

The Root Cause of the Continuous Defection from Biblical Infallibility and Consequent Objective Authority

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That part of the academic world that deals with the biblical Text, including those who call themselves 'evangelical', is dominated by the notion that the original wording is lost, in the sense that no one knows for sure what it is, or was (if indeed it ever existed as an Autograph).¹ That notion is basic to all that is taught in the area of New Testament (NT) textual criticism in most schools. In an attempt to understand where that notion came from, I will sketch a bit of relevant history.

A Bit of Relevant History

The discipline of NT textual criticism, as we know it, is basically a 'child' of Western Europe and its colonies; the Eastern Orthodox Churches have generally not been involved. (They have always known that the true NT Text lies within the Byzantine tradition.) In the year 1500 the Christianity of Western Europe was dominated by the Roman Catholic Church, whose pope claimed the exclusive right to interpret Scripture. That Scripture was the Latin Vulgate, which the laity was not allowed to read. Martin Luther's ninety-five theses were posted in 1517. Was it mere chance that the first printed Greek Text of the NT was published the year before? As the Protestant Reformation advanced, it was declared that the authority of Scripture exceeded that of the pope, and that every believer had the right to read and interpret the Scriptures for himself. The authority of the Latin Vulgate was also challenged, since the NT was written in Greek. Of course the Vatican library held many Greek MSS, no two of which were identical (at least in the Gospels), so the Roman Church challenged the authenticity of the Greek Text.² In short, the Roman Church forced the Reformation to come to grips with textual variation among the Greek MSS. But they did not know how to go about it, because this was a new field of study and they simply were not in possession of a sufficient proportion of the relevant evidence.³ (They probably didn't even know that the Mt. Athos peninsula, with its twenty monasteries, existed.)

In 1500 the Roman Catholic Establishment was corrupt, morally bankrupt, and discredited among thinking people. The Age of Reason and humanism were coming to the fore. More and more people were deciding that they could do better without the god of the Roman Establishment. The new imagined freedom from supernatural supervision was intoxicating, and many had no interest in accepting the authority of Scripture (*sola Scriptura*). Further, it would be naive in the extreme to exclude the supernatural from consideration, and not allow for satanic activity behind the scenes. Consider Ephesians 2:2—"in which you once walked, according to the Aeon of this world, the ruler of the domain of the air, the spirit who is now at work in the sons of the disobedience." Strictly speaking, the Text has "according to the Aeon of

¹ There are those who like to argue that none of the books was written by its stated author, that they are forgeries, the result of editorial activity spread over decades (if not centuries) of time. Of course they were not there, and do not know what actually happened, but that does not deter them from pontificating.

² Probably no two MSS of the Latin Vulgate are identical either, but that was not the issue. Indeed, so far as I know, there is no way to establish what may have been the original wording of the Latin Vulgate, in every detail.

³ Family 35 (for an introduction to this family please see chapter seven of my *Identity IV*), being by far the largest and most cohesive group of MSS with a demonstrable archetype, was poorly represented in the libraries of Western Europe. For that matter, very few MSS of whatever text-type had been sufficiently collated to allow for any tracing of the transmissional history. Worse, the lack of complete collations made it impossible to refute an erroneous hypothesis within a reasonable time frame.

this world, according to the ruler of the domain of the air”—the phrases are parallel, so ‘Aeon’ and ‘ruler’ have the same referent, a specific person or being. This spirit is presently at work (present tense) in ‘the sons of the disobedience’. ‘Sons’ of something are those characterized by that something, and the something in this case is ‘the’ disobedience (the Text has the definite article)—a continuation of the original rebellion against the Sovereign of the universe.¹ ‘Sons of the disobedience’ joined the attack against Scripture. The so-called ‘higher criticism’ denied divine inspiration altogether.² Others used the textual variation to argue that in any case the original wording was ‘lost’, there being no objective way to determine what it may have been (unfortunately, no one was able to perceive such a way at that time).

The uncritical assumption that ‘oldest equals best’ was an important factor, and became increasingly so as earlier uncials came to light.³ Both Codex Vaticanus and Codex Bezae were available early on, and they have thousands of disagreements between themselves, just in the Gospels (in Acts, Bezae is wild almost beyond belief). **If** ‘oldest equals best’, and the oldest MSS are in constant and massive disagreement between/among themselves, then the recovery of a lost text becomes hopeless. Did you get that? **Hopeless, totally hopeless!** However, I have argued (and continue to do so) that ‘oldest equals worst’, and that changes the picture radically. The benchmark work on this subject is Herman C. Hoskier's *Codex B and its Allies: A Study and an Indictment* (2 vols.; London: Bernard Quaritch, 1914). The first volume (some 500 pages) contains a detailed and careful discussion of hundreds of obvious errors in Codex B; the second (some 400 pages) contains the same for Codex Aleph. He affirms that in the Gospels alone these two MSS differ well over 3,000 times, which number does not include minor errors such as spelling (II, 1). [Had he tabulated all differences, the total would doubtless increase by several hundreds.] Well now, simple logic demands that one or the other has to be wrong those 3,000+ times; they cannot both be right, quite apart from the times when they are both wrong. **No amount of subjective preference can obscure the fact that they are poor copies, objectively so.**⁴ They were so bad that no one could stand to use them, and so they survived physically (but had no ‘children’, since no one wanted to copy them).

¹ Anyone in rebellion against the Creator is under satanic influence, direct or indirect (in most cases a demon acts as Satan’s agent, when something more than the influence of the surrounding culture is required—almost all human cultures have ingredients of satanic provenance; this includes the academic culture). Anyone in rebellion against the Creator will also have strongholds of Satan in his mind. Since Satan is the ‘father’ of lies (John 8:44), anytime you embrace a lie you invite him into your mind—this applies to any of his sophistries (2 Corinthians 10:5) currently in vogue, such as materialism, humanism, relativism, Marxism, Freudianism, Hortianism, etc.

² The Darwinian theory appeared to be made to order for those who wished to get rid of a Creator, or any superior Authority, who might require an accounting. The ‘higher criticism’ served the purpose of getting rid of an authoritative Revelation, that might be used to require an accounting. Rebels don’t like to be held accountable.

³ Appeal was made to the analogy of a stream, where the purest water would presumably be that closest to the source. But with reference to NT manuscripts the analogy is fallacious, and becomes a sophistry.

⁴ John William Burgon personally collated what in his day were ‘the five old uncials’ (א, A, B, C, D). Throughout his works he repeatedly calls attention to the *concordia discors*, the prevailing confusion and disagreement, that the early uncials display among themselves. Luke 11:2-4 offers one example.

“The five Old Uncials” (א ABCD) falsify the Lord’s Prayer as given by St. Luke in no less than forty-five words. But so little do they agree among themselves, that they throw themselves into six different combinations in their departures from the Traditional Text; and yet they are never able to agree among themselves as to one single various reading: while only once are more than two of them observed to stand together, and their grand point of union is no less than an omission of the article. Such is their eccentric tendency, that in respect of thirty-two out of the whole forty-five words they bear in turn solitary evidence. (*The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels Vindicated and Established*. Arranged, completed, and edited by Edward Miller. London: George Bell and Sons, 1896, p. 84.)

Since everyone is influenced (not necessarily controlled) by his milieu, this was also true of the Reformers. In part (at least) the Reformation was a 'child' of the Renaissance, with its emphasis on reason. Recall that on trial Luther said he could only recant if convinced by Scripture and reason. So far so good, but many did not want Scripture, and that left only reason. Further, since reason cannot explain or deal with the supernatural, those who emphasize reason are generally unfriendly toward the supernatural. [To this day the so-called historic or traditional Protestant denominations have trouble dealing with the supernatural.]

