

WHICH VERSION?

*An Examination of New Testament Textual Criticism
And Which is the Best Bible Version*

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- INTRODUCTION -

THE STORY'S TOLD, with delight in its humour, of the dear, 'ignorant' old saint who stands up in the Bible study meeting and indignantly rebuffs the well-educated pastor, and those in the group who are of progressive thought. With a mixture of shock and what might be called evangelistic fervor, she holds up a well-worn tome of evident years and experience, and zealously proclaims, "I'm shocked that you, Pastor, would even suggest any other Bible! If the KING JAMES VERSION was good enough for the Apostle Paul, it's certainly good enough for me!" The same teller-of-stories may even question the real need for such a book as the one you are now reading. Terence Brown quotes an article in *Crusade* magazine: "If we have the temerity to murmur or complain about this erosion of the sacred text of God's Word we are liable to be accused of defending the Authorized Version on emotional rather than on rational grounds."¹

But was that dear old saint (if she actually existed) in fact so ignorant and misguided? The resurgence in popularity among conservative Christians of the KING JAMES VERSION is actually based on facts more concrete than the mere ignorant emotionalism that may appear to the casual and unversed observer. And it is because of our *educated* emotionalism, rather, that we express our love for the Word of God as given in the KING JAMES, OR AUTHORIZED VERSION, and because of which the author writes this present volume.

Alfred Martin:

If it be objected that strong feeling obtrudes itself at times into the discussion, it can only be replied in extenuation that this is the kind of subject which engenders strong feeling. There are tremendous issues involved; the text of the Word of God is in question! How can one hold oneself mentally aloof?²

Louis Gaussen:

If you consult ministers who have spent their whole lives in meditating on the Scriptures, seeking nourishment for the Lord's flock, they... will tell you that the man of God, who keeps some text of that Holy Book close to the eyes of his soul, soon adopts the language of the naturalist who is constrained by a microscopic study of a single leaf to exclaim, "He Who made the forest made the leaf!" And He Who made the Bible made its verses also!³

Benjamin G. Wilkinson continues:

The change of one word in the Constitution of the United States, at least the transposition of two, could vitally affect thousands of people, millions of dollars, and many millions of acres of land. It took centuries of training to place within that document a combination of words which cannot be tampered with, without catastrophic results. It represents the mentality of a great people, and to change it would bring chaos into their well-ordered life.⁴

Gary Ray Branscome concludes:

In looking to Scripture for answers we should keep in mind God's promise to preserve His Word (Psalm 12:6,7). This is a promise not just to preserve the message, but to preserve the actual words which God caused to be written. This promise has been fulfilled not just through the existence of many ancient manuscripts (all of which preserve God's Word), but also through the fact that the Bible in its original Hebrew and Greek has never contained man-made books, nor has it been altered to teach false doctrine.⁵

The fact is, the present volume has arisen out of need: this writer, in the course of ministry, both officially as a pastor, and unofficially, has been confronted by many with searching questions as to why one Bible version will include verses that others won't! In response, until he used the opportunity of a research course at Bible College to perform the research for what became this book, he had to repeat what he had heard: that, "we are not sure whether or not these verses are in the Bible, that we do not have the Bible that God gave to us!" This uncertainty came with some guilt in the author's heart: guilt that he could not give a full and satisfactory explanation on a subject central to our faith. For this reason he made this research: to decide for either the KING JAMES VERSION, or for modern, "Critical," versions (the word, "Criticism" being used in its classical sense, meaning, "to judge," or, "to examine").

When the author began his research he subscribed to the philosophy prevalent in the Church today: that, "the modern versions of the Bible are more accurate than the KING JAMES VERSION because they are based upon more recent finds of older manuscripts that correct mistakes made in the KING JAMES VERSION." He was obligated, however, to look at the subject honestly, and objectively, if he were to gain a real understanding of the issues involved, not the least of which, required recognition of the fact that some very sincere Christians and indeed much literature were adamant that the KING JAMES VERSION is the only proper authority for the Christian. Furthermore, if the author were not to play the part of the fool who considers all around him to be idiots (Prov. 26:16) he had to acknowledge that perhaps these seeming unreasonable emotional zealots had a reason greater than blind loyalty for their dogmaticism in support of the KING JAMES VERSION.

The author began his research by obtaining as much information for his own library as he was able, purchasing the best materials available to the layman, by writing to foreign publishers, and even writing to one author directly. The present writer even petitioned (successfully) the librarian of one institution to sell that library's extra copy of one invaluable volume. In fact, more information was both available and obtained by the author, that supported the point of view commonly prevalent and followed by him (supporting modern translations), than supported the

conclusion he eventually adopted. In other words, this writer began his research convinced of a point of view diametrically opposed to that which he owned when he concluded his reasearch. He therefore feels justified in suggesting that the attitude employed during his research was either extremely objective and unbiased, or that the force of evidence presented by the viewpoint supporting the KING JAMES VERSION was so overwhelming as to even overcome an opponent. In either case, the conclusion is a striking clarion for the KING JAMES VERSION.

I.

THE CONTROVERSY

"THOSE who have really investigated the matter, and are in hearty sympathy with what is evangelical, realize that this Revised Version is a part of the movement to 'modernize' Christian thought and faith and away with the established truth."

THE HERALD AND PRESBYTER (Presbyterian), July 16, 1924, p. 10.⁶

THE WORD OF GOD is central to the life of the Christian. It is from this that one's faith is learned, as, "... faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," *Rom. 10:17*, and upon it that one stands against the wiles of the enemy, as, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," *Matt. 4:4*. With such authority contained within its pages, therefore, the utmost respect and authority must be given the Word of God. Harold Lindsell concurs, in *Battle for the Bible*:

It is my opinion that it is next to impossible to stop the process of theological deterioration once inerrancy is abandoned. I have said that it is a theological watershed just as the Continental Divide is the watershed for the United States and Canada. The water that flows on the other side of the divide ends up in the Pacific Ocean. But once the water starts down one side or the other, it continues until it reaches its oceanic destination. Errancy and inerrancy constitute the two principles, and which one a person chooses determines where he will end up.

No matter how sincere a man may be, and however carefully he guards against further theological concessions, they are inevitable once inerrancy is given up. Francis Schaeffer has told conferees at L'Abri that "the generation of those who first give up biblical inerrancy may have evangelical background and real personal relationships with Jesus Christ so that they can 'live theologically' on the basis of their limited-inerrancy viewpoint. But what happens when the next generation tries to build on that foundation?" I am saying that whether it takes five or fifty years any denomination or parachurch group that forsakes inerrancy will end up shipwrecked. It is impossible to prevent the surrender of other important doctrinal teachings of the Word of God when inerrancy is gone.⁷

Not content to simply provide the world with what they hope is a better translation, our modern Bible translators have often delivered scathing attacks on the manuscript source of the KING JAMES (AUTHORIZED) VERSION of the Bible, which they are hoping to supplant. A financial motive for attempting to corrode the practical monopoly of the AUTHORIZED VERSION (KJV) has been taken to the extreme of placing in doubt the credibility of the Book which for three centuries has been the source of faith for the English world, and similarly so, in the respective languages of all of Europe. Custom dies hard, so questioning the reliability of the well-used will be less successful in converting one from that version to another than it will be in placing doubt on the Word of God as a whole.

Financial gain, however, is but one reason the Greek text of the AUTHORIZED VERSION has been questioned. Perhaps the main reason for the attack has come from a change in Evangelical thought. To date, over 5300 manuscripts (mss) of the Greek New Testament are extant (known to be in existence.) Of these 5300, 95% agree in being word-for-word identical, or very closely so (although no two manuscripts are exactly alike.) The oldest of this main group of manuscripts dates from about the ninth century. There are, on the other hand, a comparative handful of manuscripts (about 55 manuscripts out of some 5300) that do not even agree very often, in wording, among themselves, or, of course, with the 95%. They are usually older than the other group, though, and are for this reason the only ones accepted by many critics today, as being representative of the original New Testament. The founders of that bias (and the present leaders of the group following them) did/do not believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, and often had even lower regard for it; hence, their bias. That more liberal-minded crowd was sired by such people as Richard Bentley (1662-1742), who wanted to recover the form of New Testament text that, “existed at the time of the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.).”^{8,9} Karl Lachmann (1793-1851) who wished to discover the text common in Eastern Christendom about A.D. 380,^{10,11,12} (and to destroy faith in the traditional text) and Samuel Prideaux Tregelles (1813-1875), who sought to discover the same, “so far as possible,” to the glory of God. “To bridge the gap between this reconstructed 4th-century text and the original text Lachmann proposed to resort to conjectural emendation,”¹³ (guessing as to what must be the correct reading [wording] according to such things as the author’s style, vocabulary, etc.)

Metzger:

As early as 1908 Rendel Harris declared that the New Testament text had not at all been settled but was “more than ever, and perhaps finally, unsettled.” Two years later Conybeare gave his opinion that “the ultimate (New Testament) text, if there ever was one that deserves to be so called, is for ever irrecoverable.” And in 1941 Kirsopp Lake, after a lifetime spent in the study of the New Testament text, delivered the following judgement: “In spite of the claims of Westcott and Hort and of von Soden, we do not know the original form of the Gospels, and it is quite likely that we never shall.”¹⁴

And Hills:

As far as the recovery of the original New Testament is concerned, pessimism is the order of the day. As G. Zuntz (1953) remarks, “the optimism of the earlier editors has given way to that skepticism which inclines towards regarding ‘the original text’ as an unattainable mirage.” H. Greeven (1960) also has acknowledged the uncertainty of the naturalistic (secular) method of New Testament textual

criticism. "In general," he says, "the whole thing is limited to probability judgments; the original text of the New Testament, according to its nature, must be and remain a hypothesis." And R.M. Grant (1963) expresses himself still more despairingly. "The primary goal of New Testament textual study," he tells us, "remains the recovery of what the New Testament writers wrote. We have already suggested that to achieve this goal is well nigh impossible." Nor is K.W. Clark (1966) more hopeful. "Great progress has been achieved," he says, "in recovering an early form of text, but it may be doubted that there is evidence of one original text to be recovered." And according to K. Aland (1970), the early New Testament text is "strongly" characterized by variations.¹⁵

Nor is uncertainty and doubt restricted to these secular-thinking modern critics. Wilkinson, about the innovative REVISED VERSION of 1881:

Previous to this there had been only two types of Bibles in the world, the Protestant and the Catholic. Now Protestants were asked to choose between the true Protestant Bible and one which reproduced reading rejected by the Reformers.¹⁶

So the present controversy between the King James Bible in English and the modern versions is the same old contest fought out between the early church and rival sects; and later, between the Waldenses and the Papists from the fourth to the thirteenth centuries; and later still, between the Reformers and the Jesuits in the sixteenth century.¹⁷

That situation persists today, with confusion reigning as to whether or not we have the Bible God gave us, and (if we have,) as to which it is. The English-speaking world has lost a resounding common text that shored up faith and lived in the memory of millions.¹⁸

In stark contrast, however, to this plethora of abundant *doubt* are the statements of *believing* scholars. Josh McDowell, for instance, in *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*:

Although he was dealing with fewer manuscripts than we have today, Philip Schaff in Comparison to the Greek Testament and the English Version concluded that only 40% of the 150,000 variant readings caused doubt about the textual meaning, and only 50 of these were of great significance. Not one of the variations, Schaff says, altered "an article of faith or a precept of duty which is not abundantly sustained by other and undoubted passages, or by the whole tenor of Scripture teaching."¹⁹

Philip Mauro:

The consoling facts in that regard are: (1) that the vast majority of the variant readings are so slight (a mere question of a single letter, or an accent, or a prefix, or a case ending) as not to raise any question at all concerning the true sense of the passage; and (2) that the sum of all the variant readings taken together does not give ground for the slightest doubt as to any of the fundamental points of faith and doctrine. In other words, the very worst Text that could be constructed from the abundant materials available would not disturb any of the great truths of the Christian faith.²⁰

Sir Robert Anderson spoke, quoting Bentley:

‘Choose (out of the whole MSS) as awkwardly as you will, choose the worst by design out of the whole lump of readings, and not one article of faith or moral precept is either perverted or lost in them. Put them into the hands of a knave or a fool, and even with the most sinistrous and absurd choice, he shall not extinguish the light of any one chapter, or so disguise Christianity but that every feature of it will still be the same.’²¹

No one perversion of the Holy Scriptures can in any way destroy any important or life-giving teaching contained therein - no true doctrine is confined to just one passage. Notice, however, the qualifier in Mr. Mauro’s statement: “fundamental points... .” It is true that attempts were made, in the early centuries, to minimize the extent of true doctrine given in the Scriptures. Full advantage of these perversions has been taken by many today who would attempt the same thing, and coincidentally (we would hope), usage of these perversions has been made by others trying, “simply,” to, “recover the original text (or that of the fourth century).”

The architects and advocates of the modern English translations of the Holy Scriptures often assure us that their numerous alterations, omissions and additions do not affect any vital doctrine. While this may be true of hundreds of minute variations there is nevertheless a substantial number of important doctrinal passages which the modern versions present in an altered and invariably weakened form. These inspired words of the Apostle Paul to Timothy have always been held to affirm the essential deity and pre-existence of the Lord Jesus Christ, but this testimony is not maintained by the modern versions which do not unequivocally declare that Christ was “God manifested in the body,” without even the grace of a marginal note, either in the English edition or in the corresponding Greek text edited by Professor Tasker, to inform the reader that any other reading was ever to be found in any of the manuscripts.²²

Passages that have been brought into question (their very inclusion in the Bible has been attacked by unbelieving "scholars") include: Jn. 5:3-4; Jn. 7:53- 8:11; Mk. 16:9-20. Were these verses not to be included, we would find that: *a*) an angel did not move the waters at the pool of Bethesda, and that the people at the pool were not healed by it; *b*) we would not have Jesus’ Words: “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her,” and would thus be deprived of such a loving example of Jesus’; *c*) we would forget the verses: “And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My Name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;” and “They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” Just a few examples. In other words, the supernatural and miraculous nature of God's care for us and the love with which He forgives us would be minimized.

It must be seen, however, that were these passages to be excluded, they would not destroy any doctrine, but merely eliminate another (although strong) witness to one or more doctrines given elsewhere in the Scriptures. And our desire is not for the doctrines, alone, which Christ gave to us, but for the very written Scriptures by which He presented them to us. Satan works in subtleties in the physical, to achieve enormities in the Spiritual.

As spoken by Mr. Lindsell and Mr. Schaeffer, the denial of the inspiration of the Scriptures is the beginning of the destruction of the Church, so, for this reason also, the present author writes this book.

The textual critic has always been a theologian, but it is equally essential that the theologian shall be a textual critic. Certainly the two functions are indivisible and whether carried on in one mind or in two they must find close partnership.²³

The present generation of Bible students, having been reared on Westcott and Hort (the "Patriarchs" of modern secular textual criticism), have for the most part accepted the theory without independent or critical examination. To the average student of the Greek New Testament today it is unthinkable to question the theory at least in its basic premises. Even to imply that one believes the Textus Receptus to be nearer the original text than the Westcott-Hort text is, lays one open to the suspicion of gross ignorance or unmitigated bigotry. That is why this controversy needs to be aired again among Bible-believing Christians. There is little hope of convincing those who are unbelieving textual critics, but if believing Bible students had the evidence of both sides put before them, instead of one side only, there would not be so much blind following of Westcott and Hort.²⁴

We have, therefore, two reasons to study and compare the theories and methods behind the textual criticisms of modern secular, "scholars," on the one hand, and those behind the followers of inerrancy and preservation, on the other:

- 1) To decide our beliefs regarding the Divine inspiration and preservation of the Scriptures.
- 2) By so-doing, to gain peace of mind.

As this volume is the result of an (hopefully) unbiased examination of all the evidence for the determination of what the author, himself, should believe, it is composed mainly of quotes and references to other authors, rather than being a mere delineation of this writer's own pre-decided viewpoint. It is the story of the author's own conversion from the one belief to the other.

