

A Book By Dean Burgon

***The Causes of the Corruption
of the Traditional Text 1896***

**By Dean John William Burgon
Edited by Edward Miller**

A Brief Summary by Rev.D. A. Waite, Th.D., Ph.D.

The Traditional Text Goes Back to the Earliest Ages

“In the companion volume to this, the Traditional Text, that is, the Text of the Gospels which is the resultant of all the evidence faithfully and exhaustively presented and estimated according to the best procedure of the courts of law, has been traced back to the earliest ages in the existence of those sacred writings. . . . it must, as far as we can judge, differ but slightly from the Text now generally in vogue, which has been generally received during the last two and a half centuries.” [Dean John William Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 1]

The Traditional Text Goes Back To the Original Autographs

That Text can be Traditional only if it goes back without break or intermission to the original autographs, because if through break or intermission it ceased or failed to exist, it loses the essential feature of genuine tradition. On the other hand, if it is proved to reach back in unbroken line to the time of the Evangelists, or to a period as near to them as surviving testimony can prove, then Dr. Hort's theory of a 'Syrian' text formed by recension or otherwise just as evidently falls to the ground. . . . I claim to have proved Dr. Hort to have been conspicuously wrong and our maintenance of the Traditional Text in unbroken succession to be eminently right. [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 3]

Corruption Also Goes Back to the Earliest Age

“It seems that corruption arose in the very earliest age. . . . Thus it appears that errors crept in at the very first commencement of the life of the Church.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, pp. 3-4]

Corruption of God's Words Is Like an Ogre

“Indeed, the vast and mysterious ogre called corruption assumes shape and form under the acute penetration and the deft handling of the Dean, whose great knowledge of the subject and orderly treatment of puzzling details is still more commended by his interesting style of writing.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 9]

The Received Text Should Be Left Alone

“Yielding to no one in my desire to see the Greek of the New Testament judiciously revised, I freely avow that recent events have convinced me, and I suppose they have convinced the public also, that we have not among us the men to conduct such an undertaking.”

The Received Text Should Be Left Alone

Better a thousand times in my judgment to leave things as they are, than to risk having the stamp of authority set upon such an unfortunate production as that which appeared on the 17th May, 1881, and which claims at this instant to represent the continued learning of the Church, the chief Sects, and the Socinian body.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, pp. 10-11]

The New Testament Has More Copies than Secular Works

“In the first place, then, let it be observed that the New Testament Scriptures are wholly without a parallel in respect of their having been so frequently multiplied from the very first . . . exceeding the number of four thousand. [now over 5,255+] There is nothing like this, or at all approaching to it, in the case of any profane writing that can be named.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 12]

The Scriptures Were Eagerly Sought by Heretical Teachers

“But then further, the Scriptures for the very reason because they were known to be the Word of God became a mark for the shafts of Satan from the beginning. They were by consequence as eagerly solicited by heretical teachers on the one hand, as they were loftily defended by the orthodox on the other.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 12]

Satan Used Many Methods to Corrupt God's Words

“Nevertheless, certain manuscripts belonging in a few small groups—particular copies of a Version—individual Fathers or Doctors of the Church,—these do, to the present hour, bear traces incontestably of ancient mischief. . . . The fourfold structure of the Gospel has lent itself to a certain kind of licentious handling—of which in other ancient writings we have no experience.

Satan Used Many Methods to Corrupt God's Words

“(1) One critical owner of a Codex considered himself at liberty to assimilate the narratives: (2) another to correct them in order to bring them into (what seemed to himself) greater harmony. (3) Brevity is found to have been a paramount object with some, and (4) Transposition to have amounted to a passion with others.

Satan Used Many Methods to Corrupt God's Words

“(5) Conjectural Criticism was evidently practised largely: and almost with as little felicity as when Bentley held the pen. (6) Lastly, there can be no question that there was a certain school of Critics who considered themselves competent to improve the style of the HOLY GHOST throughout.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 13]

The Quantity of Depravations Surpasses Any of Secular Literature

“The nature of God,—His Being and Attributes;—the history of Man’s Redemption;—the soul’s eternal destiny;—the mysteries of the unseen world;—concerning these and many other similar high doctrinal subjects, the sacred writings alone speak with a voice of absolute authority.

The Quantity of Depravations Surpasses Any of Secular Literature

“And surely by this time enough has been said to explain why these Scriptures should have been made a battlefield during some centuries, and especially in the fourth; and having thus been made the subject of strenuous contention, that copies of them should exhibit to this hour traces of those many adverse influences.