Before Adolf Deissmann published his *Light from the Ancient East* (1910), (being a translation of *Licht vom Osten*, 1908), wherein he demonstrated that Koine Greek was the *lingua franca* in Jesus' day, there even being a published grammar explaining its rules, only classical Greek was taught in the universities. But the NT was written in Koine. Before Deissmann's benchmark work, there were two positions on the NT Greek: 1) it was a debased form of classical Greek, or 2) it was a 'Holy Ghost' Greek, invented for the NT. The second option was held mainly by pietists; the academic world preferred the first, which raised the natural question: if God were going to inspire a NT, why would He not do it in 'decent' Greek? The prevailing idea that Koine was bad Greek predisposed many against the NT.

All of this placed the defenders of an inspired Greek Bible on the defensive, with the very real problem of deciding where best to set up a perimeter they could defend. Given the prevailing ignorance concerning the relevant evidence, their best choice appeared to be an appeal to Divine Providence. God providentially chose the TR, so that was the text to be used (the 'traditional' text).¹ I would say that Divine Providence was indeed at work, because the TR is a good Text, far better than the eclectic one currently in vogue.

To all appearances Satan was winning the day, but he still had a problem: the main Protestant versions (in German, English, Spanish, etc.) were all based on the *Textus Receptus*, as were doctrinal statements and 'prayer books'. Enter F.J.A. Hort, a quintessential 'son of the disobedience'. Hort did not believe in the divine inspiration of the Bible, nor in the divinity of Jesus Christ. Since he embraced the Darwinian theory as soon as it appeared, he presumably did not believe in God.² His theory of NT textual criticism, published in 1881,³ was based squarely on the presuppositions that the NT was not inspired, that no special care was afforded it in the early decades, and that in consequence the original wording was lost—lost

Yes indeed, oldest equals worst. For more on this subject, please see pages 130-36 in *The Identity of the New Testament Text IV*.

¹ Please note that I am not criticizing Burgon and others; they did what they could, given the information available to them. They knew that the Hortian theory and resultant Greek text could not be right.

² For documentation of all this, and a good deal more besides, in Hort's own words, please see the biography written by his son. A.F. Hort, *Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort* (2 vols.; London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1896). The son made heavy use of the father's plentiful correspondence, whom he admired. (In those days a two-volume 'Life', as opposed to a one-volume 'Biography', was a posthumous status symbol, albeit of little consequence to the departed.) Many of my readers were taught, as was I, that one must not question/judge someone else's motives. But wait just a minute; where did such an idea come from? It certainly did not come from God, who expects the spiritual person to evaluate everything (1 Corinthians 2:15). Since there are only two spiritual kingdoms in this world (Matthew 6:24, 12:30; Luke 11:23, 16:13), then the idea comes from the other side. By eliminating motive, one also eliminates presupposition, which is something that God would never do, since presupposition governs interpretation (Matthew 22:29, Mark 12:24). Which is why we should always expect a true scholar to state his presuppositions. I have repeatedly stated mine, but here they are again: 1) The Sovereign Creator of the universe exists; 2) He delivered a written revelation to the human race; 3) He has preserved that revelation intact to this day.

³ B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (2 Vols.; London: Macmillan and Co., 1881). The second volume explains the theory, and is generally understood to be Hort's work.

beyond recovery, at least by objective means. His theory swept the academic world and continues to dominate the discipline to this day.¹

But just how was it that the Hortian theory was able to take over the Greek departments of the conservative schools in North America? The answer begins with the onslaught of liberal theology upon the Protestant churches of that continent at the beginning of the twentieth century. The great champion of the divine inspiration of Scripture was Benjamin B. Warfield, a Presbyterian. His defense of inspiration is so good that it is difficult to improve it. Somewhere along the line, however, he decided to go to Germany to study; I believe it was at Tübingen. When he returned, he was thanking God for having raised up Westcott and Hort to restore the text of the New Testament (think about the implication of ‘restore’). One of his students, Archibald T. Robertson, a Baptist, followed Warfield’s lead. The prestige of those two men was so great that their view swept the theological schools of the continent. I solicit the patience of the reader while I try to diagnose what happened to Warfield in Tübingen.

At Tübingen Warfield found himself among enemies of an inspired Bible. Now he was a champion of divine inspiration, but for an inspired text to have objective authority today, it must have been preserved.² Given the prevailing ignorance concerning the relevant evidence at that time, Warfield was simply not able to defend preservation in objective terms (and neither was anyone else—this is crucial to understanding what happened). He was faced with the fact of widespread variation between and among the extant Greek manuscripts. Even worse—far worse—was the presupposition that ‘oldest equals best’, because the oldest manuscripts are hopelessly at odds among themselves. For example: the two great early codices, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, differ between themselves well over 3,000 times just in the four Gospels. Well now, they cannot both be right; one or the other **has** to be wrong, quite apart from the places where they are both wrong. So what was poor Warfield to do? Enter Westcott and Hort. Hort claimed that as a result of their work only a thousandth part of the NT text could be considered to be in doubt, and this was joyfully received by the rank and file, since it seemed to provide assurance about the reliability of that text—however, of course, that claim applied only to the W-H text (probably the worst published NT in existence to this day, so the claim was false).³ Warfield grasped at this like a drowning man grasps at a straw, thereby doing serious damage to North American Evangelicalism.⁴

¹ For a thorough discussion of that theory, please see chapters 3 and 4 in *Identity IV*. Chapters 3 and 4 in *Identity IV* are little different from what they were in 1977. It has been over thirty-five years, and so far as I know no one has refuted my dismantling of Hort’s theory. It has not been for lack of desire. Nowadays one frequently hears the argument that to criticize Hort is to flay a dead horse, since now the ruling paradigm is eclecticism (whether ‘reasoned’ or ‘rigorous’). But eclecticism is based squarely on the same false presuppositions, and is therefore equally wrong.

² This has always been a favorite argument with enemies of inspiration; it goes like this: “If God had inspired a text, He would have preserved it (or else why bother inspiring). He did not preserve the NT; therefore He did not inspire it.” I confess that I am inclined to agree with that logical connection, except that I am prepared to turn the tables. I believe I can demonstrate that God did in fact preserve the NT Text; therefore He must have inspired it!

³ I would say that their text is mistaken with reference to 10% of the words—the Greek NT has roughly 140,000 words, so the W-H text is mistaken with reference to 14,000 of them. I would say that the so-called ‘critical’ (read ‘eclectic’) text currently in vogue is ‘only’ off with reference to some 12,000, an improvement (small though it be). And just by the way, how wise is it to use a NT prepared by a servant (or servants) of Satan? (On the other hand, I claim that God has preserved the original wording to such an extent that we can, and do, know what it is.)

⁴ However, I should not be unduly harsh in my criticism of Warfield; no one else knew what to do either. The cruel fact was that the relevant evidence did not exist in usable form at that time. (It follows that any defense of

Why the Defection Is Continuous

To understand the full impact of the onslaught of liberal theology, one must take account of the milieu. Reason has always been important to the historic or traditional Protestant denominations. In consequence, academic respectability has always been important to their graduate schools of theology. The difficulty resides in the following circumstance: for at least two centuries academia has been dominated by Satan, and so the terms of 'respectability' are dictated by him. Those terms include 'publish or perish', but of course he controls the technical journals. Since he is the father of lies (John 8:44), anyone who wished to tell the whole truth has always had a hard time getting an article published, no matter how good it was. To get an article published one had to toe the party line. 'Taking account of the existing literature' obliges one to waste a great deal of time reading the nonsense produced by Satan's servants, all of which was designed to keep the reader away from the truth.

