

Why I Preach from the Received Text. Edited by Jeffrey T. Riddle & Christian M. McShaffrey. Winter Springs, FL: The Greater Heritage Christian Publishing, 2022. 276 pp. Softcover \$24.09; Kindle \$12.99.

The Received Text Mindset has had proponents throughout all ages of history, and a recently published compendium of essays by Reformed ministers serves as a good present day example of this historic position. Twenty-five individual pastors and church leaders contribute chapters ranging from 6 to 12 pages, giving their personal testimonies as to why they came to embrace and settle upon a Received Text position, over and against an eclectic or critical text position, for the preaching of the New Testament (NT). These writers would identify as Reformed Baptists and Presbyterians, having a Protestant approach to matters of ecclesiology. The editorial introduction informs that the writers are at various stages of ministerial service, and serve in locations from the USA and Canada to the UK and Australia.

For those who do not identify as Reformed or who only hold to whichever points of Calvinism are biblical, the book contains practically nil of the espousing of soteriological positions associated with John Calvin. And for those who do not fit neatly within popular expressions of Covenant Theology (or Dispensationalism for that matter), there is nothing of note that the reader will find overly distracting or objectionable.

The volume proves to be an excellent compendium for tracing the thinking of the forebears of Protestantism in defense of the TR position. Men such as Owen, Turretin, Muller, Hills and others are cited profitably throughout the work. Owen's assertion that text critics who treat the Bible as any other book are in fact bordering on atheism (83) needs a fresh hearing in these days of androcentric bibliology.

The book nearly equally provides a wealth of quotations from proponents of the Critical Text (CT) position, wherein their lack of faith and commitment to pragmatism is on clear display. Men such as B.F. Westcott, F.J.A. Hort, Bruce Metzger, Kurt Aland, Daniel Wallace, Bart Ehrman, and James White are cited throughout, so that the reader may learn firsthand the rationalistic approach that these men take in regards to God's Word. For instance, Kurt Aland's lengthy quote questioning the very existence of Jesus Christ is cited (248), along with several quotes from Ehrman (65) and Wallace (112) who both have declared harmoniously that there is no way to tell if we have what the Apostles originally wrote or not.

In the introduction, the editors do an excellent job showing that the topic at hand reaches back to the garden of Eden and to the original couple, and that the three main issues with the CT, namely modification & addition & deletion, are as old as man himself. That is why those who expect this issue of the text of the Bible and the doctrine of preservation to magically "go away" are not thinking biblically.

This anthology also serves as a showcase of theology (specifically bibliology) in action, providing several real life "case studies." Against the tendency to see "the text issue" as something that belongs to some academy outside of the local church, the reality is that the NT congregation is the only organization that has biblical authority to comment on the matter, and

these twenty-five pastors' testimonies serve to illustrate exactly how much the subject of the text affects both ministers and church members alike. In fact, this reviewer has observed CT proponents speak out of both sides of their mouth, first by assuring their audience that the differences between Greek Texts are not that big of a deal, and then by trying to convince them that the CT readings are so much better than the traditional text that they surely should make the switch.

This compendium also provides a great opportunity to see the writings of men who serve with the Trinitarian Bible Society from which many of the Lord's churches access their physical copies of the Received Text (Ginsberg / Scrivener). In fact, a highlight of the book is John Thackway's interaction with Hendricksen and Lloyd-Jones on Ephesians 5 (ch. 22).

The famous London Baptist Confession of Faith (1:8) quote appears numerous times throughout the work: "The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages..." It is good for those who identify as Baptist and TR to evaluate the words of this confession. The alternative to "kept pure in all ages" is "was corrupted in ages past and halts in an unrestored state as of yet."

The writers distance themselves from the KJVO-ism of the Ruckman / Riplinger variety. The editors state outright, "We did not ask our authors to address, "Why I Preach from the King James Version," but "Why I Preach from the Received Text." The primary purpose of this book is a defense of the traditional original Hebrew and Greek text of the Bible" (17). The book maintains a Christlike tone while asking some hard questions of those who would promote either uncertainty or extremism.

The Select Annotated Bibliography at the end is a treasure trove of good materials on the topic of the text of the Bible, and will be a valuable resource for those who desire to build up their libraries in the area of bibliology. There is also an appendix that provides helpful approaches for churches that are seeking to return to traditional translations from the modern versions.

Ideally, this work should be in the personal library of those who study the text and who would like to represent those who hold a classic, received text position. It should also be in the personal library of those who hold to a Majority Text or CT viewpoint, so that the TR position can be more accurately represented, and so that slanders (intentional or unintentional) of labeling these pastors "KJVO" can be avoided. Finally, the work belongs in college and seminary libraries as a helpful reference work on the text issue and practical theology. This volume begs for a sequel, and we look forward to a companion piece of additional ministers who preach from the Received Text.