In Parentheses, "For the present, the problem revolves mostly around the thousands of different readings in the Greek New Testament manuscripts. By the time of Christ, the Old Testament was in a settled condition."²⁵ A reliable copy of the Hebrew Bible was made by the Masoretic scholar Moshe ben Asher about 895, the oldest remaining complete copy of which, dates to A.D. 1008. ("Masoretic" is translated, "Traditonal."²⁶)

Whatever perplexing problems there are in connection with the Old Testament, these have largely been produced by translating it into Greek and uniting that translation to the Greek New Testament. It is around the problems of the Greek New Testament that the battle for centuries has been fought. We must, therefore, confine ourselves largely to the Christian Era; for the experience which befell the New Testament and the controversies that raged around it, also befell the Old Testament.²⁷

CATALOGUES OF THE MANUSCRIPTS

The New Testament was originally written in Koiné Greek, the common Greek dialect of the New Testament world. Until the ninth century these manuscripts were copied in Uncial (capital) letters; after that time Miniscules (small) letters were employed. In addition to Greek manuscripts such as these, we have today other early witnesses to the text of the New Testament. Lectionaries (daily lesson books of Scripture readings) are often of great antiquity; Versions (translations into other languages) of the New Testament also provide examples of the text in early times. Josh McDowell lists the manuscripts:²⁸

Greek

Uncials	267
Miniscules	2764
Lectionaries	2143
Papyri (papyrus)	88
Recent Finds	47
Total	<hr/> 5309
Latin Vulgate	10,000 plus
Ethiopic	2000 plus
Slavic	4101
Armenian	2587
Syriac Pachetta	350 plus
Bohairic	100
Arabic	75
Old Latin	50
Anglo Saxon	7
Gothic	6
Sogdian	3
Old Syriac	2
Persian	2
Frankish	1

Metzger* gives the following figures (slightly more recent):²⁹

Manuscripts Catalogued	Uncial Script	Miniscule Script
Papyri	88	
Uncial	274	
Miniscule		2795
Lectionaries	245	2759
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Totals:	607	4759
	<hr/>	
Total number of N.T. lectionaries:	2209	
	<hr/>	
Total number of N.T. manuscripts:	5366	

(Metzger adds, also, that we have extant a series of twenty ostraca (potsherds with writing) that date from perhaps the seventh century.)

No complete New Testament manuscript has survived, though the manuscript, 'Codex Sinaiticus,' contains at least portions from every Book of the New Testament. McDowell continues: "Schaff quotes both Tregelles and Scrivener: 'We possess so many MSS, and we are aided by so many versions, that we are never left to the need of conjecture as the means of removing errata.'"³⁰

** It will be noted in the examination of this book, that Bruce Metzger (1914-2007) has been cited often. This prodigious writer and accomplished teacher, a man who has received many awards³¹ has been called, "probably the greatest New Testament textual specialist that America has produced."³² It is for sheer number and the availability of his materials, that he has been so often quoted and mentioned in the present work. Although his ideas are rather liberal (and thus of very questionable virtue and usefulness in the eyes of the committed Christian) his views are cited for the fact that they are, for the most part, typical of those held by modern secular and secularly-influenced textual critics.*

It should also be said, that the quotation of various secular authors in this book is done, not to legitimize the present author's claims by seeking secular support - a position which would minimize both the support given by God Himself, and the legitimacy of the faith and truth seen in the writings of the believers cited, but to show both the falsehood of the claims by these secular writers, and the fact that not even they themselves are totally convinced of the falsehoods that they promulgate.

II

THE HISTORY OF THE TEXT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

HLLS QUOTES John Burgon:

Vanquished by THE WORD Incarnate, Satan next directed his subtle malice against the Word written. Hence, as I think, - hence the extraordinary fate which befell certain early transcripts of the Gospel. First, heretical assailants of Christianity, - then orthodox defenders of the Truth, - lastly and above all, self-constituted Critics... such were the corrupting influences which were actively at work throughout the first hundred years after the death of S. John the Divine. Profane literature has never known anything approaching to it - can show nothing at all like it.³³

While Burgon lists three sources of corruption of the text, the heretical first, the present writer will speak more specifically on that aspect a little later.

Handmade copies made of the New Testament were never 100% accurate; minor mistakes were always made in copying. Ninety-five percent of all manuscripts, world-wide, are practically identical (variously called the, "Traditional, Received, Byzantine, or Textus Receptus, "family"), while the rest diverge. These divergent manuscripts, with various similarities in mistakes, have been grouped by scholars into, "families," or (see pages 30, and following) of similar manuscripts, labelled according to the rough geographical region in which each, "family," was found. We will be studying these, "families," in the next couple sections.

A. Causes of Corruption of the New Testament Text

1) ACCIDENTS IN COPYING

Two Systems, and the results:

a) Amateurs and Demand

Metzger Explains:

In the earlier ages of the Church, Biblical manuscripts were produced by individual Christians who wished to provide for themselves or for local congregations copies of one or more books of the New Testament. Because the number of Christians increased rapidly during the first centuries, many additional copies of the Scriptures were sought by new converts and new churches. As a result, speed of production sometimes outran accuracy of execution. Furthermore, in preparing translations or versions for persons who knew no Greek, it occurred more than once (as Augustine complained) that 'anyone who happened to gain possession of a Greek manuscript and who imagined that he had some facility in both Latin and Greek, however slight that might be, dared to make a translation.'³⁴

A translation, indeed, with its inaccuracies if executed by an amateur, but God ensured accuracy in most *copies* of the Greek text. We see by the absolutely overwhelming number of Greek texts that are accurate and practically identical, a full 95% of all manuscripts extant (still in existence), that, despite the supposed amateurs involved, a supernatural work of God preserved pure copies of the Bible from the first. Grossly inaccurate copies like the Codexes Vaticanus and Sinaiticus were so evidently perverse that they were, "shelved," literally, for centuries, and eventually committed to the fireplace.

b) Monasticism

Later, during the Byzantine period, copies of books were produced by monks. In monasteries there was much less pressure than in a commercial scriptorium to produce many copies at one time, and so, instead of writing at the dictation of a lector, individual monks, often working separately in their cells, would prepare copies of the Scriptures or other books either for themselves or for some benefactor to the monastery. Such a method of multiplying copies was not open to the same kinds of errors involved in the dictation method. But another set of circumstances operated to make absolute accuracy difficult to secure. The act of copying entails four fundamental operations: (1) the reading to oneself (in antiquity no doubt reading half-aloud) of a line or a clause of the text to be copied, (2) the retaining of this material in one's memory, (3) the dictating of this material to oneself (either silently or half-aloud), and (4) the movement of the hand in executing the copy. Though several of these steps are executed almost simultaneously, there was enough opportunity for the mind of a weary or half-awake scribe to play tricks that resulted in committing the most atrocious blunders.³⁵

SOME OF THE COMMON MISTAKES:

The Greeks did not leave spaces between each word; rather, the words were printed so that they ran together, a process referred to now as, *scriptio continua*. Because of this, mistakes might have been made during conversion from one such manuscript to a later style, in which the words were separated. Metzger gives the English example: GODISNOWHERE can be seen

as either GOD IS NOWHERE or as GOD IS NOW HERE. “It must not be thought, however, that such ambiguities occur very often in Greek. In that language it is the rule, with very few exceptions, that native Greek words can end only in a vowel (or a diphthong) or in one of three consonants... .”³⁶

Metzger suggests that inattentive scribes in a scriptorium (centre in which one man dictated that being copied to a group of scribes) could easily make a mistake, especially when two words, as in the English, “great,” and, “grate,” were mistaken one for another.³⁷

Faulty eyesight is another possible reason for corruptions. It is understandable that a scribe might have mistaken one letter for another.³⁸

Another cause, and one that seems to have been quite common, is referred to as, *parablepsis*, or, “a looking by the side;” this occurred when a scribe looked away from the exemplar (original) to write, then, when looking back to the exemplar, looked back not to the original location, but to a similar place nearby, one which ended with letters or words similar to that which he had just written - and then continued copying rather from the new location.³⁹ This might have been especially easy were the exemplar written *scriptio continua*. Occasionally the scribe’s eye might return to the correct place in the text, but with his nevertheless writing the same words a second time; this mistake is referred to as, *dittography*.⁴⁰

It was the result of mistakes like these that some manuscripts, **especially the earlier ones**, exclude entire words, and even lines. (Because of truant or added phrases or sentences supposedly edited in this way some scholars have boasted that they have been able to determine the length and number of lines in the exemplar of the manuscript they are studying.

And, despite the fact that these mistakes are more common to earlier manuscripts, it is those earlier manuscripts, in particular, that are idolized by today’s secular textual critics.

Four "Errors of the Mind:"

- i) - *the substitution of synonyms* is not unknown in the manuscripts.
- ii) - “*Variations in the sequence of words* is a common phenomenon... .”
- iii) - *the transposition of letters* within a word occasionally formed another word.
- iv) - “*The assimilation of the wording of one passage to the slightly different wording in a parallel passage, which may have been better known to the scribe*, accounts for many alterations in the Synoptic Gospels.”⁴¹

Metzger (an unbelieving textual critic) suggests that occasionally marginal notes added by commentators were introduced into the text, and that therefore the shorter text in one manuscript must as a general *rule of thumb* be preferred over a longer text in a manuscript to which it is being compared. It is for suggestions like this that he, as his secular colleagues, prefers shorter texts, and therefore often seems to find ways to eliminate passages which he does not like to

believe were in the original. Because of the general feeling among Metzger and his colleagues that 'the shorter the text in the Greek, the more preferred is that text over other, longer ones in other manuscripts,' the suggestion of the assimilation of marginal notes must be seen as not only the cause of such a bias, but also a result of that pre-disposition.

A very controversial matter is the suggestion of *conflation* (meaning, "blown together"). It is suggested by many secular textual critics that when a scribe had before him two manuscripts, each with a different reading, he would combine the two, thus producing a, "*conflated* text."⁴² This too is a reason given for the general preference among secular and secularly-influenced textual critics for their pre-disposition toward the shorter reading.

Harmonization has already been mentioned; J.W. Wenham details the concept.

We can distinguish four types of harmonization in ascending order of deliberateness.

(1) *Unwitting harmonization*. In most cases a copyist simply copied what was in front of him. If, as was frequently the case, the copyist knew the gospels well, he might in passages paralleled in another gospel, either because of inattention or illegibility slip out of the phraseology of one into that of the other...

(2) *Unintelligent Harmonization*. Presumably the commonest reason for copying a MS was that it was beginning to become illegible. It must therefore have been usual for a copyists to procure one or more additional exemplars to help him in his task. Having done so it would only have been commonsense to chop and change from one to another, whichever he found easiest to read. Sometimes he would discover differences between the manuscripts which would force him to make a choice without any consistent principles to guide him. Conscious or unconscious recollection might tip the scales... .

(3) *Deliberate Soft Harmonization*. Less commonly a scholar would adopt the role of editor and deliberately try to determine the best readings in different MSS of a particular text. If there were variants, some of which agreed with another gospel and some which did not, he might well prefer the former. We might call this procedure soft harmonization. Soft harmonization would create no new variants; sometimes it would perpetuate the work of an early harmonizer and sometimes (in cases where corruption had caused the texts of gospels to diverge) it would recover an original reading.

(4) *Deliberate Hard Harmonization*. Less commonly still- ever more rarely as time went on- an editor might dare to insert his own 'improvement' from another gospel or elsewhere.⁴³

2) HERETICAL CORRUPTIONS

a) By the former discussion it is evident that the mere copying of manuscripts offered many opportunities for the text to become corrupted. Transcriptional corruptions, however, were by no means the only way that the text was perverted. Black:

The difference between sacred writings in constant popular and ecclesiastical use, and the work, of a classical author, has never been sufficiently emphasized in the textual criticism of the New Testament. Principles valid for the textual restoration of Plato or Aristotle cannot be applied to sacred texts such as the Gospels or the Pauline Epistles. We cannot assume that it is possible by a sifting of 'scribal errors' to arrive at the prototype or autograph text of the Biblical writer.⁴⁴

Colwell:

The majority of the variant readings in the New Testament were created for theological or dogmatic reasons. Most of the manuals and handbooks now in print (including mine!) will tell you that these variations were the fruit of careless treatment which was possible because the books of the New Testament had not yet attained a strong position as, "Bible." The reverse is the case. It was because they were the religious treasure of the Church that they were changed.⁴⁵

James Jasper Ray quotes:

The worst corruptions to which the New Testament has ever been subjected, originated within a hundred years after it was composed. The African Fathers, and the whole western, with a portion of the Syrian Church, used far inferior manuscripts to those employed by Erasmus, or Stephens thirteen centuries later when molding the *Textus Receptus*.⁴⁶

According to J.W. Wenham, "...secondary texts were early, widespread and tenacious, but highly fluid."⁴⁷ "...During the years immediately following the composition of the several documents that eventually were collected to form the New Testament, hundreds if not thousands of variant readings arose."⁴⁸ "...It is apparent from even a casual examination of a critical apparatus that scribes, offended by real (*sic!* - *God inspired no real spelling mistakes!*) or imagined errors of spelling, grammar, and historical fact, deliberately introduced changes into what they were transcribing."⁴⁹ According to Wilkinson,⁵⁰ Eusebius A.D. (265 - c.341) complains about the corrupt manuscripts, between which there was no hope for agreement, and reports that those who were corrupting them were claiming that they were actually correcting them. Metzger says, "Ironically enough, the earliest efforts to ascertain the original text of the New Testament seem to have been made by those who were excommunicated as heretics by the authoritarian Bishop of Rome, Pope Victor (A.D. 187-98)."⁵¹ Metzger explains, in *Chapters in the History of New Testament Textual Criticism*, that, "...the earliest textual efforts of which we have knowledge were those of Marcion (c.144), Tatian (c.170), and certain Monarchian heretics, the disciples of Theodotus, a leather merchant from Byzantium."⁵² He says, in *The Text of the New Testament*, that, "Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Eusebius, and many other Church Fathers accused the heretics of corrupting the Scriptures in order to claim Scriptural support for their special views. In the mid-second century Marcion expunged his copies of the Gospel according to Luke of all references to the Jewish background of Jesus;"⁵³ Metzger says in another place⁵⁴ that Marcion's alterations were guided by doctrine, rather than by considerations of textual criticism. Ray quotes Irenaeus, "Wherefore also Marcion and his followers have betaken themselves to mutilating the scriptures, not acknowledging some books at all; and curtailng the gospel according to Luke; and the epistles of Paul they assert that these alone are authentic, which they themselves shortened."⁵⁵ Metzger explains that: "Tatian's Harmony of the Gospels contains several textual alterations which lent support to ascetic or encratite (ascetic non-*wine, meat, sex* doctrine) views,"⁵⁶ and explains, in "*Chapters*," that, because of those encratite views, Tatian felt embarrassment, "...regarding certain expressions in the Gospels which refer to the relationship of Joseph to Mary and of both of them to Jesus."⁵⁷ Wilkinson explains that Tatian

was a student of Justin Martyr, who was apparently born in A.D. 100, the year the apostle John is said to have died. He describes Martyr's teachings as being of a heretical nature. Tatian, "one of the more controversial," Church Fathers,⁵⁸ "...embraced the Gnostic heresy." His *Diatessaron* ("Through [The] Four"), a harmony of the Gospels, was so corrupt that eventually a bishop of Syria was forced to rid his churches of two hundred of them, as his people were mistaking it for true Scripture.⁵⁹

Two of the other more prominent early heretics involved in textual criticism were Origen, 184/185 – 253/254, (of whom we shall speak more later) and Clement of Alexandria, A.D. 200:

(Clement) went much further than Tatian in that he founded a school at Alexandria which instituted propaganda along these heretical lines. Clement expressly tells us that he would not hand down Christian teachings, pure and unmixed, but rather clothed with precepts of pagan philosophy. All the writings of the outstanding heretical teachers were possessed by Clement, and he freely quoted from their corrupted manuscripts as if they were the pure words of Scripture. His influence in the depravation of Christianity was tremendous.⁶⁰

Nor were these men an appreciable percentage of all that found a place in the list of heretics common at that time. "Epiphanius, in his polemic treatise the 'Panarion,' describes not less than eighty heretical parties."^{61,62} One region in particular is seen as having been particularly infested with heresy: Egypt, centered in Alexandria. Of persons known to have corrupted the New Testament, Burgon mentions in particular Basilides, Valentinus, and Origen.⁶³ Hills says:

Thus we see that it is unwise in present-day translators to base the texts of their modern versions on recent papyrus discoveries or on *B* and *Aleph*. For all these documents come from Egypt, and Egypt during the early Christian centuries was a land in which heresies were rampant. So much was this so that, as Bauer (1934) and van Unnik (1958) have pointed out, later Egyptian Christians seem to have been ashamed of the heretical past of their country and to have drawn a veil of silence across it. This seems to be why so little is known of the history of early Egyptian Christianity. In view, therefore, of the heretical character of the early Egyptian Church, it is not surprising that the papyri, *B*, *Aleph*, and other manuscripts which hail from Egypt are liberally sprinkled with heretical readings.⁶⁴

b) That author brings to our attention various questionable readings taken from the Egyptian manuscripts:

Traditional: Mk. 1:1 The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Alexandrian Text: *omits* "Son of God."