The Quantity of Depravations Surpasses Any of Secular Literature

“I say it for the last time, of all such causes of depravation the Greek Poets, Tragedians, Philosophers, Historians, neither knew nor could know anything. And it thus plainly appears that the Textual Criticism of the New Testament is to be handled by ourselves in an entirely different spirit from that of any other book.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 14]

Codexes Such as A, B, L, and D Have Special Depravations

“But increased and enlarged acquaintance with the subject have convinced me that by far the larger number of the omissions of such Codexes as A/B/L/D must needs be due to quite a different cause. These MSS omit so many words, phrases, sentences, verses of Scripture, –that it is altogether incredible that the proximity of like endings can have much to do with the matter.

Codexes Such as A, B, L, and D Have Special Depravations

“Inadvertency may be made to bear the blame of some omissions: it cannot bear the blame of shrewd and significant omissions of clauses, which invariably leave the sense complete. A systematic and perpetual mutilation of the inspired Text must needs be the result of design, not of accident.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 23]

Definitions of Accidental Corruptions

1. Pure Accident (pp. 24-35)

This is a “catch-all” classification for things that cannot be listed under any of the other headings.

2. Homoeoteleuton (pp. 36-41)

It comes from two Greek words, *homo* (“same”) and *teleuton* (“ending”). When a scribe copied the Greek New Testament, his eye might have accidentally followed the ending of one Greek word and then when he began copying again, his eye lighted on a word with the same ending several words or lines away from the first word. In this way, this accidental corruption could have taken place.

Definitions of Accidental Corruptions

3. From the Writing of Uncials (pp. 42-55)

The uncials were written completely in capital Greek letters. There was no spacing between words. There were no accents over the Greek words. There was no punctuation. There were no divisions in the text that would indicate verses, chapters, or other things. If the scribe were not thoroughly familiar with the Greek language, it would be possible for him to mistake one word for another by dividing the letters differently. Here is how the uncials would look if written in English: THISISANEXAMPLEOFUNCIALLETTERS WITHNOSPACING BETWEEN.

Definitions of Accidental Corruptions

4. Itacism (pp. 56-66)

This classification of accidental corruption might be defined as the mistaking by a scribe of one vowel for another. It was a misspelling of various words by the use of the wrong vowels.

Definitions of Accidental Corruptions

5. Liturgical Influence—The Lectionaries (pp. 67-88)

This kind of accidental corruption deals with the liturgical practice of the Greek churches. They used in their churches “Lectionaries.” These are portions of the Greek New Testament which were read in the churches during certain times in the Church year. There are over 2,143 Lectionaries that have been preserved for us today. They are very important sources for verification of true textual readings. On rare occasions, accidental corruption might have taken place in the copying of these New Testament Greek verses for Lectionary purposes.

God Used Lectionaries to Preserve His Words

“There is one distinct class of evidence provided by Almighty GOD for the conservation of the deposit in its integrity, which calls for special notice in this place. The Lectionaries of the ancient Church have not yet nearly enjoyed the attention they deserve, or the laborious study which in order to render them practically available they absolutely require.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 67]

Lectionaries Range for Over 700 Years

“As for the external appearance of these documents, it may be enough to say that they range, like the mass of uncial and cursive copies, over a space of about 700 years,—the oldest extant being of about the eighth century, and the latest dating in the fifteenth.”
[Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 68]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

1. Harmonistic Influence (pp. 89-99)

This cause of corruption stems from the desire of various scribes and editors of the New Testament to bring the four Gospels into a harmonistic unit. They would try to take from one Gospel and place that portion into another Gospel. The result was a confusion of the original Gospels themselves.

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

2. Assimilation (pp. 100-122)

This cause of corruption, like harmonistic influence above, also arose from the frequent parallels that are seen especially between the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Some scribes and editors assimilated parts of one Gospel into another, thus making for confusion as to the original readings of each Gospel. Dean Burgon names seven “Critics” who are guilty of following such corrupting influences.

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

2. Assimilation (pp. 100-122)

“Instructive in the meantime it is to note the fate which this word has experienced at the hands of some Critics. Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Alford, Westcott and Hort, have all in turn bowed to the authority of Cod. B and Origen. Bishop Lightfoot mistranslates and contends on the same side.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 109]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

3. Attraction (pp. 123-127)

This cause of corruption arises, as Dean Burgon phrases it, from “the proneness of words standing side by side in a sentence to be attracted into a likeness of ending, –whether in respect of grammatical form or of sound; whereby sometimes the sense is made to suffer grievously, –sometimes entirely to disappear.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 123]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

4. Omission (pp. 128-156)

The cause of omission, according to Dean Burgon, is “the largest of all classes of corrupt variations from the genuine Text, –the omission of words and clauses and sentences, . . . Omissions are much in favour with a particular school of critics; . . . ” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 128]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