The TRUTH—aye, there's the rub. Consider 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12: "The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (NKJV). Although verse ten is in the context of the activity of the Antichrist, who will find an easy target in 'those who are wasting themselves' (my translation), it does not follow that no one will be wasting himself before that activity. Obviously, people have been wasting themselves all down through history, and the underlying cause for that 'wasting' has never changed—"they did not receive the love of the truth". (It began in the Garden.)

Please notice carefully what is said here: it is God Himself who sends the strong delusion! And upon whom does He send it? Upon those who do not receive the love of the truth.¹ And what is the purpose of the strong delusion?—the condemnation of those who do not believe the truth. Dear me, this is heavy. Notice that the truth is **central** to anyone's salvation. This raises the necessary question: just what is meant by 'the truth'? In John 14:6 Sovereign Jesus declared Himself to be 'the truth'. Praying to the Father in John 17:17 He said, "Thy Word is truth". Once each in John chapters 14, 15 and 16 He referred to the third person of the Trinity as "the Spirit of the truth". Since the Son is back in Heaven at the Father's right hand, and the Spirit is not very perceptible to most of us, most of the time, and since the Word is the Spirit's sword (Ephesians 6:17), our main access to 'the truth' is through God's Word, the Bible. The Bible offers propositional truth, but we need the Holy Spirit to illumine that truth, and to have the Holy Spirit we must be adequately related to Sovereign Jesus.

Now then, for something to be received, it must be offered; one cannot believe in something he has never heard about (Romans 10:14). The use of the verb 'receive' clearly implies an act of volition on the part of those not receiving the truth; that love was offered or made available

divine preservation at that time had to be based upon faith, faith that God would produce the evidence in His time.) Part of the damage produced by Hort's theory was its disdain for the vast bulk of later manuscripts—they were not worth the bother to collate and study. Since it is precisely those disdained MSS that furnish the necessary evidence, that soporific effect of Hort's theory delayed the availability of the relevant evidence for a century. I remember one day in class (in 1957), the professor filled his lungs and proclaimed with gusto, "Gentlemen, where B and Aleph agree, you have the original." The poor man had obviously never read Herman C. Hoskier's *Codex B and its Allies: A Study and an Indictment* (published in 1914).

¹ Please note that it is not enough to merely 'accept' the truth; it is required that we love the truth. Satan tantalizes us with fame and fortune (on his terms, of course), so to love the truth requires determination.

to them but they did not want it; they wanted to be able to lie and to entertain lies told by others. But the consequences of such a choice are terrible; they turned their back on salvation. I suspect that not many Christians in the so-called 'first world' really believe what Sovereign Jesus said in Matthew 7:14: those who find the way of Life are **few!** And do not forget Revelation 22:15; "whoever loves and practices a lie" is excluded from the heavenly City [any lie, including Hort's].¹ I will here consider the implications for a student entering a graduate school of theology, because of what happens if he becomes a professor, or NT scholar, in his turn.²

Most such students presumably come from an evangelical environment, and were doubtless taught that the Bible is God's Word, and therefore inspired. Some may even have been taught verbal, plenary inspiration. However, in most theological schools you cannot get a job as a teacher if you do not agree to use the eclectic Greek text, with all that implies. (Just as you cannot get a teaching job in most universities unless you at least pretend to believe in evolution.) If the school is at least nominally conservative, they will still say that the Bible is inspired. But if a student brings up the question of the preservation of the text in class, there will be an uncomfortable silence. If it was preserved, no one knows what or where it is. The brainwashing has been so complete that many (most?) seminary graduates do not even know that there is any question about what they were taught. They were taught an eclecticism based on Hort's theory, and for them that is all there is.

But to go back to our student, he finds himself surrounded by professors whose job it is to destroy his faith in an inspired Bible with objective authority. Of course, presumably, very few such professors have ever thought in those terms (so they would object to my statement). They would say that they are just doing their job, doing what they are paid to do, without troubling themselves with the whys and wherefores.³ But of course the student is not expecting that; he believes that his professors must be men of God, and so he is predisposed to believe them. Besides that predisposition (and it is powerful), what are the tools at their disposal for doing their job? Well, they have ridicule, sarcasm, brainwashing, peer pressure, the 'emperor's new clothes' gambit, and satanic assistance, for starters. (There may also be threats, failing grades, disciplinary actions, foul play, and so on—I write from experience.) Most of the terms above are self-explanatory, but some readers may not be familiar with the ancient myth about the emperor—it boils down to this: you don't want to admit that you can't 'see' it, when everyone else claims to be doing so. But by far the most serious is 'satanic assistance', and here I must needs go into detail.

Returning to 2 Thessalonians 2:10 and the 'love of the truth', as explained above, our main access to 'the truth' is through God's Word, the Bible. Our student may have gone to Sunday

¹ Help! "A lie" is rather general, open-ended. What happens if I accepted a lie without realizing that it was one? But the text does not say 'accepts'; it says 'loves' and 'practices'. The implication is that the contrary evidence, to the lie, is available, but has been rejected, or deliberately ignored—the person sold himself to the lie.

² At the graduate level, a student has the responsibility to evaluate what is being taught—if it goes contrary to the Text, it should not be accepted. I remember one day in chapel, a visiting scholar was expounding Romans 10:9. He stated that the Greek Text plainly means "Jesus as Lord", but then went on to try to explain why the school didn't believe that. His effort was rather lame; so much so that I determined to delve into the question for myself.

³ For older, established scholars there is also the matter of pride and vested interest; who wants to admit that he has been wrong all his professional life? Then there is the doctrine of professional ethics, one must respect his colleagues (respect for the colleague trumps respect for the truth). [One must not ask where that doctrine came from.] One other thing: where a school or institution depends on financial help from outside, it will be threatened with the loss of that help, if it does not toe the line, and its very existence may depend on that help.

school, probably heard sermons with at least some biblical content, and certainly has his own copy of the Bible. In short, he has had, and continues to have, access to ‘the truth’. However, the Holy Spirit does ‘talk’ to us, if we will listen. For example: my father was born in 1906, and in due time went to Moody Bible Institute and Wheaton College. In those days the American Standard Version (ASV) was touted as the best thing since the Garden of Eden; it was ‘the rock of biblical integrity’, etc. etc. Now my father had the practice of reading through the entire Bible once a year, a practice that he maintained all his life. Due to the hype surrounding the ASV, he got a copy and began to read it. It was hard going from the start, and he soon had to stop—the Holy Spirit simply would not let him go on. He returned to his trusty AV.

I imagine that at least some of my readers will have a question at this point. Am I implying that anyone who embraced the ASV was not listening to the Holy Spirit when he made that decision? The answer is, “Yes”. Obviously, the same holds for the Hortian theory, etc. Unfortunately, few students of theology are in the habit of consulting the Holy Spirit, and those who do are marked for persecution. No Establishment can tolerate anyone who listens to the Holy Spirit. Surely, or have you forgotten John 3:8? “The wind blows where it wishes, and you (sg) hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who has been begotten by the Spirit.” Notice that the Lord is saying here that it is **we** who are to be unpredictable, like the wind, or the Spirit (“comes” and “goes” are in the present tense). If you are really under the control of the Spirit you will do unexpected things, just like He does.¹ An Establishment is defined by its ‘straightjacket’, and the Holy Spirit does not like straightjackets, and vice versa.