Traditional: Jn. 3:13 No man hath ascended up to heaven but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man who is in heaven.

Alexandrian: *omits* "who is in heaven."

Traditional: Jn. 9:35 Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

Alexandrian: Dost thou believe on the Son of man?

Traditional: Jn. 9:38-39 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him. And Jesus said...

Alexandrian: *omit these words.*

Traditional: I Tim. 3:16 God was manifest in the flesh.

Alexandrian: "who," *or* "which" was manifest in the flesh.⁶⁵

B. Early History

1) Heresies and Persecutions

As already mentioned, most corruptions occurred almost immediately after the composition of the writings, and became progressively less common.⁶⁶

Heresies thus thrived for the first couple centuries but in the middle of the third until well into the fourth centuries the Church began to suffer great persecutions. During this time, as a part of the attack on the Church, successive Roman emperors, beginning with Nero, and including especially Decius, starting in 250, and Diocletian (245-313), the Bible was ordered destroyed, with the death penalty for anyone not relinquishing copies of the Scriptures in their possession. This changed with the otherwise tragic, “Christianization,” of the Roman Empire under Constantine around 312. Metzger states:

2) Constantine’s Fifty Copies

About A.D. 331, when Constantine wished to secure copies of the Scriptures for the new churches which he proposed to build in Constantinople, he wrote to Eusebius requesting him to arrange without delay for the production of ‘fifty copies of the sacred Scriptures... to be written on fine parchment in a legible manner, and in a convenient portable form, by professional scribes... thoroughly accomplished in their art.’ These orders, Eusebius continues, ‘were followed by the immediate execution of the work itself, which we sent him in magnificent and elaborately bound volumes of threefold and fourfold forms.’⁶⁷

But another author exclaims:

Attentive observers have repeatedly been astonished at the unusual phenomenon exhibited in the meteoric history of the Bible adopted by Constantine. Written in Greek, it was disseminated at a time when Bibles were scarce, owing to the unbridled fury of the pagan emperor, Diocletian. We should naturally think that it would therefore continue long. Such was not the case.

...One would naturally suppose that the Bible which had received the promotion of Constantine, especially when disseminated by that emperor who was the first to show favor to that religion of Jesus, would rapidly have spread everywhere in those days when imperial favor meant everything. The truth is, the opposite was the outcome. It flourished for a short space. The span of one generation sufficed to see it disappear from popular use as if it had been struck by some invisible and withering blast. We turn with amazement to discover the reason for this phenomenon.⁶⁸

The reason for this phenomenon was that the Church rejected it (the Constantinian copies of the Bible). Just as the canon (list of Books in our Bible) was determined not by Church conference, but by the common usage of the Church itself, by the working of the Holy Ghost in ensuring that only, yet every, Book that God inspired was accepted as such, so also, the Holy Spirit guided

the Church to accept only those manuscripts of the Bible which were not corrupted by heresy.⁶⁹

Yet, why in particular were these manuscripts rejected? "Many students, including Tischendorf (*"The man to whom modern textual critics of the New Testament owe most..."*,⁷⁰ *one of the most eminent textual critics of the last century*) and Hort, have thought them (**Ⲭ** and *B*, *the two main representatives of the Alexandrian text*) to be two of the fifty copies which Eusebius had prepared under the order of Constantine...⁷¹ Metzger feels that these two manuscripts are "...doubtless like (though not identical to) those which Constantine ordered."⁷² In other words, the two main remaining representatives of the Alexandrian text, the text that we have seen was the most corrupted in early Christianity, the text in which we ourselves have, on the last couple pages, witnessed only a few examples of the corruptions, is very similar, if not identical to the Bible text rejected by the early Church at the time of Constantine. Is there any longer any doubt as to WHY this text was rejected and fell into oblivion within a generation of having being imposed upon the Church so in need of copies of the Scriptures?

C. The Early Versions

On pages 6 - 7 we catalogued the numerous manuscripts of the Bible, according to their type or language version. We will here examine briefly each of the various language versions and discover which text types they follow.

1) THE LATIN VULGATE VERSION *10,000 copies extant, plus.*

About the end of the generation above, Jerome was asked by the Church to prepare a new Latin revision (of the *Old Latin*) of the Scriptures. *Using old manuscripts of the Traditional ("Textus Receptus," "Received," "Majority," "Byzantine," and other names) text,*⁷³ he was finished by 405.⁷⁴

This Latin Bible, though, was by no means perfect, and as the Scriptures were written in Greek, it fell to the Greek (Eastern) Church to be the keepers of Holy Writ;⁷⁵ the Roman Church had converted totally to the Latin. Nor was that the only receptacle of the true Word. While the Roman Church introduced corrupt readings which followed their doctrines both originally (for Jerome did not stick mechanically to the Traditional text) and through the centuries, through God's providence, many translations of the Word, right from the second century, were made from the Traditional text: it has been shown that even in Egypt, in the *Coptic version*, some scribes accepted many Traditional readings.⁷⁶

This version was the source for the **ANGLO-SAXON** Bible.

2) THE ETHIOPIC VERSION

2000 copies extant, plus.

"... A mixed type of text, *predominantly Byzantine in complexion*, but with occasional agreement with certain..." manuscripts that display an Alexandrian text.⁷⁷ The close proximity of Ethiopia to Egypt, and the traffic which flowed between the two regions, made the influence of Egypt inevitable among individuals who were inclined away from the orthodox.

3) THE SLAVONIC VERSION

4101 copies extant.

Metzger: "*The version belongs basically, as one would expect, to the Byzantine type of text*, but it also contains not a few earlier readings of the Western and Caesarean types."⁷⁸ ("Byzantine" is Metzger's name for the Traditional, Majority, or, Textus Receptus, text.) *The Slavonic Version*:

"...was the Bible in use in the Greek Empire, in the countries of Syrian Christianity, in northern Italy, in southern France, and in the British Isles in the second century. This was a full century and more before the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus (B and \aleph , the main representatives of the Alexandrian Text) saw the light of day. When the apostles of the Roman Catholic Church entered these countries in later centuries they found the people using the (Traditional Text); and it was not without difficulty and a struggle that they were able to displace it with their Latin Vulgate... . The Textus Receptus (Traditional Text) belongs to the type of these early apostolic manuscripts that were brought from Judea."⁷⁹

Metzger concurs, speaking of the wide use given to this version both in history,⁸⁰ and to this day, in the Eastern Orthodox Church.⁸¹

4) THE ARMENIAN VERSION

2587 copies extant.

Considered to be of the Traditional Text type, mixed with many unusual and wild readings.

5) THE SYRIAC PESHITTA VERSION

350 copies extant, plus.

The *Syriac Peshitta Version*, which is the historic Bible of the whole Syrian Church, agrees closely with the Traditional Text, the vast majority of Greek New Testament manuscripts. Until about one hundred years ago it was almost universally believed that the Peshitta originated in the 2nd century and therefore was one of the oldest New Testament versions. Hence because of its agreement with the Traditional Text the Peshitta was regarded as *one of the most important witnesses to the antiquity of the Traditional Text*. In more recent times, however, naturalistic critics have tried to nullify this testimony by denying that it is an ancient version.^{82,83}

It was at Antioch, capital of Syria, that the believers were first called Christians. And as time rolled on, the Syrian-speaking Christians could be numbered by the thousands. It is generally admitted that the Bible was translated from the original languages into Syrian about 150 A.D. This version is known as the Peshitto ("the correct," or, "simple"). This Bible even today generally follows the Received Text.

Another authority tells us: "The Peshitto in our days is found in use amongst the Nestorians, who have always kept it, by the Monophysites on the plains terraces of Lebanon."⁸⁴

6) THE BOHAIRIC VERSION

100 copies extant, plus.

Bohairic was the indigenous language of northern and coastal Egypt in previous centuries A.D. Consequently, it comes of no surprise that Metzger states, "The Greek prototype of the *Bohairic* version appears to be closely related to the Alexandrian text-type."⁸⁵

7) THE ARABIC VERSION

75 copies extant.

"...The study of the Arabic versions is exceedingly complicated, and many problems remain to be solved."⁸⁶

8) THE OLD LATIN VERSION

50 copies extant.

Metzger, an avid opponent of the validity of the Traditional text is obliged to admit its antiquity: "The *Old Latin* must date from the second century A.D. ...!"⁸⁷ As a matter of fact, says another, "The old Latin versions were used longest by the western Christians who would not bow to the authority of Rome- e.g., the Donatists; the Irish in Ireland, Britain, and the Continent; the Albigenses, etc."⁸⁸ This was an old Latin translation preceding the Latin Vulgate of the Roman Catholic Church, and, along with the *Syriac Peshitto* version, *is one of the most convincing proofs of the antiquity of the Traditional Text.*

9) THE GOTHIC VERSION

6 copies extant.

Metzger says, "The first translation of the Bible into a Teutonic language dates from the second half of the fourth century and was made, as is well known, by Ulfilas, the apostle to the Goths."⁸⁹ Metzger and Kauffmann give in this passage testimony to its Traditional text type. Hills quotes Kenyon: "*The type of text represented in it is for the most part that which is found in the majority of Greek manuscripts.*"⁹⁰ Metzger concludes that, "*The Gothic version, therefore, appears to be the oldest extant representative of the Traditional Text.*"⁹¹

Having briefly examined, therefore, each of the ancient versions, or "translations," of the Bible, we see that they all display, as is to be expected, the Traditional Text-type. The exceptions to this rule are those manuscripts that were subjected to the malign Egyptian influences of heresy and slovenly workmanship. The Egyptian manuscripts generally are corrupted and of poor quality. Neighboring regions, originating the Ethiopic and the Armenian versions, while generally following the original (Traditional) text, have occasionally been corrupted to various degrees with the Egyptian (Alexandrian) readings (although Metzger cannot say that the Arabic versions do so). All other early versions of the Bible of course display the true, Traditional, text, and preserve that text down through the centuries, no matter where in the world they are found, whether the versions be the Slavonic (Slavic), the Gothic, the Anglo-Saxon, Various Latin Versions, etc. The Alexandrian Text-type is quite evidently, therefore, merely a REGIONAL aberration. Its likeness is found ONLY in the heresy-infected Egypt of the time.

D. Middle History

1) THE WALDENSIANS

In the mountains of Northern Italy and Southern France a certain group evolved about A.D. 120 (by the calculations of the Reformers, Calvin in particular.) The Waldensians, a people of the mountain valleys, passed down from father to son the teachings of the apostles, the last of whom had died but twenty years before the group's founding. Their *Old Latin*, or *Italic Version* was translated no later than A.D. 157. At the end of the sixteenth century, Beza, from who's editions of the Greek New Testament, of 1588-89, and 1598, the KING JAMES BIBLE was translated,⁹² Cyril Lucar ([1568-1638] "born in the East, early embraced the principles of the Reformation, and for it, was pursued all his life by the Jesuits... When holding an important position in Lithuania, he opposed the union of the Greek Church there and in Poland with Rome... Later he was elected the head of the Greek Catholic Church:" [retainers of the Traditional Text]),⁹³ and Diodati, formed a scholarly trio in Geneva. Beza shocked the world by printing a Greek text dissimilar to the manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate, and Diodati used this to translate into Italian a new text for the Waldensians,⁹⁴ as, because most of their Bibles and records had been destroyed after a Pope's order at the Council of Toulouse in 1229,⁹⁵ for their persecution, and because Latin had ceased to be a spoken language,⁹⁶ an up-to-date translation was needed.

Unquestionably, the leaders of the Reformation- German, French, and English- were convinced that the Received (Traditional) Text was the genuine New Testament, not only by its own irresistible history and internal evidence, but also because it matched with the received Text which in Waldensian form came down from the days of the apostles.

The other three Bibles of Waldensian connection were due to three men who were at Geneva with Calvin, or when he died, with Beza, his successor, namely Olivetan, Leger, and Deodati. How readily the two streams of descent of the Received Text, through the Greek East and the Waldensian West, ran together, is illustrated by the meeting of the Olivetan Bible and the Received Text. Olivetan, one of the most illustrious pastors of the Waldensian Valleys, a relative of Calvin, according to Leger, (who wrote a history of the Vaudois, or valley people [the Waldensians]) and a splendid student, translated the New Testament into French. Leger bore testimony that the Olivetan Bible, which accorded with the Textus Receptus ("Beza's" Greek text), was unlike the old manuscripts of the Papists, because they were full of falsification. Later, Calvin edited a second edition of the Olivetan Bible. The Olivetan in turn became the basis of the Geneva Bible in English which was the leading version in England in 1611 when the King James appeared.⁹⁷

When Luther made his Reformation New Testament translation he compared it with and used the Tepl Bible, a pre-reformation translation from the Waldensian Bible into German.⁹⁸

It is therefore evident that the translators of 1611 (the King James Version) had before them four Bibles which had come under Waldensian influences: the Diodati in Italian, the Olivetan in French, the Lutheran in German, and the Genevan in English. We have every reason to believe that they had access to at least six Waldensian Bibles written in the old Waldensian vernacular.⁹⁹

2) THE HISTORY OF THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS

...Is the name given to the Traditional Text in its printed form, as edited by Erasmus and his successors.

a) From the preface of the New Testament translated *by the Jesuits* (and therefore tainted *against Erasmus!*) from the Vulgate into English, 1582 A.D.:

“It is almost three hundred years since James, Archbishop of Genoa, is said to have translated the Bible into Italian. More than two hundred years ago, in the days of Charles V the French king, was it put forth faithfully in French, the sooner to shake out of the deceived people’s hands, the false heretical translations of a sect called Waldenses.”

Such was the darkness and so many were the errors which the Reformers had to encounter as they started on their way. They welcomed the rising spirit of intelligence which shone forth in the new learning (the Renaissance), but the priests loudly denounced it. They declared that the study of Greek was of the devil and prepared to destroy all who promoted it. How entrenched was the situation may be seen in the following quotation of a letter written by Erasmus:

“Obedience (writes Erasmus) is so taught as to hide that there is any obedience due to God. Kings are to obey the Pope. Priests are to obey their bishops. Monks are to obey their abbots. Oaths are exacted, that want of submission may be punished as perjury. It may happen, it often does happen, that an abbot is a fool or a drunkard. He issues an order to the brotherhood in the name of holy obedience. And what will such order be? An order to observe chastity? An order to be sober? An order to tell no lies? Not one of these things. It will be that a brother is not to learn Greek; he is not to seek to instruct himself.”¹⁰⁰

Such was the darkness over Europe at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Europe was kept in secrecy, in ignorance, and under the domination of the Roman Church. Within a short span of time, a few things would happen that would cause Europe to explode: on October 31, 1517¹⁰¹ Martin Luther, after studying the scriptures on his own, posted his ninety-five theses: the Reformation had begun. Preceding him by just a couple years was a scholar of Greek who edited the first published printed Greek New Testament: Desiderius Erasmus. It is a common proverb that “Erasmus laid the egg and Luther hatched it.”¹⁰²

b) *Desiderius Erasmus* (1466-1536) traveled in Holland, France, England, and Italy. He taught at Cambridge University, and at the University of Louvain.

In 1608 Bonaventure Elzevir (Bonaventura Elzevier¹⁰³) founded a printing establishment at Leiden, with his brother Matthew, later with also his nephew Abraham,¹⁰⁴ and published editions of Beza’s 1565 edition in 1624, 1633, and 1641,¹⁰⁵ following also, Erasmus, the Complutensian, and the Latin Vulgate.

One might think that all this moving around would have interfered with Erasmus’ activity as a scholar and writer but quite the reverse is true. By his travels he was brought into contact with all the intellectual currents of his time and stimulated to almost superhuman efforts. He became one of the most prolific writers of all time, his collected works filling ten large volumes in the Leclerc edition of 1705 (phototyped by Olms in 1962). As an editor also his productivity was tremendous. Ten columns of the catalogue of the library in the British Museum are taken up with the bare enumeration of the works translated, edited, or annotated by Erasmus and their subsequent reprints. Included are the greatest names of the classical and patristic world, such as Ambrose, Aristotle, Augustine, Basil, Chrysotom,

Cicero, and Jerome. An almost unbelievable showing.