4. Omission (pp. 128-156)

a. Omissions Are Found in Very Few Copies

“And it will be borne in mind that I speak now of those words alone where the words are observed to exist in ninety-nine MSS. out of a hundred, so to speak;—being away only from that hundredth copy.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 128]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

4. Omission (pp. 128-156)

b. Mark 16:9-20 Is a Prime Example of Omission

“And I will begin with a crucial case;—the most conspicuous doubtless within the whole compass of the New Testament. I mean the last twelve verses of St. Mark’s Gospel; which verses are either bracketed off, or else entirely severed from the rest of the Gospel, by Tischendorf, Tregelles, Alford and others.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 129]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

4. Omission (pp. 128-156)

c. Manuscripts B (Vatican) and A (Aleph) Abound in Omissions

“To this question there can be but one answer, viz. ‘Because those critics are blinded by invincible prejudice in favour of two unsafe guides, [B and A] and are now anxious to learn what there can be in omissions which render them so acceptable to minds of the present day.

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

4. Omission (pp. 128-156)

c. Manuscripts B (Vatican) and A (Aleph) Abound in Omissions

And we can imagine nothing except the halo which has gathered round the detection of spurious passages in modern times, and has extended to a supposed detection of passages which in fact are not spurious. Some people appear to feel delight if they can prove any charge against people who claim to be orthodox;” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 130]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

4. Omission (pp. 128-156)

d. Many False Readings Died Out Speedily

“Now, as I am writing a book on the principles of Textual Criticism, I must be allowed to set my reader on his guard against all such unsupported dicta as the preceding, though enforced with emphasis and recommended by a deservedly respected name. I venture to think that the exact reverse will be found to be a vast deal nearer the truth: viz.

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

4. Omission (pp. 128-156)

d. Many False Readings Died Out Speedily

There has always in fact been a process of elimination going on, as well as of self-propagation: a corrective force at work, as well as one of deterioration. How else are we to account for the utter disappearance of the many *monstra potius quam variae lectiones* which the ancients nevertheless insist were prevalent in their times?" [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 139]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

4. Omission (pp. 128-156)

e. B and A Exhibit Flagrant Errors

“And yet, if the discrepancy between Codexes B and A and the great bulk of the copies in this place did not originate in the way insisted on by the critics, how is it to be accounted for? . . . Unbounded license of transcription, flagrant carelessness, arbitrary interpolations, omissions without number, disfigure these two ancient MSS in every page. We seldom trouble ourselves to inquire into the history of their obliquities.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, pp. 140-141]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

5. Transposition (pp. 157-163)

Dean Burgon defines transposition as a cause of textual corruption as follows:

“One of the most prolific sources of Corrupt Readings is TRANSPPOSITION, or the arbitrary inversion of the order of the sacred words,-- generally in the subordinate clauses of a sentence. The extent to which this prevails in Codexes of the type of BACD passes belief.”
[Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 157]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

5. Transposition (pp. 157-163)

He continues this thought by saying:

“It is not merely the occasional writing of *tauta* for *panta tauta*,—or *ho laos houtos* for *houtos ho laos*, to which allusion is now made: for if that were all, the phenomenon would admit of loyal explanation and excuse. But what I speak of is a systematic putting to wrong of the inspired words throughout the entire Codex; an operation which was evidently regarded in certain quarters as a lawful exercise of critical ingenuity,—perhaps was looked upon as an elegant expedient to be adopted for improving the style of the original without materially interfering with the sense.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 157]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

6. Substitution (pp. 164-165)

The corruption of the Traditional Text due to substitution occurs when a false word is substituted for a true word. An example of this would be the substitution of the word *hos* (“who”) for *theos* (“God”) in 1 Timothy 3:16.

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

7. Addition (pp. 166-171)

The practice of adding words or phrases to the Traditional Text by editors comprises the smallest number of instances when compared to omission, transposition, or substitution.

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

8. Glosses (pp. 172-190)

Dean Burgon wrote this about “Glosses”:

“Glosses,” properly so called, though they enjoy a conspicuous place in every enumeration like the present, are probably by no means so numerous as is commonly supposed.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 172]

He then defined what he considered to fit the true definition of a “Gloss”:

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

8. Glosses (pp. 172-190)

“For certainly every unauthorized accretion in the text of Scripture is not a ‘gloss’: but only those explanatory words or clauses which have surreptitiously insinuated themselves into the text, and of which no more reasonable account can be rendered than that they were probably in the first instance proposed by some ancient Critic in the way of useful comment, or necessary explanation, or lawful expansion, or reasonable limitation of the actual utterance of the SPIRIT.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 172]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