In John 8:44 Sovereign Jesus declared that “there is no truth” in Satan, and that he is the father of the lie. Since God cannot lie, Titus 1:2, it being contrary to His essence, any and all lies come from the enemy. So what happens if you embrace a lie? You invite Satan into your mind. And what does he do there? He sets up a stronghold that locks you into that lie; you become blind to the truth on that subject.² It is a specific application of the truth expressed in 2 Corinthians 4:4—Satan blinds minds. So what happens to our student? With very few exceptions, he succumbs to the pressure exerted by the tools already mentioned. He accepts the party line, and since it is a lie, Satan goes about blinding him to the truth. If he goes on to become an influential scholar, he will almost certainly come under demonic surveillance (since Satan is not omnipresent).

There is a common misapprehension that trips people up at this point. Since any genuinely regenerated person has the indwelling Holy Spirit, how can Satan or a demon be in that person’s mind? There is a fundamental difference between presence and control. Very few Christians have consciously turned over every area of their lives to the control of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a gentleman, he will not take over an area against your will (see John 4:23-24). Any areas not under the Spirit’s control are open to the enemy’s interference, and most especially if you embrace a lie. By embracing a lie you grieve the Holy Spirit; not wise (Ephesians 4:30). You also resist Him; also not wise (Acts 7:51). So why does God not protect you? Because you rejected the love of the truth, and that turned God against you! When God

¹ Since Satan is forever muddying the water with excesses and abuses, spiritual discernment is needed.

² On that one subject—you will not necessarily be blinded on other subjects, or at least not at first.

turns against you, what are your chances? Without God's protection, you become Satan's prey (1 Peter 5:8).¹

Anyone in rebellion against the Creator is under satanic influence, direct or indirect (in most cases a demon acts as Satan's agent, when something more than the influence of the surrounding culture is required—almost all human cultures have ingredients of satanic provenance; this includes the academic culture). Anyone in rebellion against the Creator will also have strongholds of Satan in his mind. Since Satan is the 'father' of lies (John 8:44), anytime you embrace a lie you invite him into your mind—this applies to any of his sophistries (2 Corinthians 10:5) currently in vogue, such as materialism, humanism, relativism, Marxism, Freudianism, Hortianism, etc.

The selling of the lie is carried on from generation to generation, resulting in a continuous defection. Most professors are 'parrots', simply repeating what they were taught, without ever going back to check the facts. Some older scholars may have become aware of the facts, but because of vested interest they do not mention them to their students; they maintain the party line.

Is there a Way to Stop the Defection?

I believe there is, and it must begin with the TRUTH. To be more precise, it must begin with the love of the truth, which necessitates that the truth be made available. We must promote the love of the truth, and to do that we must also denounce the lie.² To promote something, we need vehicles for doing so. To succeed, we must be convincing. Most important, we must do something about the interference in people's minds.

1) Vehicles for promoting the truth:

It is modern technology that comes to our aid here. Blogs are being used to promote anything and everything. We can use them to promote the truth. I have done a fifteen-hour lecture series (in Portuguese) on the divine preservation of the NT Text. It was filmed and is available on the net via blog. Websites are being used. Most of my work is available from walkinhiscommandments.com, and even more is available from my own prunch.org. I wish to call special attention to The Center for Study and Preservation of the Majority Text. Their site, cspmt.org, is receiving literally thousands of visits a day, and from dozens of countries around the world. And then there is Twitter, Facebook and so on—the fact is that the technical journals no longer have a stranglehold on any discipline; there are other ways of 'publishing' your ideas. And there has always been word-of-mouth, people telling their friends and acquaintances. I suspect that we may soon see a groundswell of this sort of thing.

The advent of self-publishing represents a real boon to those of us who reject a party line, and do not have the financial means to use an established publishing house. For various reasons it has become increasingly difficult to use a publisher. The contracts place all the onus on the author (including the cost of lawsuits). One must cover the cost of several thousand copies up front, and even so, only if the publisher decides he can make a profit on the book, not to

¹ Please keep in mind the sequence of cause and effect—it begins with the rejection of the love of the truth. It is not enough to merely 'accept' the truth, one must love it. For those who have embraced a lie, the only 'medicine' is to return to the love of the truth, rejecting the lie. God may require a public renunciation of the lie.

² My own denunciation of the Hortian lie has been in print since 1977, and I continue to stand by every bit of it.

mention an ‘acceptable’ content (publishers are not charitable institutions). It is the advent of ‘print-on-demand’ that saves those of us who have no money—copies are produced only as they are ordered. Since a machine does it all, one can order a single copy at the going price, and receive it.

Permit me to cite my own experience. My first book, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, was published in 1977 by Thomas Nelson Publishers. Each time they wished to do another printing, they graciously allowed me to do some revising. Their final (4th?) printing came out in 1990, so they kept the book in print for at least fifteen years, for which I give them my sincere thanks.¹ It had been out of print for some years when Wipf and Stock Publishers asked for permission to publish it as an academic reprint. So a revised edition came out in 2003, as *The Identity of the New Testament Text II*. Wipf & Stock also did *Identity III*, in 2012. It was during that interval that I tuned in to Family 35, so *Identity III* was the first edition to present and defend that family. The current *Identity IV*, with further heavy revision, I self-published with Amazon. My other books are also available there—what established publisher would have accepted *The Greek New Testament According to Family 35*?

Self-publishing also permits one to make a book available in electronic form, as I have done with mine. This allows people to download into their notebooks, or whatever, so they don’t have to carry a book (or several). This is becoming increasingly important, as more and more people are joining the smart-phone culture. That said, however, we should not despise the good old hard copy; for serious study many still prefer a book (you can make notes in a book). In short, we should use both, electronic and printed.

Especially in cultures where ‘who you know’ is more important than ‘what you know’, but also in others, we should promote the ‘social’ vehicle, the sharing with friends and acquaintances. We can invite people over for a cup of coffee (or tea), spread the word wherever we have contacts.

2) *A convincing presentation:*

What is the best way to protect a caged lion? Just open the cage! What is the best way to promote the Truth? Just turn it loose! As Sovereign Jesus said in John 8:31-32, “If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (NKJV). The truth will make us free from what? In the immediate context (verse 34), it is from sin, but with reference to the topic in hand, it is able to free us from Satan’s blinding and his lies. The Word is the Holy Spirit’s sword, and a sword cuts, whether someone believes it or not. That said, however, what can we do so that people will listen to us?

Bombast and ranting should be avoided. They may appeal to the emotions of those who are already on our side, but they will have a negative effect on those we are trying to reach. The truth is best served by the facts, the evidence. And the evidence should be presented in a straightforward fashion, without undue appeal to emotion. However, emotion must be

¹ By then there were well over 10,000 copies in use around the world, quietly making a difference in people’s lives. Every now and again I hear from someone, thanking me for the book, including some Greek professors. Such professors are no longer destroying the faith of their students. There is a stirring at the grassroots level, that the Establishment is doing its best to ignore. When obliged to take notice, it is ‘pooh-pooh’; but the time is coming, indeed now is, when that will no longer work.

distinguished from presupposition (as well as from principles of reasoned debate). It is impossible to work without presuppositions; everyone has them. It follows that if someone criticizes me for having presuppositions, while pretending that he has none, that someone is being dishonest and perverse (or perhaps just brainwashed and blinded).