To conclude, there was no man in all Europe better prepared than Erasmus for the work of editing the first printed Greek New Testament text, and this is why we may well believe God chose him and directed him providentially in the accomplishment of this task.¹⁰⁶

When Erasmus began work in Basle in 1515, five manuscripts, especially, were available to him (listed with their present identifying numbers): “*1* (an 11th-century manuscript of the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles), *2* (a 15th-century manuscript of the Gospels), *2ap* (a 12th-14th century manuscript of Acts and the Epistles), *4ap* (a 15th century manuscript of Acts and the Epistles), and *1r* (a 12th-century manuscript of Revelation).” Erasmus apparently used *1* and *4ap* only occasionally, and, for the Gospels, Acts and Epistles, he used primarily *2* and *2ap*.¹⁰⁷

It is also apparent that Erasmus used other manuscripts and sources. His friend John Colet, lent him two manuscripts, although it is not sure exactly which ones. Hills points out also that it is well-known that Erasmus widely searched out manuscripts during his extensive travels, and borrowed them when he could.¹⁰⁸ Metzger attacks:

Going to Basle again in July of 1515, Erasmus hoped to find Greek manuscripts sufficiently good to be sent to the printer as copy to be set up in type along with his own Latin translation, on which he had been working intermittently for several years. To his vexation the only manuscripts available on the spur of the moment required a certain amount of correcting before they could be used as printer's copy. ...the... edition...which, as Erasmus himself declared later, was ‘precipitated rather than edited’. Since Erasmus could not find a manuscript which contained the entire Greek Testament (no manuscript contains it), he utilized several for various parts of the New Testament. For most of the text he relied on two rather inferior manuscripts from a monastic library at Basle, one of the Gospels ... and one of the Acts and Epistles, both dating from about the twelfth century. Erasmus compared them with two or three others of the same books and entered occasional corrections for the printer in the margins or between the lines of the Greek scripts. For the Book of Revelation he had but one manuscript, dating from the twelfth century, which he had borrowed from his friend Reuchlin. Unfortunately, this manuscript lacked the final leaf which had contained the last six verses of the book. For these verses, as well as a few other passages throughout the book where the Greek text of the Apocalypse and the adjoining Greek commentary with which the manuscript was supplied are so mixed up as to be almost indistinguishable, Erasmus depended upon the Latin Vulgate, translating this into Greek... .

Thus the text of Erasmus' Greek New Testament rests upon a half-dozen miniscule manuscripts. The oldest and best of these manuscripts (codex 1, a miniscule of the tenth century, which agrees often with the earlier uncial text) he used least, because he was afraid of its supposedly erratic text!¹⁰⁹

Thus has the text of Erasmus often been attacked since man has begun, in the last hundred and fifty years or so, to question the preservation of the scriptures. But just how inferior were the manuscripts used by Erasmus? Wilkinson reminds us that Erasmus examined hundreds of manuscripts, but used only a few. He needed no more, as the bulk of manuscript evidence says the same thing.

The manuscripts which Erasmus used, differ, for the most part, only in small and insignificant details from the bulk of the cursive manuscripts- that is to say, the manuscripts which are written in running hand and not in capital or... uncial letters. The general character of their text is the same. By this observation the pedigree of the Received Text is carried up beyond the individual manuscripts used by

Erasmus to a great body of manuscripts of which the earliest (of the cursives) are assigned to the ninth century. That pedigree stretches back to a remote antiquity. The first ancestor of the Received Text was, as Dr. Hort is careful to remind us, at least contemporary with the oldest of our extant manuscripts, if not older than any one of them.”¹¹⁰

Wilkinson cites, elsewhere, also, “Dr. F.C. Cook, editor of the *Speaker’s Commentary*, chaplain to the Queen of England, who was invited to sit on the Revision Committee (of the *Revised Version*), but refused:” “That Textus Receptus was taken in the first instance from late cursive manuscripts; but its readings are maintained only so far as they agree with the best ancient version, with the earliest and best Greek and Latin Fathers, and with the vast majority of uncial and cursive manuscripts.”¹¹¹ Burgon, also, reiterates the idea that the manuscripts followed were used only because they aligned with the great majority of witnesses.¹¹²

Erasmus printed five editions, correcting in each one, mistakes in the copy that he had subsequently discovered.^{113, 114}

Erasmus’ text became the standard for all subsequent printed editions of the New Testament, for, although it was the second printed Greek New Testament, (after the Complutensian Polyglot) the Polyglot was not actually put into circulation until six years after Erasmus’ text.¹¹⁵ It has been suggested in numerous places by Metzger, that this and its lower price were the main reasons for its popularity. If this were the case, we would suggest that those very factors were ordained and initiated by God’s providence, as this printed Greek text was both spawned by the most popularly-used Greek manuscript system, the vast majority of the manuscripts in existence, and it was this printed text that was to be the most popularly-used printed Greek text in Europe.¹¹⁶

It was in the preface to the edition of 1633, that the following was printed: *Textum ergo habes, nunc ab omnibus receptum: in quo nihil immutatum aut corruptum damus*, or, “(The reader has) therefore the text which is now received by all, in which we give nothing changed or corrupted.”

“Thus,” says Metzger, “from what was a more or less casual phrase advertising the edition (what modern publishers might call a ‘blurb’), there arose the designation, ‘*Textus Receptus*,’ or commonly received, standard text,”¹¹⁷ and, in another volume, “In one sense this proud claim of the Elzevirs on behalf of their edition seemed to be justified, for their edition was, in most respects, not different from the approximately 160 other editions of the printed Greek Testament that had been issued since Erasmus’s first published edition of 1516.” And again, “...except for three or four editors who timidly corrected some of the more blatant errors of the Textus Receptus, this debased form of the New Testament text was reprinted in edition after edition.” (So even the secular, those refusing to believe in Divine Preservation, are forced to recognize the universal acceptance of this text by those who do believe, both past and present.) Hills aptly points out that, “this statement has often been assailed as a mere printer’s boast or ‘blurb,’ and no doubt it was partly that. But in the providence of God it was also a true statement.”¹¹⁸

According to the Preface to the *Trinitarian Bible Society New Testament* the Textus Receptus has been also the base for “the Dutch *Statenvertaling* (*State Translation*, or “Authorized Version”) of 1637, and all of the Protestant versions of the period of the Reformation... ” It is the version that was also used for every major Protestant Bible in the various countries of Europe.

Although the term was first used in 1633, it has come to be associated mainly with the Stephens text of 1550.¹¹⁹ Since 1633 the Textus Receptus has remained unchanged.¹²⁰

c) In 1543 *Simon Colinaeus*, a Parisian Printer, published a version of the Greek New Testaments based upon the Erasmian and Complutensian editions, but this edition was never reprinted as it was superseded by the editions of his stepson¹²¹ Robert Estienne, Latinized as “Stephanus” (1503-59), who published three editions at Paris (1546, 49, 50), and one at Geneva (1551), as a Protestant.¹²² His 1550 version, the *Editio Regia*, or, “Royal Edition,” saw the introduction of the present verse divisions.¹²³

d) *Jean Crispin* (or *Crespin*) reprinted the Royal Edition in 1553, adding a few alterations. It was either this, or one of the editions of Stephanus, that “...William Whittingham and his fellow Protestant refugees from England utilized when they prepared their English translation of the New Testament (Geneva, 1557).”¹²⁴

e) *Theodore Beza* (1519-1605), “Calvin’s disciple and successor at Geneva, was renowned for his ten editions of the Greek New Testament, nine published during his lifetime and one after his death.” Also, his Latin translation was reprinted over 100 times.¹²⁵ He corrected the Greek Text, taking into account manuscripts in his possession or available to him, but despite all his comparisons of manuscripts, he ultimately corrected Stephanus’ last text in a mere 38 places.^{126,127} The editions of 1588-89, and 1598,¹²⁸ and the last editions of Stephanus’ text were the main texts used in the King James Version of 1611.¹²⁹

3) THE KING JAMES VERSION

Little more remains to be said of the AUTHORIZED VERSION of the Bible, translated under Royal Commission in 1611, except the following. Of its translators:

Few indeed are the living names worthy to be enrolled with those mighty men. It would be impossible to convene out of any one denomination, or out of all, a body of translators on whom the whole Christ-community would bestow such confidence as is reposed upon that illustrious company or who would prove themselves as deserving of such confidence....

The translators of the King James, moreover, had something beyond great scholarship and usual skill. They had gone through a period of great suffering. They had offered their lives that the truths which they loved might live.¹³⁰

Through the Reformation the Received Text was again given to the Church. In the ages of twilight and gloom the corrupt church did not think enough of the corrupt Bible to give it circulation. Since the Reformation the Received Text, both in Hebrew and in Greek, has spread abroad throughout the world. Wherever it is accurately translated, regardless of whatever the language may be, it is truly the Word of God as our own Authorized Bible. Nevertheless, in a remarkable way, God has honored the King James Version. It is the Bible of the 160,000,000 English-speaking people, whose tongue is spoken by more (sic) of the human race than any other. German and Russian are each the language of 100,000,000; while French is spoken by 70,000,000. The King James Version has been translated into many other languages. One writer claims 886. It is the book of the human race. It is the author of vastly more missionary enterprises than any other version. It is God’s missionary Book.¹³¹

And the KING JAMES VERSION is translated from the same text of the Greek New Testament which has held sway over almost all of the non-Roman Catholic world since year one, that Greek Text which we now call the, “Textus Receptus.”

E. The Development of Liberalistic Thought Concerning the Bible

1) Richard Simon

a) *His Own Philosophy*

Richard Simon (1638-1712) has been called, “the founder of New Testament introduction.”

However, it must not be overlooked that many of the motives of Simon’s critical work were quite other than historical. To be sure, Simon expressly declared that he wished only to serve the truth, but he also carried on his work in order that it might prove useful to the Catholic Church; and he believed that he would be able to achieve that goal by demonstrating that in opposition to the Protestant doctrine of the Bible as the only source of revelations this Bible was so unreliably transmitted and so incapable of being clearly understood by itself alone that the tradition of the Catholic Church was needed if the Bible were to yield reliable teaching for faith: “...I avow that in composing this work I had no other intention than to be useful to the (*Roman Catholic*) Church by establishing what it holds most sacred and most divine.”¹³²

b) *His Jesuitical Argument*

Wilkinson also describes the work of the Jesuits in the Counter-Reformation. The Bible, or, “‘the paper pope of the Protestants,’ as they contemptuously called it...,” was kept from the laity and the Jesuits did not even “refrain from criticizing its genuineness and historical value.”¹³³ He quotes William Palmer:¹³⁴

For it must be said that the Roman Catholic or the Jesuitical system of argument - the work of the Jesuits from the sixteenth-century to the present day - evinces an amount of learning and dexterity, a subtilty of reasoning, a sophistry, a plausibility combined, of which ordinary Christians have but little idea.

Palmer then explains the falseness of Jesuitical argument. Wilkinson continues:

There is something startlingly in common to be found in the modernist who denies the element of the miraculous in the Scriptures, and the Catholic Church which invests tradition with an inspiration equal to the Bible. As a result, it seems a desperately hard task to get justice done to the Reformers or their product.

A ... result of this tide of revision is that when our time-honored Bibles are revised, the changes are generally in favor of Rome. We are told that Bible revision is a step forward; that new manuscripts have been made available and advance has been made in archaeology, philology, geography, and the apparatus of criticism. How does it come then that we have been revised back into the arms of Rome?

If my conclusion is true, this so-called Bible revision has become one of the deadliest of weapons in the hands of those who glorify the Dark ages and who seek to bring Western nations back to the theological thinking which prevailed before the Reformation.¹³⁵

2) Johann Jakob Wettstein

It was Johann Jakob Wettstein (1693- 1754), whose presuppositions in theology and textual criticism were similar in lack of a bias toward the orthodox, so that, “a move in the direction of a fundamentally historical examination of the New Testament began to manifest itself.”

Nevertheless all these impulses toward a comprehensive historical consideration of the New Testament could only come into effective play when men had learned to look at the New Testament entirely free of all dogmatic bias and, in consequence, as a witness out of the past to the process of historical development. This attitude emerged for the first time during the course of the critical study of religion by English Deism. As a result of the confluence of humanistic thoughts and of the English Latitudinarians, together with the latitudinarian debate against the orthodoxy of the English state church, a theological school of thought came into being. It was fostered by the English theology, by the English Revolution of 1688, and by the Toleration Act of 1689, which tried to unify the various theological and ecclesiastical schools by a return to “natural religion” and which declared war on all supernaturalism, even that involved in a consideration of the New Testament.¹³⁶

3 Johann Salomo Semler; Johann Jakob Griesbach

Johann Salomo Semler (1725-1791), “... often regarded as the father of German rationalism, made noteworthy contributions to the science of textual criticism.” He did not publish an edition of the Greek New Testament, but edited and added to the commentary on the Greek text written by Wettstein.¹³⁷ Thus, “the father of German rationalism,” or belief dependent on empiricistic, or displayable proof alone, “... made noteworthy additions to the study of the Book of Faith;” i.e., ‘we owe much, for our possession of the Word of God, to a pagan philosopher.’ Johann Jakob Griesbach (1745-1812), a *student of Semler’s*, “... laid foundations for all subsequent work on the Greek text of the New Testament.”¹³⁸

4 Christian Friedrich Matthaei

Metzger lists as being important the textual commentary of Christian Friedrich Matthaei (1744-1811), a man of whom he writes, “While in Russia Matthaei managed to steal a good many manuscripts of both the classics and the Fathers. Some of these he kept in his own library, while others he sold or gave to various libraries and friends in Germany and Holland. For an account of his life with incriminating evidence of his brazen thievery, see”¹³⁹

5) Karl Lachmann

Karl Lachmann (1793-1851) is the man recognized to have been the first to break totally with the Textus Receptus. His Greek text was composed solely by means of textually critical methods, and it was thus his goal to, “restore,” the text current in the fourth century.¹⁴⁰ Lachmann’s bias was generated by the current German liberalism;¹⁴¹ he had a, “prejudicial dislike,” for the Textus Receptus and, “... set to work to form a text independent of that, right or wrong.” For this reason, he preferred only the oldest manuscripts.¹⁴² Bishop Ellicott, Hort¹⁴³ and Metzger condemn him for the paucity of evidences upon which he based his Greek Text.

6) Westcott and Hort and the Revised Version

In 1871 it was decided that a revision was needed of the AUTHORIZED VERSION; this work was to be merely a revision, an update of language, etc.: “A Revision of the Authorized Versions,” with a view to, “... the removal of plain and clear errors, ...” and that the first rule was, “... to introduce as few alterations as possible into the text of the Authorized.”¹⁴⁴ “Such were in fact the limits formally imposed by convocation during 10th Feb. and 3rd, 5th, May, 1870, on the work of Revision.”¹⁴⁵ The workings of the Revision committee were kept completely secret for the ten years until 1881, during which the committee worked! (The work on the AUTHORIZED VERSION of 1611 had been kept completely open to allow constant input from any and all, learned and interested enough to have anything to contribute.)

a) It is tragic, however, that at this time, Brooke Foss Westcott (1825 - 1901) “Canon of Peterborough and Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge (he was consecrated Bishop of Durham in 1890), and Fenton John Anthony Hort (1828 - 1892), Hulsean Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, ...” were appointed to the Revision committee. These men had been working already, “... about twenty-eight years ... ,” on their own version of the Greek text¹⁴⁶ (which, 'coincidentally,' was published within five days of the new REVISED VERSION which they now undertook editing.)