9. Corruption by Heretics (pp. 191-210)

a. The Importance of Corruption of the Traditional Text by Heretics

Chapter XIII, which deals with the ninth cause of intentional corruption, contains many examples of how various heretics changed the Traditional Text to suit their own false doctrines. I had a two-hour radio debate with Mr. James White on the King James Bible several years ago. [These two audio cassettes are available as B.F.T. #2494/1-2 for a GIFT of \$7 + P&H]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

9. Corruption by Heretics (pp. 191-210)

a. The Importance of Corruption of the Traditional Text by Heretics

This took place prior to the release of his book, *The King James Only Controversy*. During this debate, Mr. White denied that heretics had corrupted the Words of God. He would not receive any proof I gave to him concerning this matter, even though I listed nine or ten early heretics who were guilty of doing just that. Because of this, I have given many quotations from Dean Burgon on this subject.

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

9. Corruption by Heretics (pp. 191-210)

b. Proofs of the Corruption of God's Words by Heretics

(1) Previous Kinds of Corruption Were Not in Bad Faith

“The Corruptions of the Sacred Text which we have been hitherto considering, however diverse, the causes from which they may have resulted, have yet all agreed in this: viz. that they have all been of a lawful nature. My meaning is, that apparently, at no stage of the business has there been *mala fides* in any quarter. [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 191]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

9. Corruption by Heretics (pp. 191-210)

b. Proofs of the Corruption of God's Words by Heretics

(2) There is a Large Assortment of Heretical Corruption

“But there remains after all an alarmingly large assortment of textual perturbations which absolutely refuse to fall under any of the heads of classification already enumerated. They are not to be accounted for on any ordinary principle. And this residuum of cases it is, which occasions our present embarrassment.

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

9. Corruption by Heretics (pp. 191-210)

b. Proofs of the Corruption of God's Words by Heretics

(2) There is a Large Assortment of Heretical Corruption

They are in truth so exceedingly numerous; they are often so very considerable; they are, as a rule, so very licentious; they transgress to such an extent all regulations; they usurp so persistently the office of truth and faithfulness, that we really know not what to think about them. Sometimes we are presented with gross interpolations,--apocryphal stories: more often with systematic laceration of the text, or transformations as from an angel of light." [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, pp. 191-192]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

9. Corruption by Heretics (pp. 191-210)

b. Proofs of the Corruption of God's Words by Heretics

(3) How did this happen?

Questions that Demand Answers

“We are constrained to inquire, How all this can possibly have come about? Have there even been persons who made it their business of set purpose to corrupt the [sacred deposit of Holy Scripture entrusted to the Church for the perpetual illumination of all ages till the Lord should come?]” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels*, p. 192. The bracketed words were added by editor Miller.]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

9. Corruption by Heretics (pp. 191-210)

b. Proofs of the Corruption of God's Words by Heretics

(4) Heretical Corruption Began From the Very First

“At this stage of the inquiry, we are reminded that it is even notorious that in the earliest age of all, the New Testament Scriptures were subjected to such influences. In the age which immediately succeeded the Apostolic there were heretical teachers not a few, who finding their tenets refuted by the plain Word of God bent themselves against the written Word with all their power. From seeking to evacuate its teaching, it was but a single step to seeking to falsify its testimony. Profane literature has never been exposed to such hostility.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 192]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

(4) Heretical Corruption Began From the Very First

(b) Grievous Wolves and Nicolaitans Were Mentioned by the Apostles Paul and John

“The ‘grievous wolves’ whose assaults St. Paul predicted as imminent, and against which he warned the heads of the Ephesian Church, [Acts 20:29] did not long ‘spare the flock.’ Already, while St. John was yet alive, had the Nicolaitans developed their teaching at Ephesus [Revelation 2:6] and in the neighbouring Church of Pergamus [Revelation 2:15]. Our risen LORD in glory announced to His servant John that in the latter city Satan had established his dwelling-place [Revelation 2:13]. Nay, while those awful words were being spoken to the Seer of Patmos, the men were already born who first dared to lay their impious hands on the Gospel of CHRIST.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 193]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

(5) Disturbing Influences Continued After Apostolic Times

“No sooner do we find ourselves out of Apostolic lines and among monuments of the primitive age that we are made aware that the sacred text must have been exposed at that very early period to disturbing influences which, on no ordinary principles, can be explained.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 193]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

(5) Disturbing Influences Continued After Apostolic Times

(a) Systematic Mutilation Is Observed in B, A, and D

“ . . . the copies Codexes B and A; and above all, coming later down still, Cod. D—these venerable monuments of a primitive age occasionally present us with deformities which it is worse than useless to extenuate,—quite impossible to overlook. Unauthorized appendixes,—tasteless and stupid amplifications,—plain perversions of the meaning of the Evangelists,—wholly gratuitous assimilations of one Gospel to another,—the unprovoked omission of passages of profound interest and not unfrequently of high doctrinal import:—