Ever since Burgon, who stated his presuppositions honestly and openly (as any true scholar should), there has been a constant and insistent attack against those presuppositions, and even the stating of them. A psychosis has been created to the extent that even some modern defenders of the majority text have become paranoid on the subject; they have actually reached the point of excluding the supernatural from their model. However, in Luke 11:23 the Sovereign Creator, Jehovah the Son incarnate, declares: "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters." Here is a plain statement—there are only two teams in this world; there are only two sides, two kingdoms; there is no neutral ground; there is no true agnosticism.¹ If you are not with Jesus, you are automatically against Him; if you are not gathering with Him, you are automatically scattering. If you do not receive Jesus' affirmations about Scripture, you have rejected them. Neutrality does not exist.

But how can we reach those who pretend that they have no presuppositions, who refuse, or in any case fail, to declare their presuppositions openly? If those same people criticize us for declaring ours, we may question their basic honesty; but how can we get them to listen? How can you get a blind person to see? How can you get a deaf person to hear? Something must be done about the cause of the condition. The 'cause of the condition' in the area we are discussing is the satanic interference in their thought processes that the Text, 2 Corinthians 4:4, calls 'blinding' (the brainwashing is a consequence of, and an accessory to, that blinding). Just how to address that cause will be treated in the next section. In the meantime, it is necessary to discuss the question of presupposition, but we should attempt to do so with a calm and irenic spirit.²

But to return to the matter of presenting the evidence in a convincing fashion, we must keep in mind that brainwashed people are generally ignorant of the evidence. Most professors are 'parrots', simply repeating what they were taught, without ever going back to check the facts. Some older scholars may have become aware of the facts, but because of vested interest they do not mention them to their students; they maintain the party line. For the truth to set people free, the truth must be presented. So I repeat: we must present the evidence in a straightforward manner.

The primary evidence is furnished by the continuous text manuscripts (Greek) of the NT. The evidence furnished by the lectionaries is secondary. The evidence furnished by ancient versions and patristic citations is tertiary. Genuine historical evidence (to the extent that this can be determined) is ancillary. Where the primary evidence is unequivocal, the remaining types should not come into play. For example, at any given point in the four Gospels there will be

¹ Agnosticism is a passive rejection; the agnostic is not accepting the claim.

² I am well aware that it is not easy, which is why I use 'attempt'.

around 1,700 extant continuous text MSS, representing all lines of transmission and all locales.¹ Where they all agree, there can be no legitimate doubt as to the original wording.

It should also be evident that a variant in a single MS, of whatever age, is irrelevant—it is a false witness to its family archetype, at that point, nothing more. If a number of MSS share a variant, but do not belong to the same family, then they made the mistake independently and are false witnesses to their respective family archetypes—there is no dependency. Where a group of MSS evidently reflect correctly the archetypal form of their family, then we are dealing with a family (not the individual MSS). Families need to be evaluated just as we evaluate individual MSS. It is possible to assign a credibility quotient to a family, based on objective criteria. But of course, any and all families must first be empirically identified and defined, and such identification depends upon the full collation of MSS.

Although the discipline has (so far) neglected to do its homework (collating MSS), still a massive majority of MSS should be convincing. For example, if a variant enjoys 99% attestation from the primary witnesses, this means that it totally dominates any genealogical 'tree', because it dominated the global transmission of the text. The *INTF Text und Textwert* series, practitioners of the Claremont profile method, H.C. Hoskier, von Soden, Burgon, Scrivener—in short, anyone who has collated any number of MSS—have all demonstrated that the Byzantine bulk of MSS is by no means monolithic. There are any number of streams and rivulets. (Recall that F. Wisse posited thirty-four groups within the Byzantine bulk, with seventy subgroups.) It is clear that there was no 'stuffing the ballot box'; there was no 'papal' decree; there was no recension imposed by ecclesiastical authority. In short, the transmission was predominantly normal.²

But to get back to presenting the evidence, we should call attention to the evidence that has been presented down through the years: Herman C. Hoskier's *Concerning the Text of the Apocalypse and Codex B and its Allies, a Study and an Indictment*; Hermann von Soden's *magnum opus*—in spite of its imperfections, it contains valuable information; S.C.E. Legg's editions of Matthew and Mark; the IGNTP's edition of Luke; Reuben J. Swanson's editions of Matthew through Galatians; Frederik Wisse on Luke; W.F. Wisselink's *Assimilation as a Criterion for the Establishment of the Text*; Tommy Wasserman on Jude; the *Text und Textwert* series from the *INTF*, and even better, their *Editio Critica Maior* series.

Last, but not least, is my own work. My Greek NT is the first to give the archetype of Family 35, and its critical apparatus is the first to offer percentages with the variants, besides including six published editions. The series on f^{35} variants, book by book, gives the detailed result of my collations of representative MSS, usually at least thirty per book. All of this is now freely available on the internet from my site, prunch.org (mostly in English, but also some in Portuguese). The Center for Study and Preservation of the Majority Text (CSPMT) is preparing a critical edition whose apparatus will contain new information about lines of transmission within the Byzantine bulk. We have ways of making evidence available, but how can we get people to look at it? The best, if not the only, way is to use the spiritual authority that Sovereign Jesus has given us.

¹ Of course we know that there are many MSS not yet 'extant', not yet identified and catalogued, so the number can only go up.

² For a fuller discussion, please see my *Identity IV*, pages 367-69.

3) Neutralizing the interference:

On what basis might we neutralize interference? The most fundamental question for human life on this planet is that of authority: who has it, to what degree, and on what terms? As the chief priests said to Jesus, “By what authority are you doing this?” (Luke 20:2). After His death and resurrection Sovereign Jesus said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matthew 28:18). So He is perfectly within His rights, clearly competent, to delegate a piece of that authority to us. Consider Luke 10:19: “Take note, I am giving you the authority to trample on snakes and scorpions,¹ and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing at all may harm you.” Instead of ‘am giving’, perhaps 2.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have ‘have given’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.)—a serious error. Jesus said this perhaps five months before His death and resurrection, addressing the seventy (not just the twelve). The Lord is talking about the future, not the past, a future that includes us!

Consider further John 20:21: Jesus said to them again: “Peace to you! Just as the Father sent me, I also send you.” “Just as . . . so also”—Jesus is sending us just like the Father sent Him. So how did They do it? The Father determined and the Son obeyed: “Behold, I have come to do your will, O God” (Hebrews 10:7). And what was that will? To destroy Satan (Hebrews 2:14) and undo his works (1 John 3:8). Since Jesus did indeed defeat Satan (Colossians 2:15, Ephesians 1:20-21, etc.), but then went back to Heaven, what is left for us is the undoing of his works.² It seems clear to me that to undo any work we must also undo its consequences (to the extent that that may be possible).

Consider also Ephesians 2:4-6: “But God—being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions—made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) and raised us up together and seated us together in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.” This is tremendous! Here we have our authority. Christ is now seated at the Father’s right, ‘far above’ the enemy and his hosts. This verse affirms that

¹ The Lord gives us the authority to “trample snakes and scorpions”. Well now, to smash the literal insect, a scorpion, you don’t need power from on High, just a slipper (if you are fast, you can do it barefoot). To trample a snake I prefer a boot, but we can kill literal snakes without supernatural help. It becomes obvious that Jesus was referring to something other than reptiles and insects. I understand Mark 16:18 to be referring to the same reality—Jesus declares that certain signs will accompany the believers (the turn of phrase virtually has the effect of commands): they will expel demons, they will speak strange languages, they will remove ‘snakes’, they will place hands on the sick. (“If they drink . . .” is not a command; it refers to an eventuality.) But what did the Lord Jesus mean by ‘snakes’?