There is no intention in this work to disparage the intellect or the scholarship of Westcott and Hort. Their names are well known to all students of the Greek New Testament not only for their textual studies, but also for their exegetical work. No attempt will be made to list or discuss their voluminous writings, since there is no necessity of establishing this fact. Both men served for many years as professors at the University of Cambridge.¹⁴⁷

Someone else has also said that they were, “... without question two of the most brilliant and erudite scholars of their day.”¹⁴⁸

Unfortunately, however, intellect must be matched with piety in a manner unfamiliar to Westcott and Hort: among other things, these men did not believe the Bible to be *verbally inspired* (inspired in actual wording, not just in doctrine). Hort writes:

But the book which has most engaged me is Darwin. Whatever may be thought of it, it is a book that one is proud to be contemporary; with ... My feeling is strong that theory is unanswerable. If so, it opens up a new period.¹⁴⁹

Further I agree with them (authors of Essays and Reviews) in condemning many leading doctrines of the popular theology ... Evangelicals seem to me perverted rather than untrue. There are, I fear, still more serious differences between us on the subject of authority, and especially the authority of the Bible.¹⁵⁰

The matter in question in, "Essays and Reviews," of course, was, "... an attempt to acclimatize in the Church of England the critical and historical study of the Bible, which had been actively engaging the minds of German thinkers for fifty years and more."¹⁵¹ "... Scarcely veiled atheism, open skepticism, laxity, and daring flippancy were charges that he (Samuel Wilberforce) brought against some of the essayists."¹⁵² "Disraeli remarked that it was convulsing Christendom and seemed 'to have shaken down the towers of Chichester Cathedral.'"¹⁵³

To continue, we read the writings of Westcott:

"I wish I could see to what forgotten truth Mariolatry bears witness."¹⁵⁴

This morning I went to hear the Hulsean Lecturer. He preached on the Atonement ... All he said was very good, but then he did not enter into the great difficulties of the notion of sacrifice and vicarious punishment. To me it is always most satisfactory to regard the Christian as in Christ - absolutely one with Him, and he does what Christ has done: Christ's actions become his, and Christ's life and death in some sense his life and death."¹⁵⁵

Westcott has been described as, "... free from all verbal or mechanical idea of inspiration."¹⁵⁶ Hort, to his wife:

I entirely agree correcting one word - with what you say on the Atonement, having for many years believed that 'the absolute union of the Christian (or rather, of man) with Christ Himself' is the spiritual truth of which the popular doctrine of substitution is an immoral and material counterfeit ... Certainly nothing could be more unscriptural than the modern limiting of Christ's bearing our sins and sufferings to his death; but indeed that is only one aspect of an almost universal heresy."¹⁵⁷

Wilkinson explains of Westcott and Hort:

Both rejected the atonement of the substitution of Christ for the sinner, or vicarious atonement; both denied that the death of Christ counted for anything as an atoning factor. They emphasized atonement through the incarnation. This is the Catholic doctrine. It helps the mass.¹⁵⁸

Hort writes further:

I believe Coleridge was quite right in saying that Christianity without a substantial church is vanity and disillusion; and I remember shocking you and Lightfoot not so long ago by expressing a belief that 'Protestantism' is only parenthetical temporary." "Perfect Catholicity has been nowhere since the Reformation."

and,

I am inclined to think that no such state as 'Eden' (I mean the popular notion) ever existed, and that Adam's fall in no degree differed from, the fall of each of his descendants, as Coleridge justly argues.¹⁵⁹

Coleridge, for his part, has been described as pantheistic, Unitarian, metaphysical, one who, "... identifies reason with the divine Logos, (a Gnostic concept) ...," and one who holds views of inspiration as low as the rationalists.¹⁶⁰

When Dr. G. Vance Smith's ouster from the Revision committee before work began was under serious debate because he, "... received the sacrament without joining in the Creed ...," because, "... of his principles as a Unitarian,"¹⁶¹ Westcott confided to Hort, "If the Company accept the dictation of Convocation ("that no person who denies the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ ought to be invited to join either company to which is committed the revision of the Authorized Version of Holy Scripture ... and that any such person now on either company should cease to act therewith"¹⁶²) my work must end."¹⁶³

b) i) Probably little more remains to be said therefore of the Spiritual conditions of Westcott and Hort. Let's examine their methods:

Hort to Williams:

The errors and prejudices, which we agree in wishing to remove, can surely be more wholesomely and also more effectually reached by combined open assault. At present very many orthodox but rational men are being unawares acted on by influences which will assuredly bear good fruit in due time, if the process is allowed to go quietly; and I cannot help fearing that a premature crisis would frighten back many into the merest traditionalism.¹⁶⁴

As a matter of fact, the Greek Text which they had been working on since 1853 was distributed among the Revision Committee members under a pledge of secrecy!

Some of our readers will perhaps be asking how it was possible that the learned men who composed the Revision Committee could have allowed the great mass of testimony which sustains the authenticity of the Received Text to be set aside upon the sole authority of two Codices so dubious as the two we have been discussing. The explanation is that the Revisionists did not consider these matters at all. They were not supposed to undertake the refashioning of the Greek Text - for that lay entirely outside their instructions - and they had therefore no occasion to go into the many intricate matters involved in the weighing of the evidence for and against the Received Text.¹⁶⁵

Westcott and Hort had laid the foundations for their, "sting," through subtlety and secrecy; all that lay ahead of them was the Revision process itself. Says Dr. Hemphill, "it can hardly be doubted that Hort's was the strongest will of the whole Company, and his adroitness in debate was only equaled by his pertinacity."¹⁶⁶ Dr. Salmon:

That which gained Hort so many adherents had some adverse influence with myself - I mean his extreme cleverness as an advocate; for I have felt as if there were no reading so improbable that he could not give good reasons for thinking it to be the only genuine.¹⁶⁷

Thus, it was only after the work had been done, and the principles behind it examined: “Only after it was too late were the facts realized, even by the Revisers themselves.”¹⁶⁸ The REVISED VERSION has been called “The most astonishing, as well as the most calamitous, literary blunder of the age,”¹⁶⁹ and: Hort’s work was a, “failure, though a glorious one.”¹⁷⁰ Metzger says of Westcott and Hort:

Though the discovery of additional manuscripts has required the realignment of certain groups of witnesses, the general validity of their critical principles and procedures is widely acknowledged by textual scholars today.¹⁷¹

Parvis suggests that Hort’s text of the Greek New Testament has become a new *Textus Receptus*.¹⁷² It is accepted as, “the true text,”¹⁷³ and, “most work in textual criticism today has at least a Hortian foundation.”¹⁷⁴

Westcott and Hort’s view that the Syrian (Traditional) text of the New Testament is worthless for the recovery of the original text has left its mark, not only on their own edition, but on much subsequent textual analysis.¹⁷⁵

Hoskier points out that now, “... works on higher criticism, and other, have been grounded on this text.”¹⁷⁶ (*Higher Criticism* is the secular study of the origin of Scripture, often with the goal of establishing a merely human origin, rather than Divine Inspiration. *Lower*, or *Textual Criticism* - the subject of this present book, -

“... is more of a verbal and historical nature, and is confined to the words, or the collocation of the words, as they stand in the manuscript or printed texts, the ancient versions, and other legitimate sources of appeal.”

“(Higher criticism) “consists in the exercise of the judgment in reference to the texts on grounds taken from the nature, form, method, subject, or arguments of the different books; the nature and connection of the context; the relation of passages to each other; the known circumstances of the writers, and those of the persons for whose immediate use they wrote.”

and:

The questions of the higher criticism are questions of integrity, authenticity, credibility and literary forms of the various writings that make up the Bible (usually completely negative).¹⁷⁷

Higher criticism occupies itself with ruminations over the content of the text of the Bible. It seeks to determine whether what the Bible claims concerning its authorship, originality, its very identification as Holy Scripture is in fact valid. In other words, Higher Criticism is in no way

Christian. It questions from the start the very virtue of the Scriptures that it is examining. It places that Scripture under the negatively critical eyes and opinions of its examiners and demands from them, usually negatively, an opinion and judgement. The Holy Scriptures become therefore answerable to mere mortal man, and man who is unregenerate, at that! (Higher Criticism is in no way beneficial to the Scriptures - the Word of God must be accepted non-critically and without judgement - without the harsh attempts of the nonChristian Higher Critic to prove it false.)

The unbelieving and harsh criticism of the Scriptures by Westcott and Hort, in their system of Lower Criticism, was therefore ripe to be plucked and utilized by the Higher Critics. Hoskier:

Finally observe that up to the time of Westcott and Hort the 'lower criticism' had kept itself quite apart from the so-called 'higher criticism.' Since the publication of Hort's text, however, and that of the Revisers, much of the heresy of our time has fallen back upon the supposed results acquired by the 'lower criticism' to bolster up their views.¹⁷⁸

III

TEXTUAL CRITICISM: ITS CHARACTERISTICS, GOOD AND EVIL

A. Families

1) THE HISTORICAL DIVISIONS

ACCORDING TO modern textual critics, the 5,366 Greek manuscripts, the 2,209 lectionaries, and the versions can be divided or subdivided into groups of similar manuscripts.

Semler was the first to do this, dividing all manuscripts into Alexandrian, Eastern, and Western groups.¹⁷⁹ He attributed an *Eastern Text* to a *recension* (text put together as a combination of the best readings of many Greek manuscripts) by Lucian of Antioch.¹⁸⁰ Griesbach was next to develop the idea of recensions and families, attributing the *Alexandrian Text* to Origen.¹⁸¹

The entire argument of most textual critics relies on the assumption of recensions. According to the theory, the one stream of copies of the original Scriptures relatively early became at least three streams, thought to have happened at approximately the same time. If the times were staggered (it is rarely and hesitatingly admitted) perhaps the Traditional text was the earlier one, but few have dared to examine this threat to the theories of status quo. These three or four recensions were quite quickly spread over a relatively wide area, but generally remained in the areas in which they were created. According to the historically more popular (perhaps because of the writings of Westcott and Hort) belief, the Traditional Text evolved as Church scholars tried to eradicate mistakes made by the Apostles: either factual or grammatical (the refusal to recognize God's hand in the Work is obvious), and to correct copying mistakes, so it developed over the centuries. The Caesarean text was merely a "mixed" text. This theory does not see the possibility (fact) that any of these texts is the original scriptures handed down without recension.¹⁸²

It is also held that within families, sub-groups exist, indicating regional variations. 'One may often identify from which area a text type came by identifying exactly which Church Father(s) used it in his quotations, and then identifying where that Father lived.'

a) The Traditional Text

Approximately ninety-five percent¹⁸³ of all manuscripts of the New Testament correspond to the main family of manuscripts. Metzger, himself, lists the following manuscripts (the following letters and letter combinations are each a name of a different manuscript) as belonging to this group, or, "family":¹⁸⁴

- " *Gospels*: A, E, F, G, H, K, P, S, V, among others, in the Uncials (the oldest manuscripts). And most miniscules (manuscripts after 9th century).
- " *Acts*: Ha, Lap, Pa, 049 and most miniscules.
- " *Epistles*: Lap, 049 and most miniscules.
- " *Revelation*: 046, 051, 052 and many miniscules.

This family was named the "Syrian" by Westcott and Hort,¹⁸⁵ John Burgon gave it the name "Traditional,"¹⁸⁶ in the days of Jerome it was referred to as the "Greek Vulgate:" ("Vulgate" means "commonly used," or "current."¹⁸⁷) Griesbach called it "Constantinopolitan,"¹⁸⁸ as that was the capital of the empire in which the text has been most common. Von Soden, who made one of the most extensive studies of the text, gave it the name "Kappa," or "Common."¹⁸⁹ ("Koine" can be used in place of "Kappa."¹⁹⁰) Kirsopp Lake gave it the name "Ecclesiastical,"¹⁹¹ and Ropes' term for it was "Antiochian."¹⁹² Burnett Streeter called it "Byzantine."¹⁹³

Westcott and Hort felt that the Traditional Text was produced by an editor (Metzger feels that this was Lucian of Antioch, or some of his associates¹⁹⁴) or editors in the fourth century, wanting to produce a smooth-flowing text with no contradictions. They claimed that it was a combination of a few manuscripts taken to Constantinople, and thence throughout the Byzantine Empire, modern-day Turkey, Greece, Albania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria.¹⁹⁵

Westcott and Hort held that sometime between:

"...A.D. 250 and A.D. 350, (1) "The growing diversity and confusion of Greek Texts led to an authoritative Revision at Antioch, which (2) was then taken as a standard for a similar authoritative Revision of the Syriac Texts and (3) was itself at a later time subjected to a second authoritative Revision," the final revision being "apparently completed by (A.D.) 350 or thereabouts."¹⁹⁶

The source of the division of text-types in general, and the Traditional text in particular, arises mainly, it seems, from the statement of Jerome, in *Lives of Illustrious Men*, about A.D. 392:

Alexandria and Egypt in their copies of the Septuagint praise Hesychius as author; Constantinople to Antioch approves the copies (containing the text) of Lucian the martyr; the middle provinces between these read the Palestinian codices edited by Origen, which Eusebius and Pamphilus published."¹⁹⁷

The reason, however, that Metzger is one of a relatively low number, indeed, of scholars in love with the Lucian idea, is for the idea in the admission of Metzger himself, "There has been a curious reluctance among many scholars to admit that Jerome here refers to any more than the Lucianic text of the Old Testament."¹⁹⁸

Having, however, in this way, (1) assumed a "Syrian Recension," (2) invented the cause of it, and (3) dreamed the process by which it was carried into execution, the Critic (Hort) hastens, *more suo* to characterize the historical result...¹⁹⁹

Hort's description:

The qualities which the authors of the Syrian text seem to have most desired to impress on it are lucidity and completeness. They were evidently anxious to remove all stumbling-blocks out of the way of the ordinary reader so far as this could be done without recourse to violent measures. They were apparently equally desirous that he should have the benefit of instructive matter contained in all the existing texts, provided it did not confuse the context or introduce seeming contradictions. New omissions accordingly are rarer and where they occur are usually found to contribute to apparent simplicity. New interpolations on the other hand are abundant, most of them being due to harmonistic or other assimilation, fortunately capricious and incomplete. Both in matter and in diction the Syrian text is conspicuously a full text. It delights in pronouns, conjunctions, and expletives and supplied links of all kinds, as well as in more considerable additions. As distinguished from the bold vigour of the 'Western' scribes, and the refined scholarship of the Alexandrians, the spirit of its own corrections is at once sensible and feeble. Entirely blameless on either literary or religious grounds as regards vulgarised or unworthy diction, yet shewing no marks of either critical or spiritual insight, it presents the New Testament in a form smooth and attractive, but appreciably impoverished in sense and force, more fitted for cursory perusal or recitation than for repeated and diligent study.²⁰⁰

Surely, this could not be the pure Word of God! It is obviously grossly perverted by human editing: it is "blameless," "sensible," "attractive." Were this the original Word of God, Himself, it would surely have been condemnable, nonsensical, and, certainly, anything but attractive! (But, we forget, belief in the inspiration of Scripture is not exactly a belief one commonly finds in that secular group who call themselves, "Textual Critics.")

Because of the suggestion of the unbelieving textual critics of his day, ("The 'Syrian Text' must in fact be the result of a 'Recension,' performed deliberately by editors, and not merely by scribes," copying the original. - *Hort*²⁰¹) John Burgon, a believing Bible scholar, in examining the Westcott-Hort theory, visualized for the sake of argument, the suggestion of a recension to create the Traditional text:

Behold then from every principal diocese of ancient Christendom, and in the church's palmiest days, the most famous of the ante-Nicene Fathers repair to Antioch. They go up by authority, and are attended by skilled ecclesiastics of the highest theological attainment. Bearers are they perforce of a vast number of copies of the Scriptures, and (by the hypothesis) the latest possible dates of any of these copies must range between A.D. 250 and 350.

But the delegates of so many ancient sees will have been supremely careful, before starting on so important and solemn an errand, to make diligent search for the oldest copies anywhere discoverable. And when they reach the scene of their deliberations, we may be certain that they are able to appeal to not a few codices written within a hundred years of the date of the inspired autographs themselves. Copies of the Scripture, authenticated as having belonged to the most famous of their predecessors,

and held by them in high repute for the presumed purity of their texts, will have been stowed away, for purposes of comparison and avoidance, specimens of those dreaded texts whose existence has been the sole reason why (by the hypothesis) they will have been scornfully rejected by the general consent of the judges. Pass an interval, (are we to suppose of fifty years?) and the work referred to is "subjected to a second authoritative revision." Again, therefore, behold the piety and learning of the four great patriarchates of the East, formally represented at Antioch! The church is now in her palmiest days. Some of her greatest men belong to the period of which we are speaking. Eusebius (A.D- 308-340) is in his glory. One whole generation has come and gone since the last Textual Conference was held, at Antioch. Yet is no inclination manifested to reverse the decrees of the earlier conference. This second recension of the text of Scripture does but "carry out more completely the purposes of the first," and the "final process was apparently completed by A.D- 350." So far the Cambridge Professor.

... When, therefore, at the end of a thousand and half a thousand years, Dr. Hort (guided by his inner consciousness, and depending on an intellectual illumination of which he is able to give no intelligible account) proposes to reverse the deliberate sentence of antiquity, his position strikes us as bordering on the ludicrous. Concerning the seven places (of supposed "conflation") referred to, which the assembled Fathers pronounce to be genuine Scripture, and declare to be worthy of all acceptation, Dr. Hort expresses himself in terms which- could they have been heard at Antioch- must it is thought, have brought down upon his head tokens of displeasure which might have even proved inconvenient.²⁰²

In recent years, as we move further from the "Love is blind" years of the exaltation of Westcott and Hort, following the publication of the Revised Version and the accompanying Greek text, modern scholars have occasionally leaned toward giving the Traditional Text more credence, but more often have merely allowed slip a word or two in admission of the virtue of that Text. The following are typical: Metzger:

It appears to the present writer, however, that these unfavorable estimates of the value of the Antiochian text must be at least partially revised in the light of critical study of what may be called... the Ur-Lucianic text.