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

(5) Disturbing Influences Continued After Apostolic Times

(a) Systematic Mutilation Is Observed in B, A, and D

How are such phenomena as these to be accounted for? Again, in one quarter, we light upon a systematic mutilation of the text so extraordinary that it is as if some one had amused himself by running his pen through every clause which was not absolutely necessary to the intelligibility of what remained. In another quarter we encounter the thrusting in of fabulous stories and apocryphal sayings which disfigure as well as encumber the text.--How will any one explain all this?" [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 194]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

(5) Disturbing Influences Continued After Apostolic Times

(b) Depravations Appear in Very Few of the Ancient Sources

“If the most primitive witnesses to our hand are indeed discovered to bear false witness to the text of Scripture,—whither are we to betake ourselves for the Truth? And what security can we hope ever to enjoy that any given exhibition of the text of Scripture is the true one? Are we then to be told that in this subject-matter the maxim ‘*id verius quod prius*’ does not hold? that the stream instead of getting purer as we approach the fountain head, on the contrary grows more and more corrupt?

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

(b) Depravations Appear in Very Few of the Ancient Sources

“Nothing of the sort, I answer. The direct reverse is the case. Our appeal is always made to antiquity; and it is nothing else but a truism to assert that the oldest reading is also the best. . . . “The characteristic note, the one distinguishing feature, of all the monstrous and palpable perversions of the text of Scripture just now under considerations this:--that they are never vouched for by the oldest documents generally, but only by a few of them,--two, three, or more of the oldest documents being observed as a rule to yield conflicting testimony, (which in this subject-matter is in fact contradictory). In this way the oldest witnesses nearly always refute one another, and indeed dispose of one another’s evidence almost as often as that evidence is untrustworthy.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, pp. 194-195]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

(6) Names of Some of the Heretics Who Corrupted the Text

(a) Basilides, Ebionites, Valentinians, Marcion, and Tatian

“I say then that it is an adequate, as well as a singularly satisfactory explanation of the greater part of those gross depravations of Scripture which admit of no legitimate excuse, to attribute them, however remotely, to those licentious free-handlers of the text who are declared by their contemporaries to have falsified, mutilated, interpolated, and in whatever other way to have corrupted the Gospel; whose blasphemous productions of necessity must once have obtained a very wide circulation: and indeed will never want some to recommend and uphold them.

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

(6) Names of Some of the Heretics Who Corrupted the Text

(a) Basilides, Ebionites, Valentinians, Marcion, and Tatian

What with those who like Basilides and his followers invented a Gospel of their own:--what with those who with the Ebionites and the Valentinians interpolated and otherwise perverted one of the four Gospels until it suited their own purposes:--what with those who like Marcion shamefully maimed and mutilated the inspired text:--there must have been a large mass of corruption festering in the Church throughout the immediate post-Apostolic age. But even this is not all. There were those who like Tatian constructed Diatessarons, or attempts to weave the fourfold narrative into one,--‘Lives of CHRIST,’ so to speak;” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, pp. 195-196]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

(6) Names of Some of the Heretics Who Corrupted the Text

(b) Heretical Denial of Biblical Christology

“Numerous as were the heresies of the first two or three centuries of the Christian era, they almost all agreed in this:—that they involved a denial of the eternal Godhead of the SON of Man; denied that He is essentially very and eternal GOD. This fundamental heresy found itself haplessly confuted by the whole tenor of the Gospel, which nevertheless it assailed with restless ingenuity: and many are the traces alike of its impotence and of its malice which have survived to our own times. It is a memorable circumstance that it is precisely those very texts which relate either to the eternal generation of the SON,—to His Incarnation,—or to the circumstances of His Nativity,—which have suffered most severely, and retain to this hour traces of having been in various ways tampered with.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 196-197]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

(6) Names of Some of the Heretics Who Corrupted the Text

(c) Heretics Constructed Man-Made Gospels

“The men who first systematically depraved the text of Scripture, were as we now must know the heresiarchs Basilides (fl. 134), Valentinus (fl. 140), and Marcion (fl. 150): three names which Origen is observed almost invariably to enumerate together. Basilides and Valentinus are even said to have written Gospels of their own. . . . the general fact is established by the notices, and those are exceedingly abundant, which the writers against Heresies have cited and left on record. All that is intended by such statements is that these old heretics retained, altered, transposed, just so much as they pleased of the fourfold Gospel: and further, that they imported whatever additional matter they saw fit:--not that they rejected the inspired text entirely, and substituted something of their own invention in its place.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, pp. 195-196]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