In a list of distinct activities Jesus has already referred to demons, so the ‘snakes’ must be something else. In Matthew 12:34 Jesus called the Pharisees a ‘brood of vipers’, and in 23:33, ‘snakes, brood of vipers’. In John 8:44, after they claimed God as their father, Jesus said, “You are of your father the devil”. And 1 John 3:10 makes clear that Satan has many other ‘sons’ (so also Matthew 13:38-39). In Revelation 20:2 we read: “He seized the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is a slanderer, even Satan, who deceives the whole inhabited earth, and bound him for a thousand years.” If Satan is a snake, then his children are also snakes. So then, I take it that our ‘snakes’ are human beings who have chosen to serve Satan, who have sold themselves to evil. I conclude that the ‘snakes’ in Luke 10:19 are the same as those in Mark 16:18, but what of the ‘scorpions’? Since they also are of the enemy, they may be demons, in which case the term may well include their offspring, the humanoids (for more on this see my article, “In the Days of Noah”, available from prunch.org). I am still working on the question of just how the removal is done.

² For more on this subject see my article, “Biblical Spiritual Warfare” (available from prunch.org).

we who are in Christ are there too! So in Christ we also are far above the enemy and his hosts.¹ Surely, or is that not what is stated in Ephesians 1:16-21?

I really do not stop giving thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the real knowledge² of Himself, the eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His^[F] calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of His power into³ us who are believing, according to the demonstration of the extent of His might which He exercised in the Christ when He raised Him^[S] from among the dead and seated Him at His^[F] right, in the heavenly realms, far above every ruler and authority and power and dominion—even every name that can be named, not only in this age but also in the next.

Now then, “far above every ruler and authority and power and dominion—even every name that can be named, not only in this age but also in the next” must include Satan and his angels. If Christ, seated at the Father’s right, is “**far** above” them, and we are in Him, seated at the Father’s right, then we too are above all the hosts of the enemy. That is our position and authority for neutralizing interference.

Well and good, but just how are we to go about doing it? Well, at what level should we ‘neutralize’? The candidates that suggest themselves are: institutions, teachers, students, church leaders, and lay people. How about working at all levels? Next, what procedures are at our disposal to do the neutralizing? I offer the following: a) forbid any further use of Satan’s power, in a specific case; b) claim the undoing of the consequences of the use of that power that there has been (to the extent it may be possible); c) destroy any strongholds of Satan in their minds (including blind spots); d) bind any demons involved and send them to the Abyss, forbidding any further demonic activity; e) take their thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ. In my experience, to be efficient we need to be specific: name the institution; name the person.

A word of caution is necessary at this point. Consider James 4:7—“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” Note the sequence: we need to verify that we are in

¹ We should be consciously operating on that basis, but since few churches teach this, most Christians live in spiritual defeat.

² I finally settled on ‘real knowledge’ as the best way to render *επιγνωσις*, the heightened form of *γνωσις*, ‘knowledge’. Real knowledge is more than mere intellectual knowledge, or even true theoretical knowledge—it involves experience. The Text goes on to say, “the eyes of your heart having been enlightened”. Real knowledge changes your ‘heart’, who you are.

³ “Into us”—that is what the Text says. Note that ‘believing’ is in the present tense. Consider Ephesians 3:20. “Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to the power that is working in us.” Note that “is working” is also in the present tense; having believed yesterday won’t hack it, we must believe today. This tremendous power that God pours into us, as we believe, exceeds our powers of imagination. Well now, my personal horizon is limited and defined by my ability to imagine. Anything that I cannot imagine lies outside my horizon, and so obviously I won’t ask for it. I sadly confess that I have not yet arrived at a spiritual level where I can unleash this power—I have yet to make the truth in this verse work for me. But I understand that the truth affirmed here is literal, and I only hope that others will get there before I do (so I can learn from them), if I keep on delaying. The whole point of the exercise (verse 21) is for God to get glory, and to the extent that we do not put His power in us to work we are depriving Him of glory that He could and should have.

submission to God before taking on the devil. Then we should claim our position in Christ at the Father's right hand. Since few Christians have received any remotely adequate level of instruction in the area of biblical spiritual warfare (most have received none), I need to explain the procedures.

a) Forbid any further use of Satan's power:

This procedure is based on Luke 10:19. Sovereign Jesus gives us 'the' authority over all the power of the enemy. Authority controls power, but since we have access to God's limitless power (Ephesians 3:20), we should not give Satan the satisfaction of our using his (and he could easily deceive us into doing things we shouldn't). We should use our authority to forbid the use of Satan's power, with reference to specific situations—in my experience, we must be specific. (I have tried binding Satan once for all until the end of the world, but it doesn't work; presumably because God's plan calls for the enemy's continued activity in this world. We can limit what the enemy does, but not put him completely out of business, or so I deem.)

b) Claim the undoing of the consequences of the use of that power that there has been:

This procedure is based on 1 John 3:8, allied to Luke 10:19. It should be possible for us to command Satan to use his own power to undo messes he has made, thereby obliging him to acknowledge his defeat (which will not sit well with his pride). The Son of God was manifested for the purpose of "undoing the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8), and it is incumbent upon us to continue His work here in this world (John 20:21). How can you undo a work without undoing its consequences as well? The Father sent the Son to undo Satan's works, and the Lord Jesus Christ is sending us to undo Satan's works. Again, I understand that we must be specific.

c) Destroy any strongholds of Satan in the person's mind:

This procedure is based on 2 Corinthians 10:4 and 1 John 3:8. Since strongholds, and blind spots, in the mind are a work of Satan, and we are here to undo such works, this falls within the area of our competence. It is done by claiming such destruction in so many words, being specific.

d) Bind any demons involved and send them to the Abyss:

This procedure is based on Mark 3:27 and Luke 8:31. "No one can plunder the strong man's goods, invading his house, unless he first binds the strong man—then he may plunder the house" (Mark 3:27). Since the definite article occurs with 'strong man' the first time the phrase occurs, the entity has already been introduced, so the reference is to Satan. Here is a biblical basis for binding Satan, which is now possible because of Christ's victory. If we can bind Satan, evidently we can also bind any of his subordinates. "And he¹ kept imploring Him that He would not order them to go away into the Abyss" (Luke 8:31).² I take it that Jesus did not send them to the Abyss at that time because He had not yet won the victory, and the demons were 'within their rights', under Satan, who was still the god of this world. But the demons were obviously worried! (They knew very well who Jesus was, and what He could do.) I would say

¹ The boss demon does most of the talking, representing his cohort.

² The Text has 'the Abyss', presumably the same one mentioned in Revelation 20:3. The demons knew something that most of us don't.

that this is one of the 'greater things' (John 14:12) that we may now do—rather, that we should do. As for forbidding any further demonic activity, we have the Lord's example (Mark 9:25), and we are to do what He did (John 14:12).

e) Take their thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ:

This procedure is based on 2 Corinthians 10:5. In the context, the thoughts are of people who are serving Satan (even if unwittingly). (Of course we should always be checking to be sure that we ourselves are operating within 'the mind of Christ', 1 Corinthians 2:15-16.) Now this procedure moves away from simply neutralizing the enemy's interference, since it introduces a positive 'interference', but it is relevant to the issue being discussed here, since it is protection against falling back into the former error. Again we must be specific.

f) Some further texts that may apply: Luke 4:18-21, Psalm 149:5-9, John 14:12.