And,

The Old Latin must date from the second century A.D.; hence it cannot be based on the recension of Lucian as such; its peculiar interest lies in the fact that it affords independent evidence of the existence of MSS. containing Lucian's characteristic readings (or renderings), considerably before the time of Lucian himself...²⁰³

... What was said above regarding the presence of ancient readings in the Lucianic recension of the Old Testament ought to make one cautious about rejecting off-handedly and as a matter of course every Antiochian reading in the New Testament. In fact, since the time of Westcott and Hort, the acquisition of several new witnesses has tended to put the matter in a new light.²⁰⁴

Metzger points out, furthermore, various, "Byzantine," readings which rather should be accepted,²⁰⁵ and that certain subjects in regards to the Traditional ("Byzantine") Text ought to be studied, rather than ignored.^{206, 207} Birdsall agreed in 1956: "It is evident that all presuppositions concerning the Byzantine text- or texts - except its inferiority to other types, must be doubted and investigated *de novo*."²⁰⁸ That the Byzantine text in the manuscripts extant give the same

readings of the first century, Hort himself gives ample witness:

The fundamental text of the late extant Greek mss. generally is, beyond all question, identical with the dominant Antiochian or Graeco-Syrian text of the second half the 4th century. The Antiochian (and other) Fathers, and the bulk of extant mss. written from about three or four, to ten or eleven centuries later, must have had, in the greater number of extant variations, a common original either contemporary with, or older than, our oldest extant mss.²⁰⁹

Von Soden stated that “the substance of the text remains intact throughout the whole period of perhaps 1,200 years. Only very sporadically do readings found in other text-types appear in one or another of the varieties.”²¹⁰ Lake said: “...the scribes who were responsible for the variations in the Byzantine text introduced remarkably few and unimportant changes, they shunned all originality.”²¹¹ Hort explains that “an overwhelming proportion of the text in all known cursive manuscripts except a few is, as a matter of fact, identical.”²¹² Burgon supports Metzger’s statement that from the early centuries, the Traditional text was “generally regarded as the authoritative form of text and was the one most widely circulating and accepted.”²¹³

Grant seems more willing than most other modern textual critics to assign a second-century date to the Traditional text;²¹⁴ Burgon, a believer, seems the most logical of all:

And surely, if it be allowable to assume (with Dr. Hort) that for 1532 years, (viz. from 350 to A.D. 1882) the Antiochian standard has been faithfully retained and transmitted, it will be impossible to assign any valid reason why the inspired original itself, the apostolic standard should not have been as faithfully transmitted and retained from the apostolic age to the Antiochian, i.e. throughout an interval of less than 250 years, or one-sixth of the period.²¹⁵

Preservation has been supported by scholars on both sides, using the same idea. Metzger explains that lectionaries, the books of daily readings prepared for use in the church, “... exerted a stabilizing influence...,” on the Traditional text of the New Testament.²¹⁶ Burgon:

The practice of reading Scripture aloud before the congregation - a practice which is observed to have prevailed from the apostolic age - has resulted in the increased security of the Deposit. The ear once thoroughly familiarized with the words of scripture is observed to resent the slightest departure from the established type.²¹⁷

He concludes:

Apart however from the gross intrinsic improbability of the supposed Recension, - the utter absence of one particle of evidence, traditional or otherwise, that it ever did take place, must be held to be fatal to the hypothesis that it did. It is simply incredible that an incident of such magnitude and interest would leave no trace of itself in history.²¹⁸

Kenyon agreed; Colwell said that (the Traditional Text, the Byzantine, the Kappa, the Con-

stantinopolitan, the Ecclesiastical, the Antiochian, the Byzantine, text, - all the same name for the common Greek text,) "... had in its origin no such single focus (recension) as the Latin had in Jerome."²¹⁹

b) The Alexandrian Text

i) This "text" is considered by the secular textual critics to be "...on the whole the best ancient recension and the one most nearly approximating the original."²²⁰ "It is widely agreed that the Alexandrian text was prepared by skillful editors, trained in the scholarly traditions of Alexandria."²²¹ (Hatch, though, felt that the Alexandrian corruptions came from transcription, rather than from recension.²²²) Because of the divisions given by Westcott and Hort, the text has been traditionally divided into an earlier and a later text. The earlier, represented mainly (if not solely) by Codex Vaticanus, or "B," was named the "Neutral text," the second, the Alexandrian. The Neutral was considered to be very near, if not identical, "except for slips of the pen,"²²³ to the autographs. "Neutral," though, has long been doubted as a proper title, and has more recently been replaced with the title, "proto-Alexandrian." The case for division, in any, case, has usually been suggested because of the preponderous amount of difference present in Egyptian manuscripts. What helped to destroy the "Neutral" cognomen, was the more recent strong temptation to accept some "Western" readings over the Neutral, and also the "clear evidence of 'mixture' in the Egyptian witnesses anterior to B."²²⁴

Out of 5,366 manuscripts, Metzger lists only about 55 manuscripts, either whole or in part, as witnesses to the Alexandrian. Martini admits that, "...as for the method of detection of these variants (Alexandrian readings), ... all extant MSS are mixed MSS. THEREFORE THE ALEXANDRIAN TEXT CANNOT BE FOUND AS SUCH IN ANY OF THE EXISTING DOCUMENTS."²²⁵ ***In other words, as regards the ethereal Alexandrian text, one must search through the manuscripts to find it, and discover that a mere 55-odd ancient witnesses contain PIECES of what was the original scriptures!***

Martini quotes Westcott and Hort: "The distinctively Alexandrian variants are 'the work of careful and leisurely hands, and not seldom display a delicate philological tact,' " -very similar to the *accusation* of improvement brought against the substance of the Traditional text!

ii) *Because of the profusion of the writings of Origen, a third century heretical, "theologian," in which he used much Scripture in quotations and explained it in detail, the text he used has been the goal of recent secular textual critics (since Westcott and Hort).*^{226, 227} The logic holds that, 'he is ancient; he lived in Egypt: he must be "good".' The trouble is, both Origen, and his writings are extremely questionable in character as, "The Church at large disagreed with Origen's conclusions."²²⁸

The influence which the writings of Origen exercised on the ancient Church is indeed extraordinary.

The fame of his learning added to the splendour of his genius, his vast Biblical achievements and his real insight into the depth of scripture, conciliated for him the admiration and regard of early Christendom. Let him be freely allowed the highest praise for the profundity of many of his utterances, the ingenuity of almost all. It must at the same time be admitted that he is bold in his speculations to the verge, and beyond the verge, of rashness; unwarrantedly confident in his assertions; deficient in sobriety; in his critical remarks even foolish. A prodigious reader as well as a prodigious writer, his words would have been of incalculable value, but that he seems to have been so saturated with the strange speculations of the early heretics, that he sometimes adopts their wild method; and in fact has not been reckoned among the orthodox Fathers of the Church.²²⁹

Origen interpreted the Bible allegorically, saying also, "The Scriptures are of little use to those who understand them as they are written." He sat under Clement, and Origen's "... predilection for Plato led him into many grand and fascinating errors." He familiarized himself with the heresies of the time, and sat under "... the heathen Ammonius Saccas, founder of Neo-Platonism." Origen believed that Christ was, "eternally generated," and subordinate to the Father,²³⁰ and followed Hindu-like belief in such things as reincarnation and the pre-existence of the soul. "He believed that the devils would be saved, that the stars and planets had souls, and were, like men, on trial to learn perfection."²³¹ "It might be called the adaptation of the Word of God to Gnosticism."²³²

Martin warns: "Hort's veneration for the name of Origen does not carry weight with all scholars, for some would not trust that aberrant Father any more in textual criticism than they would in theology."²³³

In his comment on this passage (Matt. 19:17) Origen gives us a specimen of the New Testament textual criticism which was carried on at Alexandria about 225 A.D. Origen reasons that Jesus could not have concluded his list of God's commandments with the comprehensive requirement, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. For the reply of the young man was, All these things have I kept from my youth up, and Jesus evidently accepted this statement as true. But if the young man had loved his neighbor as himself, he would have been perfect, for Paul says that the whole law is summed up in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But Jesus answered, If thou wilt be perfect, etc., implying that the young man was not yet perfect. Therefore, Origen argued, the commandment, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, could not have been spoken by Jesus on this occasion and was not part of the original text of Matthew. This clause, he believed, was added by some tasteless scribe.²³⁴

He felt that the lack of a similar requirement of love for one's neighbor in the parallel passage in Mark and Luke confirmed his opinion.²³⁵

Hills adds, "And there were other critics at Alexandria even less restrained than he who deleted many readings of the original New Testament text and thus produced the abbreviated text found in the papyri and in the manuscripts *Aleph* and *B*."²³⁶

The attempt to recover Origen's text has been primarily successful; it "... holds good except in certain places."

The ... difficulty lies in the fact that at different times he used texts of differing textual character, and those differences are related in part to his shift of residence in A.D. 231 from Alexandria to Caesarea, where he lived until his death in 253.²³⁷ "Origen's citations are full of conflateions, (:) where he knew two recensions, (readings) and incorporated both."²³⁸

Origen's text, therefore, is not an end-all: it has been found to be not only Alexandrian, but also Western, and "Neutral!"²³⁹ Whenever Origen is seen to use a Traditional Text reading, (whenever it is admitted²⁴⁰) the fact is explained rather as a harmonization at a later time by another scribe of his writings with the supposedly later Traditional text.²⁴¹ In conclusion:

But no one who considers the peculiar character of his genius, his subtlety, his restless curiosity, his audacity in speculation, his love of innovation, will be disposed to deny the extreme risk of adopting any conclusion, any reading, which rests on his authority, unless it is supported by the independent testimony of earlier or contemporary Fathers and Versions.²⁴²

iii) Until the discovery of Papyri **ϐ66** and **ϐ75**,²⁴³ the two primary manuscripts of the Alexandrian text were Codices Sinaiticus (also known as: **Ⲭ** or Aleph) and Vaticanus (also known as B). Especially in Westcott and Hort, textual criticism's "gurus," love for these two manuscripts is evident:

This general immunity from substantive errors in the common original of Aleph B, in conjunction with its very high antiquity, provides in a multitude of cases a safe criterion of genuineness, not to be distrusted except on very clear internal evidence. Accordingly ... it is our belief, (1) that readings of Aleph B should be accepted as the true readings until strong internal evidence is found to the contrary; and (2) that no readings of Aleph B can be safely rejected absolutely.²⁴⁴

Metzger explains,

The Neutral text, as its question-begging name implies, is, in the opinion of Westcott and Hort, the most free from later corruption and mixture, and comes nearest to the text of the autographs. It is best represented by codex Vaticanus (B), and next by codex Sinaiticus (**Ⲭ**). The concurrence of these two manuscripts is very strong, and cannot be far from the original text. With the exception of a few passages, which they specify, Westcott and Hort declare:

It is our belief (1) that the readings of **Ⲭ** B should be accepted as the true readings until strong internal evidence is found to the contrary, and (2) that no readings of **Ⲭ** B can safely be rejected absolutely, though it is sometimes right to place them only on an alternative footing, especially where they receive no support from Versions or Fathers.

The exceptions to their preference for the Neutral text are several passages which Westcott and Hort term 'Western non-interpolations.' They doubtless chose this cumbersome nomenclature simply because they could not bring themselves to refer directly to 'Neutral interpolations'-which is exactly what, on their own reconstruction, is involved in these readings. In several passages in the last three chapters of Luke, and one in Matthew, the Western text is regarded by Westcott and Hort as preserving the original form of text. The reason they abandon the testimony of **Ⲭ** and B in these passages is that here the Western text, which normally is the fuller and more circumstantial form of text, has resisted (so they believe) the impulse to add material, whereas it is the Neutral text that presents the expanded reading."²⁴⁵

Dr. Cook explains that B and the Greek Text of Westcott and Hort are practically identical;²⁴⁶ it has been suggested, "Take away this one Codex, and Dr. Hort's volume becomes absolutely

without coherence, purpose, meaning. One-fifth of it is devoted to remarks on B and Aleph.²²⁴⁷

We are informed by Dr. Scrivener that there are 2,864 cursive and uncial manuscripts of the New Testament in whole or in part. Price says there are 112 uncials and 3,500 cursives. These represent many different countries and different periods of time. Yet astonishing to relate, the majority of the Revisers ignored these and pinned their admiration and confidence practically to two—the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.²⁴⁸

Burgon:

Codex B is discovered not to contain in the gospels alone 237 words, 452 clauses, 748 whole sentences, which the later copies are observed to exhibit in the same places and in the same words. By what possible hypothesis will such a correspondence of the copied be accounted for if these words, clauses, and sentences are indeed, as is pretended, nothing else but spurious accretions to the text?²⁴⁹

Like most transcribers, he (the scribe of B) occasionally omits necessary portions of text because his eye returned to the exemplar at the wrong place. (As the longer portions of text so omitted consist usually either of 12 to 14 letters or of multiples of the same, the manuscript's exemplar was doubtless written in lines of this length.) Often, but not always, an obvious cause of omission may be found in *homoeoteleuton*, the accidental ending of a portion of text with the ending of a following portion of text that has the same combination of letters or words. (This would necessarily omit the beginning of the second portion of text.)²⁵⁰ Burgon again:

The impurity of the text exhibited by these codices is not a question of opinion but of fact ... In the Gospels alone Codex B (Vatican) leaves out words or whole clauses no less than 1,491 times. It bears traces of careless transcription on every page.²⁵¹ Vaticanus is “tinged, as are other documents, with Coptic, Latin and Syriac colors...”²⁵²

It is commonly known, as for instance, stated by Tregelles²⁵³ and Scrivener,²⁵⁴ that Aleph was corrected by at least ten scribes.²⁵⁵ (It seems, also, that at least six of its pages were written by the scribe who copied B.²⁵⁶) This is evidenced by the various handwritings of the correctors, “some of them systematically spread over every page, others occasional, or limited to separate portions of the MS., many of these being contemporaneous with the first writer, but for the greater part belonging to the sixth or seventh century.”²⁵⁷ And while B is horrible, **Ⲙ** is even worse! “Thus, whereas (in the Gospels alone) B has 589 readings *quite peculiar to itself*, affecting 858 words, Aleph has 1460 such readings, affecting 2640 words,”²⁵⁸ says Burgon, as quoted by Fuller (emphasis added by the present writer).

(**Ⲙ**) ... ‘abounds with errors of the eye and pen to an extent not indeed unparalleled, but happily rather unusual in documents of first-rate importance. On many occasions 10, 20, 30, 40 words are dropped through very carelessness. Letters and words, even whole sentences, are frequently written twice over, or begun and immediately canceled; while that gross blunder, whereby a clause is omitted because it happens to end in the same words as the clause preceding, occurs no less than 115 times in the New Testament.’²⁵⁹

Tregelles describes **Ⲙ** as being, “very rough.”²⁶⁰

As if these figures weren't embarrassing enough for the disciples of the "Alexandrian text," Hoskier:

... Lists 656 differences (between Aleph and B) in Matthew, 567 in Mark, 791 in Luke, and 1,022 in John (total of 3,036 in the Gospels), and then shows by further lists at the back of the book that even these are not exhaustive.²⁶¹

*Burgon states that it is easier to find two consecutive verses in one of the two manuscripts, that disagree with the same two in the other, than to find a pair that match!*²⁶²

One's faith in the "Neutral" Text ought to be shaken or strained if one would pore over the many pages which list in detail more than three thousand real differences between the texts of B and Aleph in the four Gospels alone! Hoskier says at the beginning of this volume, "In the light of the following huge lists let us never be told in future that either Aleph or B represents any form of 'Neutral' Text." He lists 656 differences in Matthew, 567 in Mark, 791 in Luke, and 1,022 in John (a total of 3,036 in the Gospels)....²⁶³

It is not difficult to see why these have been called "two of the least trustworthy documents in existence."²⁶⁴

By far the greatest number in innovations, including those which give the severest shocks to our minds, are adopted on the testimony of two manuscripts, or even of one manuscript against the distinct testimony of all other manuscripts, uncial and cursive.... The Vatican Codex, sometimes alone, but generally in accord with the Sinaitic, is responsible for nine-tenths of the most striking innovations in the R.V.²⁶⁵

And hence, in most subsequent translations of the Scriptures. Branscome explains that, while most of the five thousand readings that **X** and B 'introduce to the scene,' are very minor, "amounting to little more than variations in spelling or word order," over two hundred of them are "significant."²⁶⁶ In conclusion,

(Aleph and B)"...are found to contain such internal proofs of their unreliability as to impeach their own testimony, and render them utterly unworthy of belief. They present the case of witnesses who have been caught in so many misstatements as to discredit their entire testimony."²⁶⁷

iv) Colwell constructed a mean text based on the readings of the six main witnesses of the Alexandrian text, and found the results dismaying. In the first chapter alone, the following differed from the 'average' text: "L, nineteen times (*Westcott and Hort*, twenty-one times); *Aleph*, twenty-six times; 2427, thirty-two times; 33, thirty-three times; B, thirty-four times; and 892, forty-one times."²⁶⁸

The five old uncials Aleph, A, B, C, D...