(6) Names of Some of the Heretics Who Corrupted the Text

(d) The Gospels Listed that Were Corrupted by the Heretics

“ . . . Basilides,--who, as well in respect of St Paul’s Epistles as of the four Gospels, was evidently a grievous offender,--yet, since it is clear that his principal followers, who were also his contemporaries, put forth a composition which they were please to style the ‘Gospel of Truth,’ it is idle to dispute as to the limit of the rashness and impiety of the individual author of the heresy. Let it be further stated, as no slight confirmation of the view already hazarded as to the probable contents of the (so-called) Gospels of Basilides and of Valentinus, that one particular Gospel is related to have been preferred before the rest and specially adopted by certain schools of ancient Heretics.

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

(6) Names of Some of the Heretics Who Corrupted the Text

(d) The Gospels Listed that Were Corrupted by the Heretics

“Thus, a strangely mutilated and depraved text of St. Matthew’s Gospel is related to have found special favour with the Ebionites, with whom the Corinthians are associated by Epiphanius: though Irenaeus seems to say that it was St. Mark’s Gospel which was adopted by the heretical followers of Cerinthus. Marcion’s deliberate choice of St. Luke’s Gospel is sufficiently well known. The Valentinians appropriated to themselves St. John. Heracleon, the most distinguished disciple of this school, is deliberately censured by Origen for having corrupted the text of the fourth Evangelist in many places.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 198-199]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

(6) Names of Some of the Heretics **Who Corrupted the Text**

(e) Marcion Was a Leading Heretic **Who Corrupted Scripture**

“Concerning Marcion, who is a far more conspicuous personage, it will be necessary to speak more particularly. He has left a mark on the text of Scripture of which traces are distinctly recognizable at the present day. A great deal more is known about him than about any other individual of his school. Justin Martyr and Irenaeus wrote against him: besides Origen and Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian in the West, and Epiphanius in the East elaborately refuted his teaching, and give us large information as to his method of handling Scripture.

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

(6) Names of Some of the Heretics **Who Corrupted the Text**

(e) Marcion Was a Leading Heretic **Who Corrupted Scripture**

“. . . It is to be remembered that Marcion's Gospel was known to be an heretical production: one of the many creations of the Gnostic age,-it must have been universally execrated and abhorred by faithful men. Besides this lacerated text of St. Luke's Gospel, there was an Ebionite recension of St. Matthew: A Cerinthian exhibition of St. Mark: a Valentinian perversion of St. John. And we are but insisting that the effect of so many corruptions of the Truth, industriously propagated within far less than 100 years of the date of the inspired verities themselves, must needs have made itself sensibly felt.

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

(6) Names of Some of the Heretics Who Corrupted the Text

(e) Marcion Was a Leading Heretic Who Corrupted Scripture

“Add the notorious fact, that in the second and third centuries after the Christian era the text of the Gospels is found to have been grossly corrupted even in orthodox quarters,—and that traces of these gross corruptions are discoverable in certain circles to the present hour,—and it seems impossible not to connect the two phenomena together.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 200-201]

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(7) Mutilations by Codexes B and D

“The proneness of these early Heretics severally to adopt one of the four Gospels for their own, explains why there is no consistency observable in the corruptions they introduced into the text. It also explains the bringing into one Gospel of things which of right clearly belong to another— . . . but in no other way is it possible to account for such systematic mutilations as are found in Cod. B,—such monstrous additions as are found in Cod. D,—such gross perturbations as are continually met with in one or more, but never in all, of the earliest Codexes extant, as well as in the oldest Versions and Fathers.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p.201]

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(8) Some of the Doctrines of the Gnostic Heretics

(a) Christ as Only Begotten “God” Instead of “Son”

**“These professors of ‘Gnosticism’ held no
consistent theory. The two leading
problems on which they exercised their
perverse ingenuity are found to have been
(1) the origin of Matter, and (2) the origin of
Evil.**

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“(1) they taught that the world’s artificer (‘the Word’) was Himself a creature of ‘the Father.’ Encountered on the threshold of the Gospel by the plain declaration that, ‘In the beginning was the WORD: and the WORD was with GOD: and the WORD was GOD’ and presently, ‘All things were made by Him’;--they were much exercised. The expedients to which they had recourse were certainly extraordinary. That ‘Beginning’ (said Valentinus) was the first thing which ‘the FATHER’ created: which He called ‘Only begotten SON,’ and also ‘GOD’: and in whom he implanted the germ of all things. Seminally, that is, whatsoever subsequently came into being was in Him. ‘The Word’ (he said) was a product of this first-created thing. . . . From which it is plain that, according to Valentinus, ‘the WORD’ was distinct from ‘the SON,’ who was not the world’s Creator. Both alike, however, he acknowledged to be ‘GOD’: but only, as we have seen already, using the term in an inferior sense.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, pp. 202-203]

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(b) Early Heretics' Views About Marriage

“The question of Matrimony was one of those on which the early heretics freely dogmatized. Saturninus (A.D. 120) and his followers taught that marriage was a production of Hell.