In Luke 4:18-21 Jesus includes "to set at liberty those who are oppressed" (Isaiah 58:6) as one of the things He was sent to do. Turning to Isaiah 58:6, we find Jehovah stating what kind of 'fast' He would like to see: "To loose the fetters of wickedness [a], to undo the yoke-ropes [b]; to let oppressed ones go free [a], and that you (pl.) break every yoke [b]." As is typical of Hebrew grammar, the two halves are parallel. "To loose the fetters of wickedness" and "to let oppressed ones go free" are parallel. Who placed the "fetters" and who is doing the oppressing? Well, although people can certainly forge their own bonds through their own wicked lifestyle, I take it that the point here is that wicked beings have placed the fetters on others. "To undo yoke-ropes" and "that ye break every yoke" go together. First we should untie the ropes that bind the yoke to the neck, then we should break the yokes themselves. I gain the clear impression that this text is talking about the activity of Satan's servants, men and angels. Using culture, worldview, legal devices, threats, blackmail, lies, deception and just plain demonizing and witchcraft, they bind individuals, families, ethnic groups, etc., with a variety of fetters and instruments of oppression.

So what does this have to do with our subject? Well, fasting was an important and required component in their worship of God. So this kind of 'fasting' is something that Jehovah overtly wants to see; it is specifically His will. So when we see any work of Satan in someone's life, it is God's will that we undo it. If we know it is God's will, we can proceed with complete confidence. And it is part of our commission (John 20:21).

Notice also Psalms 149:5-9. "Let the saints exult in glory; let them sing for joy in their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand—to execute vengeance upon the nations and punishments upon the peoples; to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the written judgment. This honor is for all His saints." Note that the saints are in their beds, so the activity described in the subsequent verses must take place in the spiritual realm. I assume that the 'kings' and 'nobles' include both men and fallen angels. The activity described is the prerogative of "all His saints"—if you are one of those saints, it is up to you. There are a number of 'written judgments' in the Text: Zechariah 5:2-4, Proverbs 20:10, Isaiah 10:1-2, Romans 1:26-36 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, at least.

In John 14:12 the Lord Jesus said: "Most assuredly I say to you, the one believing into me, he too will do the works that I do; in fact he will do greater works than these, because I am going

to my Father.” “Most assuredly” is actually “amen, amen”—rendered “verily, verily” in the AV. Only John registers the word as repeated, in the other Gospels it is just “amen”. In the contemporary literature we have no example of anyone else using the word in this way. It seems that Jesus coined His own use, and the point seems to be to call attention to an important pronouncement: “Stop and listen!” Often it precedes a formal statement of doctrine or policy, as here.

“The one believing into me, he too will do the works that I do.” This is a tremendous statement, and not a little disconcerting. Notice that the Lord said, “will do”; not ‘maybe’, ‘perhaps’, ‘if you feel like it’; and certainly not ‘if the doctrine of your church permits it’! If you believe, you **will do!** The verb ‘believe’ is in the present tense; if you are believing you will do; it follows that if you are not doing, it is because you are not believing. $2 + 2 = 4$. Doing what? “The works that I do.” Well, Jesus preached the Gospel, He taught, He cast out demons, He healed all sorts and sizes of sickness and disease, He raised an occasional dead person, and He performed a variety of miracles (water to wine, walk on water, stop a storm instantaneously, transport a boat several miles instantaneously, multiply food, shrivel a tree—and He implied that the disciples should have stopped the storm and multiplied the food, and He stated that they could shrivel a tree [Peter actually took a few steps on water]). So how about us? The preaching and teaching we can handle, but what about the rest? I once heard the president of a certain Christian college affirm that this verse obviously could not mean what it says because it is not happening! Well, in his own experience and in that of his associates I guess it isn’t. But many people today cast out demons and heal, and I personally know someone who has raised a dead person. Miracles are also happening. So how about me? And you?

“In fact he will do greater works than these.” Well now, if we cast out demons, heal and perform miracles, is that not enough? Jesus wants more, He wants “greater things” than those just mentioned [do not forget what He said in Matthew 7:22-23]. Notice again that He said “will do”, not maybe, perhaps, or if your church permits. But what could be ‘greater’ than miracles? This cannot refer to modern technology because in that event such ‘greater things’ would not have been available to the believers during the first 1900 years. Note that the key is in the Lord’s final statement (in verse 12), “because I am going to my Father”. Only if He won could He return to the Father, so He is here declaring His victory before the fact. It is on the basis of that victory that the ‘greater things’ can be performed. Just what are those ‘greater’ things? For my answer, see my outline, “Biblical Spiritual Warfare”.

In verse 12 the verb ‘will do’ is singular, both times, so it has to do with the individual. Observe that the Lord did **not** say, “you apostles”, “only during the apostolic age”, “only until the canon is complete”, or whatever. He said, “the one believing”, present tense, so this applies to any and all subsequent moments up to our time. To deny the truth contained in this verse is to make the Lord Jesus Christ out to be a liar. Somehow I do not think that is very smart.¹

¹ Also, to affirm that the miraculous gifts ceased when the last shovelful of dirt fell on the Apostle John’s grave is an historical falsehood. Christians who lived during the second, third and fourth centuries, whose writings have come down to us, affirm that the gifts were still in use in their day. No 20th or 21st century Christian, who was not there, is competent to contradict them. Any ‘cessationist’ will have a stronghold of Satan in his mind on that subject, because he has embraced a lie. Any doctrine that derives from reaction against excesses and abuses gives victory to Satan. Any argument designed to justify lack of spiritual power cannot be right.

The 'Crux' of a 'Lost' Original

Returning to the opening paragraph, is/was the original wording lost? I answer with an emphatic, "No". It certainly exists within the Byzantine bulk. To my mind, any time at least 90% of the primary witnesses agree, there can be no reasonable question; it is statistically impossible that a non-original reading could score that high.² Any time a reading garners an attestation of at least 80% its probability is high. But for perhaps 2% of the words in the NT the attestation falls below 80% (a disproportionate number being in the Apocalypse), and at this point we need to shift our attention from MSS to families. Once all MSS have been collated and have been empirically assigned to families, then we can confine our attention to those families from the start (as I have done in the Apocalypse). I have mentioned elsewhere assigning a credibility quotient to each family, based on objective criteria, and this needs to be done. Unfortunately, there is a great deal of 'homework' waiting to be done in this area. So far as I know, only Family 35 has an empirically defined profile (defined by a complete collation of a representative number of the MSS that make up the family), at least to this date.³

About the 2% with attestation below 80%, in a heavy majority of the cases the difference can hardly be reflected in a translation. A reader will understand the intended meaning with either variant. But within Family 35 there is very little significant variation, and the archetypal form is demonstrable. For example, of the forty-three family members I have collated for the General Epistles, twenty-eight are identical (perfect) for 2 & 3 John (but not always the same MSS), twenty-two are identical for Jude, five for 2 Peter, four each for James and 1 John, and three for 1 Peter.