"...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 variant 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. I should weary you, my dear student, if I were to take you through all the evidence which I could amass upon this disagreement with one another.²⁶⁹

To speak with entire accuracy, Drs. Westcott and Hort require us to believe that the authors of the (imaginary) Syrian Revisions of A.D. 250 and A.D. 350, interpolated the genuine text of the Gospels with between 2877 (B) and 3455 (Aleph) spurious words; mutilated the genuine text in respect of between 536 (B) and 839 (Aleph) words, substituted for as many genuine words, between 935 (B) and 1114 (Aleph) uninspired words, licentiously transposed between 2098 (B) and 2299 (Aleph); and in respect to number, case, mood, tense, person, etc. altered without authority between 1132 (B) and 1265 (Aleph) words.²⁷⁰

In all, the *Revisers* of the AUTHORIZED VERSION changed the Greek text underlying it in 5337 places,²⁷¹ making “between eight and nine changes in every five verses, and in about every ten verses three of these were made, for critical purposes, with the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus being responsible for most.”²⁷²

v) The bias of Metzger (who might be considered typical of current textual critics) toward the Alexandrian text can be seen in the following select quotes:

“Though badly written by a scribe who committed many ignorant blunders, its (Codex Regius) type of text is good, agreeing very frequently with codex Vaticanus (B).”²⁷³

“The importance of 0220 lies in its agreement with codex Vaticanus... .”²⁷⁴

“(MS. 81) ... is one of the most important of all miniscule manuscripts. It contains the text of Acts in a form which agrees frequently with the Alexandrian type of text.”²⁷⁵

“Thus Scholz’s two-volume edition of the Greek Testament (Leipzig, 1830-6) marked a retrogression in textual criticism toward the Textus Receptus... .”²⁷⁶

vi) Yet, when all is said and done,

When the textual critic looks more closely at his oldest manuscript materials, the paucity of his resources is more fully realized. All the earliest witnesses, papyrus or parchment, come from Egypt alone. Manuscripts produced in Egypt, ranging between the third and fifth centuries, provide only a half-dozen extensive witnesses (the Beatty Papyri, and the well-known uncials, Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, Ephraem Syrus, and Freer Washington)²⁷⁷

c) The Western Text

The main manuscript witness to this text is Codex Bezae, universally considered the worst manuscript in existence; it is one-tenth longer than the actual autographs.²⁷⁸

The “Western Text” is characterized by paraphrase,²⁷⁹ “notorious for harmonizations,”²⁸⁰ and adds words and phrases not found in the Traditional text.²⁸¹ This “text” is unique, in that it is said to have “certain definite theological tendencies not found in various other manuscript traditions,” such as a “concerted effort ... to tone down texts in Luke’s second volume that indicated that women played an important and prominent part in the early days of the Christian

community;²⁸² a similar bias is shown in Matt. 5:32 in this text.²⁸³

Though some have held that the Western text was the deliberate creation of an individual or several individuals who revised an earlier text, most scholars do not find this type of text homogeneous enough to be called a textual recension; it is usually considered to be the result of an undisciplined and 'wild' growth of manuscript tradition and translational activity.²⁸⁴

Westcott and Hort, the devisors of the concept of a Western text, themselves admitted the questionable title,²⁸⁵ and today there is some reason to doubt whether or not this can even be called a "text."

d) The Caesarean Text

In the opinion of B.H. Streeter, this is a text that came into being when Origen took with him to Caesarea²⁸⁶ manuscripts from Egypt; it is therefore a mixture of Western and Alexandrian readings.²⁸⁷ The "Text" encourages one to "observe a certain striving after elegance of expression,..."²⁸⁸ and, "in short, the Caesarean text appears to be the most mixed and the least homogenous of any of the groups which can be classified as distinct text-types."²⁸⁹

B. The Methods of Secular Textual Criticism

Two Categories:

The method of textual criticism which has been generally practiced by editors of classical Greek and Latin texts involves two main processes, recension and emendation. Recension is the selection, after examination of all available material, of the most trustworthy evidence on which to base a text. Emendation is the attempt to eliminate the errors which are found even in the best manuscripts,²⁹⁰

The "canons of textual criticism," as used by secular scholars today are often quite similar. A few divergent methods will be mentioned, but the main principles (laid out in a manner similar to Metzger's explanations^{291, 292}) will be the subject of this section.

Current textual criticism, quite simply, judges all manuscripts, and the readings (of each passages) in them, by how they compare to A (Aleph) and B. This method, the determination of the quality of readings by determining the *character of the manuscript they are in*, is referred to as "consulting 'External Evidence.'" Determination of the virtue of readings by whether or not such readings *fit the style of the author or, simply, the liking of the critic*, is called "following Internal Evidence." (According to modern "scholars," internal evidence occasionally does indicate that the Alexandrian reading is the poorer, but this is quite rare.)

In summary, (with Alexandrian readings: word, sentence, verse, etc., combinations and forms

already predetermined to be the best) secular textual critics like to feel they are guided primarily by Internal Evidence, with a minimal reliance on the External (they do not usually explain, however, that the manuscripts upon which they perform their examinations of internal evidence are chosen according to *external* evidence - according to whether they are similar to X and B, or to one of the other roughly 53 "Alexandrian" manuscripts); believing Bible scholars, on the other hand, usually rely initially on External evidence, with relatively rare examination, in contrast, of the Internal, except where necessary, because a few of the Majority manuscripts disagree.²⁹³

1. EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

a) "WEIGHT, NOT NUMBER" OF MANUSCRIPTS

It was Wettstein (1634-1754) who put forth the idea, *codices autem pondere, non numero estimandi sunt*: "manuscripts must be evaluated by their weight, not by their number."²⁹⁴ Metzger clarifies this, and attacks the Traditional Text:

If one finds that a given manuscript frequently supports certain readings which clearly commend themselves as original on the basis of probability, it is natural to prefer its readings *in other instances when the Internal Evidence of Readings is not clear enough for a decision*. (Robertson's emphasis) ... If, for example, of ten manuscripts nine agree against one, but the nine have a common original, the numerical preponderance counts for nothing.²⁹⁵

This idea, however, rests upon the idea that the nine manuscripts are proven to have been copied from recent copies of one recent recension, of which genealogical relationship there can be no proof, as, similarly, there is nothing to indicate that recensions of the New Testament ever took place. It is also based primarily upon a predisposition against the Majority (otherwise known as the Traditional, Byzantine, Kappa,...) text. Fee, a non-Textus Receptus scholar, points out that, at least in the minds of the Traditional Text-rejecting secular textual critics, the idea of 'more reliable witnesses (manuscripts),' "...is not an easy criterion for students to work with. Indeed, some scholars would argue that it is an irrelevant, or at least subjective, criterion."²⁹⁶ The reason for this is that those who reject the Traditional (Majority) text have nothing upon which to base their judgement as to the quality of a manuscript except for the "quality" of its readings: a criterion, of course, completely subjective. Burgon states that "we make it our fundamental rule to reason always from grounds of *external evidence* (determined by number, age, homogeneity, etc....), -never from postulates of the imagination ('internal evidence:' subjective opinions of the critic)."²⁹⁷ And:

Strange as it may appear, it is undeniably true, that the whole of the controversy may be reduced to the following narrow issue: Does the truth of the text of Scripture dwell with the vast multitude of copies, uncial and cursive, concerning which nothing is more remarkable than the marvelous agreement which subsists between? Or is it to be supposed that the truth abides exclusively with a very little handful of

manuscripts, which at once differ from the great bulk of the witnesses, and -strange to say- also amongst themselves.²⁹⁸

That witnesses are to be weighed- not counted- is a maxim of which we hear constantly. It may be said to embody much fundamental fallacy. It assumes that the witnesses we possess are capable of being weighed and that every critic is competent to weigh them, neither of which proposition is true. Number is the most ordinary ingredient of weight. If ten witnesses are called into court and nine give the same account while one contradicts the other nine, which will be accepted?²⁹⁹

The manuscript tradition of an ancient book will, under any but the most exceptional conditions, multiply in a reasonably regular fashion with the result that the copies nearest the autograph will normally have the largest number of descendants. The further removed in the history of transmission a text becomes from its source the less time it has to leave behind a large family of offspring. Hence, in a large tradition where a pronounced unity is observed between, let us say, eighty per cent of the evidence, a very strong presumption is raised that this numerical preponderance is due to direct derivation from the very oldest sources. (This truism was long ago conceded [somewhat grudgingly] by Hort, "A theoretical presumption indeed remains that a majority of extant documents is more likely to represent a majority of ancestral documents at each stage of transmission than *vice versa*.") B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, II, p. 45.)³⁰⁰

b) AGE OF MANUSCRIPTS

We have already given much discussion to the idea now common that the older manuscripts in our possession ought to eliminate the witness of the later. It is unfortunate, however, that the opposite stand has been so commonly misunderstood:

- i) We fully admit that the principle of following the most ancient manuscripts is, on its face, reasonable and safe; for it is indisputable that (other things being equal) the copies nearest to the original autographs are most likely to be free from errors. If therefore it were a question whether or not we should follow, in the fashioning of a Greek Text, the earliest as against later manuscripts, there would be no "question" at all; for all would agree

But as the case actually stands, *it is impossible for us to follow the earliest manuscripts, for the simple reason that they no longer exist*. Not a single copy of the many thousands that were made, circulated, and read in the first three centuries is known to exist today. We do have Versions and patristic quotations that date back to the second century, and these, according to the principle we are discussing, are entitled to great weight. Is it not strange therefore, that those who justify their course by appealing to, and by professing to follow blindly, that principle, should cast it aside and accept the reading of fourth century Codices, where these are in conflict with second century Versions and quotations?³⁰¹

(We have already established that Versions in other languages, Versions following the Traditional Text, were common from Gaul to Syria in the second century.)

Mauro reminds us that the manuscripts of ancient secular writers such as Herodotus, Thucydides, and Sophocles are less common, and some 500 to 1000 years more distant from their originals than our Traditional Text manuscripts are from ours, "yet no one doubts that we have correct texts of those ancient writers."³⁰² Metzger, himself, explains that one editor of an eighteenth century

Greek Text was mistaken in, “thinking that the oldest manuscript was necessarily the best.”³⁰³

ii)

A number of factors seem to have contributed to the survival of **Α** (Aleph) and B.

It is understood that when Jewish (Old Testament) manuscripts were, “worn-out, the rolls were officially and solemnly burned lest the Scripture might fall into profane hands or into fragments,”³⁰⁴ which would seem to support the belief of Kirsopp Lake, Blake, and New, who, when they were surprised to find that no New Testament manuscript could be found with its “parent” still extant, found it “hard to resist the conclusion that the scribes usually destroyed their exemplars when they had copied the sacred books.”³⁰⁵ It is for this reason that it has often been suggested that **Α**, B, and similar manuscripts, have survived only because of their recognized “evil character:” because of their exceptionally poor quality they were never used or copied, so they were never subsequently destroyed! One finds the same principle in modern libraries: the best, the most popular books, are very quickly worn out by much use; because of their subsequent dilapidated condition, popular and therefore well-used books are thrown out and replaced (no one keeps a book that is falling apart if he can replace it with a new one, unless it possesses some unique significance or quality of materials) much more often than a book that no-one reads, and which therefore might be left for years on the shelf, unused, and thereby maintaining its original shape. In respect to **Α** and B, in particular, it seems that their existence is due, also, to the fact that they are written on vellum (animal skins), rather than the papyrus usual at that time.³⁰⁶ But despite this, if “they had been good manuscripts, they would have been read to pieces long ago.”

“We suspect that these two manuscripts are indebted for their preservation, solely to their ascertained evil character; which has occasioned that the one eventually found its way, four centuries ago, to a forgotten shelf in the Vatican Library; while the other, after exercising the ingenuity of several generations of critical Correctors, eventually (viz in A.D. 1844) got deposited in the wastepaper basket of the convent at the foot of Mount Sinai (where it was found by Tischendorf). Had B and Aleph been copies of average purity, they must long since have shared the inevitable fate of books which are freely used and highly prized; they would have fallen into decadence and disappeared from sight.”³⁰⁷

iii)

Patristic Quotations as an evidence of the most ancient text should perhaps be more closely examined. Fee gives some guidelines for their use, (primarily for citations in Origen, the main, if not almost only (except, perhaps, Eusebius) Father cited by modern textual critics.

iv)

Qualifications for Absolute certainty concerning a Biblical text in a quotation:

- (1) When in a subsequent discussion the author makes a point of the very words used.
- (2) When an author actually cites a known variation to his own text;
- (3) When in a commentary or homily the subsequent discussion confirms the wording of a citation.
- (4) When in a commentary, homily, or controversial treatise, the author repeats the text

in the same words again and again (although, of course, in this case it could be his faulty memory that is consistent.)

Instances in which a text can be deduced from a quotation, with a high probability:

- (1) A citation of several verses in length, especially so when the Biblical author book is also singled out (this criterion is not true of every Father, but it does seem to hold true for Origen);
- (2) An isolated citation with a text form that shows clear affinities with a Father's otherwise well-established textual relationship (contrariwise an isolated citation that differs from such a text form must always be regarded with some degree of doubt);
- (3) Concomitantly, in most of the isolated citations of a Father whose citing habits reflect a rather high degree of verbal accuracy.³⁰⁸

Metzger says, however, that the importance of Scripture in Patristic quotations lies only in identifying the areas in which a certain text-type was used.³⁰⁹ He thus quickly manages to discredit in the eyes of his followers all the many quotations by the early Church Fathers that confirm the Traditional text, that date, as they do, to the very first centuries. Kenyon tells us that:

Hort's contention 'which was the corner-stone of his theory, was that readings characteristic of the Received Text are never found in the quotations of Christian writers prior to about A.D. 350. Before that date we find characteristically 'Neutral' and "Western' readings, but never 'Syrian.' This argument is in fact decisive; and no subsequent discovery of new witnesses, and no further examination of the old, has invalidated it.³¹⁰

- But is this true? Hort states that the Traditional text is "practically identical with that used by Chrysotom and other Antiochian Fathers in the latter part of the 4th century, thus showing that such a text must have been prevalent for many years before the "latter part of the 4th century!"³¹¹ Burgon says, "You quote either Origen or else Eusebius (even though, as Zuntz points out, "Wherever one and the same passage is extant in more than one quotation by Origen or Eusebius, variation between them is the rule rather than the exception."³¹²), but why not Didymus and Athanasius, Epiphanius and Basil Chrysotom (345-407) and Theodoret, and the Cyrils,³¹³ Gregory of Nazianus, Gregory of Nyssa, Irenaeus (c. 180), Hippolytus, Basil, Ephraim, Theodore of Mopusuestia (350-428), Isidore of Pelusium, Nilus, Nonus, Proclus, and Severianus,³¹⁴ also, Diodorus (d. 394),³¹⁵ all of whom do not quote from the Alexandrian text, but the Traditional? Miller, recognizing this, ...

I made a toilsome examination for myself of the quotations occurring in the writings of the Fathers before St. Chrysotom, or as I defined them in order to draw a self-acting line, of those who died before 400 A.D., with the result that the Traditional Text is found to stand in the general proportion of 3:2 against other variations, and in a much higher proportion upon thirty text passages. Afterwards, not being satisfied with resting the basis of my argument upon one scrutiny, I went again through the writings

of the seventy-six Fathers concerned ... besides others who yielded no evidence, and I found that although several more instances were consequently entered in my notebook, the general results remained almost the same.³¹⁶

No wonder modern textual critics usually like to exclude the use of Patristic quotes from their discussions!