“We are not surprised after this to find that those places in the Gospel which bear on the relation between man and wife exhibit traces of perturbation. I am not asserting that the heretics themselves depraved the text. I do but state two plain facts: viz. (1) That whereas in the second century certain heretical tenets on the subject of Marriage prevailed largely, and those who advocated as well as those who opposed such teaching relied chiefly on the Gospel for their proofs:

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(b) Early Heretics' Views About Marriage

“(2) It is accordingly found that not only does the phenomenon of ‘various readings’ prevail in those places of the Gospel which bear most nearly on the disputed points, but the ‘readings’ are exactly of that suspicious kind which would naturally result from a tampering with the text by men who had to maintain, or else to combat, opinions of a certain class.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, pp. 208-209]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

10. Corruption by the Orthodox (pp. 211-231)

In this section, Dean Burgon brings up some important doctrines of the Faith that heretics were attacking in the early days of the church.

a. The Orthodox Defense of John 1:18

“St. John announces (ver 18) that ‘the only begotten Son, which is the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him’: thus establishing the identity of the Word and the Only begotten Son. What else could the Valentinians do with so plain a statement, but seek to deprave it?”

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10. Corruption by the Orthodox (pp. 211-231)

a. The Orthodox Defense of John 1:18

Accordingly, the very first time St. John 1:18 is quoted by any of the ancients, it is accompanied by the statement that the Valentinians in order to prove that the ‘only begotten’ is ‘the Beginning,’ and is ‘GOD,’ appeal to the words,—‘the only begotten GOD who is in the bosom of the Father,’ &c. Inasmuch, said they, as the Father willed to become known to the worlds, the Spirit of Gnosis produced the ‘only begotten’ ‘Gnosis,’ and therefore gave birth to “Gnosis,” that is to ‘the Son’: in order that by ‘the Son’ ‘the Father’ might be made known.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 215]

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10. Corruption by the Orthodox (pp. 211-231) b. The Arian Controversy

“But the most important part of the Dean’s paper is found in his account of the origin of the expression [‘only begotten GOD’]. This inference is strongly confirmed by the employment of it in the Arian controversy. Arius reads *theos* [‘God’] (*op. Epiph. 73–Tischendorf*), whilst his opponents read *huios* [‘Son’]. So Faustinus seven times (I noted him only thrice), and Victorinus Aier six (10) times in reply to the Arian Candidus. Also Athanasius and Hilary of Poitiers four times each and Ambrose eight (add Epp. I. Xxii.5).

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10. Corruption by the Orthodox (pp. 211-231)

b. The Arian Controversy

It is curious that with this history admirers of B and A should extol their reading over the Traditional reading on the score of orthodoxy. Heresy had and still retains associations which cannot be ignored: in this instance some of the orthodox weakly played into the hands of heretics. [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, pp. 217-218]

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10. Corruption by the Orthodox (pp. 211-231)

c. John 3:13—the Omnipresence of the Lord Jesus Christ

**Even in our own times, there have been some
professedly orthodox and even professed
fundamentalists who have questioned that the Lord
Jesus Christ possessed all the Attributes of Deity while
on this earth. Though He did not always make use of
these Divine Attributes, He nevertheless possessed
every one of them. One of those Divine Attributes that
was denied in the early ages as well as today is the
Attribute of Christ's Omnipresence as taught in John
3:13. Of this textual question, Dean Burgon wrote:**

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10. Corruption by the Orthodox (pp. 211-231)

c. John 3:13—the Omnipresence of the Lord Jesus Christ

“Closely allied to the foregoing, and constantly referred to in connexion with it by those Fathers who undertook to refute the heresy of Apolinarius, is our LORD’S declaration to Nicodemus,—‘No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man “which is in heaven.” (St. John 3:13).

