public Worship of God*, and the *Form of Presbyterian Church Government*. If these are available from your office, I would appreciate it if you could send them to me.

Secondly, I would like to request, if possible, that the editor of the BRJ could consider writing and publishing expositions of the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards in future issues of the BRJ. I believe such expositions would be warmly welcomed by Reformed people everywhere.

Thank you for your kind attention. I look forward to hearing from you.
(Contact made by Tony Horne, Editor.)

From Mr. Gary A. Meharg,
36145 Barkley Avenue, Livonia,
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I enclose £10...to cover subs. to your fine publication. from the British Isles I also receive the Banner of Truth, Evangelical Times, and Sword and Trowel. I visited UK first in 1989, in 1993 my wife and I spent 2 weeks in Scotland staying B&B, concentrating on Scottish Church History, in particular Knox and the Reformation times. In 1995 I will be coming with Westminster Seminary group for 1 week at St. Andrews with Sinclair Ferguson, and 1 week at Cambridge with Dr. Sam Logan,

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studying background to founding of America by Cotton-Hooker-Shepard.

I wholeheartedly can subscribe to your doctrinal standards. I am 39 years old, live with my family in Livonia, a city of 100 000 near Detroit. Since 1986 we have been members of Ward Evangelical Presbyterian Church, a church of 4 700 members, one of the largest Presbyterian congregations in the US. Dr. J.R.DeWitt had been in our EPC denomination until recently. Dr. Rob Norris has a very large EPC in Washington DC area. EPC was founded in 1982 by a small group of reformers who felt that PCUSA had departed from Westminster Standards, especially in ref. to the Divinity of Christ. EPC has over 80 000 members. Our church has planted 5 other churches, which comprise another 2000+ members in the region. Dr. Bartlett Hess, God's instrument in all this has a 500 person congregation now in Ann Arbor, age 84!

I am familiar with Free Church of Scotland group in Livonia, am at present in the Insurance business, but am feeling the Lord's calling me to prepare to transition to a ministry of some type. I hope to study at Westminster seminary for 3 years starting in a few years. I have a 3000 book library of finest Puritan/Reformed literature. I am very active in used book market, have several hundred works from 1600's Sibbes, Perkins, Ames, Goodwin Cotton,...etc.

God has given me a special interest in the period 1500 - 1662. May God richly bless your work to His Glory. //

NOLAN'S INQUIRY..THE RECEIVED TEXT.review contin. from p.44

Nolan possessed a fine intellect: the first cleric to give the Boyle, Bampton, and Warburton lectures successively, he authored a major work harmonizing the grammar of twelve languages (1822), many of them with a biblical or semitic connotation. In 1839, he published *The Catholic Character of Christianity as recognized by the Reformed Church, in opposition to the corrupt traditions of the Church of Rome, asserted*; this was among the first broadsides against the Oxford movement.

This book is the product of an era when the subject of diverging texts (the precursor to multiple Bible versions) was treated factually and thoroughly, without the interjection of sentimental emotionalism on the one hand, and the unquenchable appetite for the latest craze on the other. This book is highly recommended, an indispensable source of data, and an ever relevant means of education regarding the issues still under debate.