For my article, "Copyist Care Quotient" (see prunch.org), I collated fifty-one (now 53) representatives of Family 35 for Mark. I analyzed the variants contained in MS 1384 (eapr, XI, Andros)—of the fifty-three MSS I collated, at least forty-four are better than 1384, so it is only a mediocre representative. However, with four exceptions, only a single letter or syllable is involved, and nowhere is the meaning seriously affected. **Someone reading MS 1384 would not be misled as to the intended meaning at any point in the book.** I say this is noteworthy, and it is typical of almost all f³⁵ MSS. Down through the centuries of transmission, anyone with access to an f³⁵ representative could know the intended meaning of the Autograph.⁴ Not only that, most lines of transmission within the Byzantine bulk would be reasonably close, good enough for most practical purposes. This is also true of the much maligned *Textus Receptus*; it is certainly good enough for most practical purposes. Down through the centuries of Church history, most people could have had reasonable access to God's written revelation.

² See Appendix C in my *Identity IV*.

³ So far as I know, neither f¹ nor f¹³ exists outside of the Gospels, but even there, has anyone ever produced an empirically defined profile for either one? Consider the following statement by Metzger:

It should be observed that, in accord with the theory that members of f¹ and f¹³ were subject to progressive accommodation to the later Byzantine text, scholars have established the text of these families by adopting readings of family witnesses that differ from the *Textus Receptus*. Therefore the citation of the siglum f¹ and f¹³ may, in any given instance, signify a minority of manuscripts (or even only one) that belong to the family. (A *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* [companion to UBS³], p. xii.)

Would it be unreasonable to say that such a proceeding is unfair to the reader? Does it not mislead the user of the apparatus? At least as used by the UBS editions, those sigla do not represent empirically defined profiles.

⁴ Since f³⁵ MSS are scattered all over, or all around, the Mediterranean world, such access would have been feasible for most people.

Some years ago now, Maurice Robinson did a complete collation of 1,389 MSS that contain the P.A. (John 7:53-8:11),¹ and I had William Pierpont's photocopy of those collations in my possession for two months, spending most of that time studying those collations. As I did so, it became obvious to me that von Soden 'regularized' his data, arbitrarily 'creating' the alleged archetypal form for his first four families, **M**^{1,2,3,4} —if they exist at all, they are rather fluid. His **M**^{5&6} do exist, having distinct profiles for the purpose of showing that they are different, but they are a bit 'squishy', with enough internal confusion to make the choice of the archetypal form to be arbitrary. In fact, I suspect that they will have to be subdivided. In contrast to the above, his **M**⁷ (that I call Family 35) has a solid, unambiguous profile—the archetypal form is demonstrable, empirically determined.

As for the Apocalypse, of the nine groups that Hoskier identified, only his Complutensian (that I call Family 35) is homogenous. Of the others, the main ones all have subdivisions, which will require their own profile.

Given my presuppositions, I consider that I have good reason for declaring the divine preservation of the precise original wording of the complete New Testament Text to this day. That wording is reproduced in my edition of the Greek NT. My presuppositions include: the Sovereign Creator exists; He inspired the biblical Text; He promised to preserve it for a thousand generations (1 Chronicles 16:15); so He must have an active, ongoing interest in that preservation [there have been fewer than 300 generations since Adam, so He has a ways to go!]. If He was preserving the original wording in some line of transmission other than **f**³⁵, would that transmission be any less careful than what I have demonstrated for **f**³⁵? I think not. So any line of transmission characterized by internal confusion is disqualified—this includes all the other lines of transmission that I have seen so far!²

On the basis of the evidence so far available I affirm the following:

1. The original wording was never 'lost', and its transmission down through the years was basically normal, being recognized as inspired material from the beginning.
2. That normal process resulted in lines of transmission.
3. To delineate such lines, MSS must be grouped empirically on the basis of a shared mosaic of readings.
4. Such groups or families must be evaluated for independence and credibility.
5. The largest clearly defined group is Family 35.
6. Family 35 is demonstrably independent of all other lines of transmission throughout the NT.
7. Family 35 is demonstrably ancient, dating to the 3rd century, at least.³

¹ 240 MSS omit the P.A., 64 of which are based on Theophylact's commentary. Fourteen others have lacunae, but are not witnesses for total omission. A few others certainly contain the passage but the microfilm is illegible. So, 1389 + 240 + 14 + 7(?) = about 1650 MSS checked by Robinson. That does not include Lectionaries, of which he also checked a fair number. (These are microfilms held by the *INTF* in Münster. We now know that there are many more extant MSS, and probably even more that are not yet 'extant'.) Unfortunately, so far as I know, Robinson has yet to publish his collations, thus making them available to the public at large.

² Things like **M**⁶ and **M**⁵ in John 7:53-8:11 come to mind.

³ Family 35 readings are attested by early witnesses, but without pattern, and therefore without dependency. But there are many hundreds of such readings. So how did the **f**³⁵ archetype come by all those early readings? Did its creator travel around and collect a few readings from Aleph, a few from B, a few from P^{45,66,75}, a few from W and

8. Family 35 representatives come from all over the Mediterranean area; the geographical distribution is all but total.¹
9. Family 35 is not a recension, was not created at some point subsequent to the Autographs.
10. Family 35 is an objectively/empirically defined entity throughout the NT; it has a demonstrable, diagnostic profile from Matthew 1:1 to Revelation 22:21.
11. The archetypal form of Family 35 is demonstrable—it has been demonstrated (see Appendix B in my *Identity IV*).
12. The Original Text is the ultimate archetype; any candidate must also be an archetype—a real, honest to goodness, objectively verifiable archetype; there is only one (so far)—Family 35.²
13. God’s concern for the preservation of the biblical Text is evident: I take it that passages such as 1 Chronicles 16:15, Psalm 119:89, Isaiah 40:8, Matthew 5:18, Luke 16:17 and 21:33, John 10:35, 1 Peter 1:23-25 and Luke 4:4 may reasonably be taken to imply a promise that the Scriptures (to the tittle) will be preserved for man's use (we are to live "by every word of God"), and to the end of the world (“for a thousand generations”), but no intimation is given as to just how God proposed to do it. We must deduce the answer from what He has indeed done—we discover that He **did!**
14. This concern is reflected in Family 35; it is characterized by incredibly careful transmission (in contrast to other lines). [I have a perfect copy of the Family 35 archetypal text for most NT books (22); I have copies made from a perfect exemplar (presumed) for another four (4); as I continue to collate MSS I hope to add the last one (Acts), but even for it the archetypal form is demonstrable.]
15. If God was preserving the original wording in some line of transmission other than Family 35, would that line be any less careful? I think not. So any line of transmission characterized by internal confusion is disqualified—this includes **all** the other lines of transmission that I have seen so far.
16. I affirm that God used Family 35 to preserve the precise original wording of the New Testament Text; it is reproduced in my edition of the Greek Text. (And God used mainly the Eastern Orthodox Churches to preserve the NT Text down through the centuries—they have always used a Text that was an adequate representation of the Original, for all practical purposes.)

I claim to have demonstrated the superiority of Family 35 based on size (number of representatives), independence, age, geographical distribution, profile (empirically determined), care (see my “Copyist Care Quotient”) and range (all 27 books). I challenge any and all to do the same for any other line of transmission!

D, etc.? Is not such a suggestion patently ridiculous? The only reasonable conclusion is that the **ƒ³⁵ text** is ancient (also independent).

¹ And for some places in Greece, based on their surviving copies, it was all they used.

² If you want to be a candidate for the best lawyer in your city, you must be a lawyer, or the best carpenter, or oncologist, or whatever. If there is only one candidate for mayor in your town, who gets elected?