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10. Corruption by the Orthodox (pp. 211-231) **c. John 3:13—the Omnipresence of the Lord Jesus Christ**

“CHRIST ‘came down from heaven’ when He became incarnate: and having become incarnate, is said to have ‘ascended up to Heaven,’ and ‘to be in Heaven,’ because ‘the Son of Man,’ who was not in heaven before, by virtue of the hypostatical union was thenceforward evermore ‘in heaven.’ But the Evangelist’s language was very differently taken by those heretics who systematically ‘maimed and misinterpreted that which belongeth to the human nature of CHRIST.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 223]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

A. John 7:53-8:11 Occupied the Same Position from the Earliest Times as it Now Occupies

**“(1) These twelve verses occupied precisely
the same position which they now occupy
from the earliest period to which evidence
concerning the Gospels reaches.” [Dean
Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the
Traditional Text*, p. 247]**

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

B. John 7:53-8:11 Has Been a Part of Every Lectionary of the Church from the Earliest Time

**“(2) That by the very construction of the Lectionary,
the Church in her corporate capacity and official
character has solemnly recognized the narrative in
question as an integral part of St. John’s Gospel, and
as standing in its traditional place, from an
exceedingly remote time.” [Dean Burgon, *The
Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p.
253]**

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

1. Dr. Hort's Theory of Conflation Is the Opposite of What Happened

Dr. Hort's theory of the formation of the
New Testament Greek text was that
Western readings and other readings were
combined (blown up or conflated) to form
what he called the "Syrian Text." This is
what "conflation" means. This is the
opposite of the truth. Editor Edward Miller
wrote:

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“Our theory is the converse in main features to this. We utterly repudiate the term ‘Syrian’ as being a most inadequate and untrue title adopted and maintained by the Catholic [that is, “universal”] Church with all her intelligence and learning, during nearly fifteen centuries according to Dr. Hort’s admissions: and we claim from the evidence that the Traditional Text of the Gospels, under the true name, is that which came fresh from the pens of the Evangelists, and that all variations from it, however they have been entitled, are nothing else than corrupt forms of the original readings.” [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, pp. 267-268]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

2. If Conflation Is Real, Why Did Dr. Hort Find Only Eight Examples?

Dean Burgon has refuted this false view of conflation in his book, *The Revision Revised* [Available as B.F.T. #611, 600 pages, for a GIFT of \$25 + \$5 P&H]. Editor Edward Miller, in APPENDIX II, has given additional information against this false view as well. He wrote:

“But the curious phenomenon that Dr. Hort has rested his case upon so small an induction as is supplied by only eight examples--if they are not in fact only seven--has not yet received due explanation. Why, he ought to have referred to twenty-five or thirty at least. If Conflation is so common, he might have produced a large number of references without working out more than was enough for illustration as patterns.”
[Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 79]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

B. The Neutral Text (pp. 282-286)

1. Dr. Hort's Text Is not Neutral but Has Been Corrupted by Heretics

“He [that is, Dr. Hort] was tempted to the impossible task of driving water uphill. Therefore I claim, not only to have refuted Dr. Hort, whose theory is proved to be even more baseless than I ever imagined, but by excavating more deeply than he did, to have discovered the cause of his error.

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

B. The Neutral Text (pp. 282-286)

1. Dr. Hort's Text Is not Neutral but Has Been Corrupted by Heretics

“No: the true theory is, that the Traditional Text—not in superhuman perfection, though under superhuman Guidance—is the embodiment of the original Text of the New Testament. In the earliest times, just as false doctrines were widely spread, so corrupt reading prevailed in many places. Later on, when Christianity was better understood, and the Church reckoned amongst the learned and holy of her members the finest natures and intellects of the world, and many clever men of inferior character endeavoured to vitiate Doctrine and lower Christian life, evil rose to the surface, and was in due time after a severe struggle removed by the sound and faithful of the day.”

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

B. The Neutral Text (pp. 282-286)

1. Dr. Hort's Text Is not Neutral but Has Been Corrupted by Heretics

So heresy was rampant for a while, and was then replaced by true and well-grounded belief. With great ability and with true discretion, the Deposit whether of Faith or Word was verified and established. General Councils decided in those days upon the Faith, and the Creed when accepted and approved by the universal voice was enacted for good and bequeathed to future ages. So it was both as to the Canon and the Words of Holy Scripture, only that all was done quietly. As to the latter, hardly a footfall was heard. But none the less, corruption after short-lived prominence sank into deep and still deeper obscurity, whilst the teaching of fifteen centuries placed the true Text upon a firm and lasting basis. [Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, pp. 285-286]

Definitions and Comments on Intentional Corruptions

B. The Neutral Text (pp. 282-286)

2. The Traditional Text Is Justified by the Evidence

“And so I venture to hold, now that the question has been raised, both the learned and the well-informed will come gradually to see, that no other course respecting the Words of the New Testament is so strongly justified by the evidence, none so sound and large-minded, none so reasonable in every way, none so consonant with intelligent faith, none so productive of guidance and comfort and hope, as to maintain against all the assaults of corruption [as] THE TRADITIONAL TEXT.”
[Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 286]