As far as the fathers who died before 400 A.D. are concerned, the question may now be put and answered, "Do they witness to the traditional text as existing from the first or do they not?" The results of the evidence, both as regards the quantity and the quality of the testimony, enable us to reply not only that the traditional text was in existence, but that it was PREDOMINANT during the period under review.³¹⁷

(It might be worth adding that, as concerns the amount of Scripture found in Patristic quotations, Dalrymple found the entire New Testament, save eleven verses.)³¹⁸

c) GEOGRAPHY, OR AREAS OF OCCURRENCE

This canon has already been given a fair amount of explanation in the course of the paper. To sum, this point involves:

The geographical distribution of the witnesses that support a variant. The concurrence of witnesses, for example, from Antioch, Alexandria, and Gaul in support of a given variant is, other things being equal, more significant than the testimony of witnesses representing but one locality or one ecclesiastical see. On the other hand, however, one must be certain that geographically remote witnesses are really independent of one another. Agreements, for example, between Old Latin and Old Syria witnesses may sometimes be due to common influence from Tatian's Diatessaron.³¹⁹

...Which, however, was compiled some decades after³²⁰ either of those translations was made! The attempt by Metzger should be obvious, to down-play the support that this canon gives to the Traditional Text.)

d) GENEALOGICAL WITNESS

Hort: "All trustworthy restoration of corrupted texts is founded on the study of their history," that is, of the relations of descent or affinity which connect the several documents.³²¹ A cornerstone, indeed, some say THE cornerstone of textual criticism in secular thought, is the idea that the history of a manuscript, or group of manuscripts, must be established. According to Metzger, the cleverest way to do it is to find readings which are obviously combinations (called *conflations*) of two (or more) readings from other manuscripts. The "other manuscripts" will naturally be shorter in at least these instances of readings, and therefore closer to the autographs... thus, the shorter Alexandrian text!

The gist of the argument, (as explained already, in another context) is that if nine out of ten manuscripts can be proven to have come from the same ancestor, those nine cease to be considered

nine different witnesses; and what better manuscript to choose as the original, but the shorter, or shortest one, as it could have been added to by the other nine! (Fee's cogent comment should be noted: "...it depends upon one's perspective as to whether a word is "added" or omitted."³²²) The trouble is, that we have no instance in which one of our manuscripts is known to have been produced from another extant manuscript, for which reason, almost all attempts at proving genealogies have concentrated on relations between families, or texts, rather than manuscripts.³²³ Colwell:

As the justification of their rejection of the majority Westcott and Hort found the possibilities of genealogical method invaluable That Westcott and Hort did not apply this method to the manuscripts of the New Testament is obvious. Where are the charts which start with the majority of late manuscripts and climb back through diminishing generations of ancestors to the Neutral and Eastern texts? The answer is that they are nowhere. Look again at the first diagram, and you will see that a, b, c, etc. are not actual manuscripts of the New Testament, but hypothetical manuscripts. The demonstrations or illustrations of the genealogical method as applied to New Testament manuscripts by the followers of Hort, the "Horticulti" as Lake called them, likewise use hypothetical manuscripts (Metzger uses such hypothetical diagrams on pp. 158, 171 of *The Text of the New Testament*.), not actual codices. Note, for example, the diagrams and discussions in Kenyon's most popular work on textual criticism, including the most recent edition. All the manuscripts referred to are imaginary manuscripts, and the latter of these charts was printed sixty years after Hort.

The second limitation upon the application of the genealogical method to the manuscripts of the New Testament springs from the almost universal presence of mixture in these manuscripts.... The genealogical diagram ... from Westcott and Hort shows what happens when there is no mixture. When there is mixture, and Westcott and Hort state that it is common, in fact almost universal in some degree, then the genealogical method as applied to manuscripts is useless. Westcott and Hort knew all this. They admitted that mixture makes the use of genealogical method impossible. They admitted that mixture occurred early and generally. They recognized this second limitation as clearly as the first. Yet they championed the genealogical method.³²⁴

Parvis agreed: "Westcott and Hort never applied the genealogical method to the MSS of the NT. They used only the idea of applying the method to the NT MSS, and even then it was only a secondary element in their procedure."³²⁵ Kurt Aland (a, compatriot of Metzger, and the man often considered Europe's most eminent secular textual critic) (using European terminology):

It is true and generally known, that the principles of stemmatology (*rezensierende Philologie*) cannot be applied to the NT. At least, the scholars who have attempted to do so have been unable to state their case convincingly.³²⁶

Branscome:

It should be self evident that the manuscripts tell us nothing of their ancestry or accuracy. That being the case, any attempt to determine the ancestry of a manuscript by comparing manuscripts must deal not with something the manuscripts say, but with conjecture about the manuscripts themselves.³²⁷

The situation is well summed by E.C. Colwell, as cited by Moir:

"One who works in the textual criticism of the New Testament is like a traveler in a far country where all the landmarks were made of clay and the rains were heavy. The old maps and road-guides are useless, for the fixed points have either vanished or been transformed. These fixed points were erected by the epoch-making work of Westcott and Hort."

Though these words were penned in 1935 one cannot really say that the situation today is much better- in some ways perhaps it is worse. Why is this so? Westcott and Hort claimed to have established fixed points- but how fixed were they? I give only two examples. They spoke about the genealogical relationship of manuscripts, but soon we find them admitting: "The discovery of extant ancestors of other existing documents is however of rare occurrence." After this they proceed to draw up genealogical tables which are not based on actual examples but are largely hypothetical. They classify manuscripts into different more or less geographical groups, but before long they have to allow that all this is largely modified by the presence of "mixture" within the family groups they are trying to establish. In short, a theoretical desire for fixation was not matched by such a situation in reality.³²⁸

2. INTERNAL EVIDENCE

a) 'THE SHORTER READING IS PREFERRED'

i) *Ereuior lectio potior, or breuior lectio praeferenda est*,³²⁹ that the shorter reading is probably the original one, has been a popular one in both classical, and in secular Biblical textual criticism.³³⁰

For all his searching of the 'expanded, conflate, Traditional text,' Hort was able to isolate but eight examples of supposedly "conflate" readings³³¹ ("premising that we do not attempt to notice every petty variant in the passages cited, or of confusing the substantial evidence.") One scholar asked why "after ransacking the Gospels for 30 years, they have at last fastened upon *eight*."³³²

Metzger would have us develop a bias for this canon by telling us that the texts of the *Iliad* and the *Mahabharata*, "one of the two national epics of India,"³³³ were consistently expanded over the years after their composition until they were printed.³³⁴ The works of other scholars, however, have revealed opposite results. Pickering cites Streeter's reference to Clark:

The whole question of interpolations in ancient MSS. has been set in an entirely new light by the researches of Mr. A.C. Clark, Corpus Professor of Latin at Oxford... . In The Descent of Manuscripts, an investigation of the manuscript tradition of the Greek and Latin Classics, he proves conclusively that the error to which scribes were most prone was not interpolation but accidental omission... . Hitherto the maxim *brevior lectio potior*, ...has been assumed as a postulate of scientific criticism. Clark has shown that, so far as classical texts are concerned, the facts point entirely the other way.³³⁵

Burgon and Leo Vaganay had their "doubts" regarding the maxim, and Mauro explains that omission was the most common type of error in transcription, and gives the example of court witnesses. He says that were one witness to say he saw or heard a certain thing, and twelve to say that they did not, or forget whether or not they did, the sole witness' testimony would be accepted. He

also correctly argues that an argument from substance (such as the evidence in the manuscripts) is stronger than argument from silence.³³⁶

It is refuted by our knowledge that errors in copying more often take the form of omission than addition (ask any secretary). It is also refuted by our knowledge that omissions did occur. Ignatius (in letter to the Philadelphians, chapter 2 verse 20) is speaking of omissions (in corrupt manuscripts of his day).³³⁷

b) *This second section will be composed of two categories:*

“THE MORE DIFFICULT READING,” and “HARMONIZATION.”

... Which cannot be too sharply distinguished from each other; appealing respectively to Intrinsic Probability, having reference to the author, and what may be called Transcriptional Probability, having reference to the copyists. In appealing to the first, we ask what an author is likely to have written; in appealing to the second, we ask what copyists are likely to have made him seem to write.³³⁸

i)

UNDER THE CATEGORY OF 'INTRINSIC PROBABILITY' :

'THE MORE DIFFICULT READING IS TO BE PREFERRED'

It was Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752), who concocted the canon, *proclivi scriptioni praestat ardua*, or “the difficult is to be preferred to the easy reading,” which has, in one way or another, been used by all (secular) textual critics since. The canon is based up on the suggestion that a scribe is more likely to make a difficult reading easier, than to make an easy one more difficult.³³⁹ (This point suggests that the autographs were either anything but perfect, or were quite harsh to the senses.)

Griesbach writes, “The most suspicious reading of all is the one that yields a sense favorable to the nourishment of piety (especially monastic piety),” and, “When there are many variant readings in one place, that reading which more than the others manifestly favors the dogmas of the orthodox is deservedly regarded as suspicious.”³⁴⁰ By what stretch of the imagination, the present writer asks, can one of sound mind and faith support such a suggestion? What we are therefore striving for is a corrupt, undogmatic book of mortal man, rather than the revelation of Christ Himself, the Source of doctrinal truth.

ii)

UNDER THE CATEGORY OF 'TRANSCRIPTIONAL PROBABILITY' :

HARMONIZATION

It is the “supreme rule for editors of the text..., to give each Gospel its own proper character,”³⁴¹ considered necessary, also, for every other author of a Book of the Bible. The textual critic is instructed to become very familiar indeed, with the specific styles of writing, and the grammar used by each of the authors.

Fee lists this canon as “the most subjective of all the criteria, and therefore must be used with caution,” and tells us that, although “it also has more limited applicability, because often two or more variants may conform to an author’s style,” it is “frequently a very important criterion.”³⁴² Tregelles

(1854) confessed “that arguments on *style* are often very fallacious, and that by themselves they prove very little.”³⁴³

Metzger suggests that “ordinarily the reading which differs from a parallel passage (particularly when the evidence for the reading of the parallel is firm) should be preferred.”³⁴⁴ It should be noted, however, that this, too, is extremely subjective, as harmonious passages abound throughout the Gospels, and even among the Epistles.

C. BELIEVING Principles of Textual Criticism

We oppose facts to their (Westcott and Hort) speculation. They weave ingenious webs, and invent subtle theories, because their paradox of a few against the many requires ingenuity and subtlety for its support.

*We are nothing if we are not grounded in facts: our appeal is to facts, our text lies in facts, so far as we can build testimonies upon testimonies and facts upon facts.*³⁴⁵

In opposition to the widely-published principles of secular textual criticism, the author lists a few principles suggested by a few others.

*Burgon’s seven (believing) principles:*³⁴⁶

1. Antiquity, or Primitiveness;
2. Consent of Witnesses, or Number;
3. Variety of Evidence, or Catholicity;
4. Respectability of Witnesses, or Weight;
5. Continuity, or Unbroken Tradition;
6. Evidence of the Entire Passage, or Context;
7. Internal Considerations, or Reasonableness.

*Dr. Edward F. Hills:*³⁴⁷

1. The infallible inspiration of the Scriptures;
2. The eternal origin of the Scriptures;
3. The providential preservation of the Scriptures.

“Conjectural Emendation’ (guesswork) can be allowed no place whatever in the textual criticism of the New Testament.”³⁴⁸

Dr. Hills offers a number of principles (*Scripture references added by the present writer*):

Principle One: The Old Testament text was preserved by the Old Testament priesthood and the scribes and scholars that grouped themselves around that priesthood.

Deu. 17:18, Deu. 31:25, 26; II Kings 22:8-10; II Chron. 17:8,9; Neh. 8:1; Luke 4:16-20

Principle Two: When Christ died upon the cross, the Old Testament priesthood was abolished. In the New Testament dispensation every believer is a priest under Christ the great High Priest. Hence the New Testament text has been preserved by the universal priesthood of believers, by faithful Christians in every walk of life.

Luke 22:20; I Cor. 11:23-27, Heb. 8:6

Rev. 1:6

I Jn. 2:27

Principle Three: The Traditional Text, found in the vast majority of the Greek New Testament manuscripts, is the True Text because it represents the God-guided usage of this universal priesthood of believers.

Principle Four: The first printed text of the Greek New Testament represents a forward step in the providential preservation of the New Testament. In it the few errors of any consequence occurring in the Traditional Greek Text were corrected by the providence of God operating through the usage of the Latin-speaking Church of Western Europe. In other words, the editors and printers who produced this first printed Greek New Testament text were providentially guided by the usage of the Latin-speaking Church to follow the Latin Vulgate in those few places in which the Latin Church usage rather than the Greek Church usage had preserved the genuine reading.

Principle Five: Through the usage of Bible-believing Protestants God placed the stamp of His approval on this first printed text, and it became the Textus Receptus (Received Text). It is the printed form of the Traditional Text found in the vast majority of the Greek New Testament manuscripts.

Rom. 1:17-20; Col. 4:16; Jn. 10:27; Jn. 16:13

Principle Six: THE KING JAMES (AUTHORIZED) VERSION is an accurate translation of the Textus Receptus. On it God has placed the stamp of His approval though the long continued usage of English-speaking believers. Hence it should be used and defended today by Bible-believing Christians.³⁴⁹

And also (*with parallel Scripture references again added by the present writer*),

How do we take our stand upon divine revelation? Only in one way, namely, through the logic of faith.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16). Since this Gospel is true, these conclusions logically follow: *First*, the Bible is God's infallibly inspired Word. This must be so, because if our salvation depends on our believing in Christ, then surely God must have left us an infallible record telling us who Jesus Christ is and how we may believe in Him truly and savingly. *Second*, the Bible has been preserved down through the ages by God's special providence. This also must be so, because if God has inspired the holy Scriptures infallibly, then surely He has not left their survival to chance but has preserved them providentially down through the centuries. *Third*, the text found in the majority of the biblical manuscripts is the providentially preserved text. This too must be true, because if God has preserved the Scriptures down through the ages for the salvation of men and the edification and comfort of His Church, then

II Tim. 3:16; II Pet. 1:19-21; Exo. 17:14; Exo. 34:1, 27; Num. 5:23; Isa. 30:8; Jer. 30:2; Hab. 2:2; Psa. 12:6; Matt. 5:18; Psa. 18:30; Psa. 19:8; Psa. 119:140; Pro. 30:5; II Pet. 3:16;

Psa. 89:28-37; Psa. 119:89; Isa. 40:8; Matt. 5:18; Matt. 24:35; Acts 2:39; I Pet. 1:25

He must have preserved them not secretly in holes and caves but in a public way in the usage of His Church. Hence the text found in the majority of the biblical manuscripts is the true, providentially preserved text. *Fourth*, The providential preservation of the Scriptures did not cease with the invention of printing. For why would God's special, providential care be operative at one time and not at another time, before the invention of printing but not after it? Hence the first printed texts of the Old and New Testament Scriptures were published under the guidance of God's special providence.

Col. 1:25-28

Thus when we believe in Christ, the logic of our faith leads us to the true text of holy Scripture, namely, the Masoretic Hebrew text, the Textus Receptus, and the King James Version and other faithful translations. It is on this text, therefore, that we take our stand and endeavor to build a consistently Christian apologetic system.³⁵⁰

Lastly, we must take into account the completely unique nature of the Bible, the Word of God:

I say it for the last time- of all such (intentional) 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.³⁵¹

We must therefore address the subject with the understanding that the Word of God is indeed different from all other Books: it was created by the Hand of God.

16 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. *II Tim. 3:16,17*

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost. *II Pet. 2:19-21*

The Word of God has been declared perfect, by the Word of God. God in fact prides Himself in the perfection and preservation of His Word,

6 The words of the LORD *are* pure words: *as* silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

7 Thou shalt preserve them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

Psa. 12:6,7

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. *Matt. 5:18*

And God has declared that His Word is as much for the present generation as it was for those two thousand years ago:

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. *Acts 2:39*

Therefore we understand that, if God considered it important to have perfection in His Word when He inspired it and had it written, and that if the same Word is as applicable to us today as it was to men thousands of years ago, we must *believe* that God has preserved it to be just as pure now as it was originally. When seeing the imperfections in the individual written copies of that Word we must bear these points in mind; this will enable us to recognize and believe the fact that these imperfections in the old manuscripts do not prevent us from having that same pure and perfect Word of God when we recognize the Word of God as a combination of all these manuscripts. We can *believe* that God has, indeed, provided us now with the same perfect Word of God which He wrote. And we must *believe* that that Word of God is not only still in existence, but is also available to us today. And we can believe that because God is always the same, and is faithful:

8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. *Heb. 13:8*

13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*. *1 Cor. 10:13*

Just as God is faithful and able to preserve us and keep us from forces too strong for us, so God is faithful and able to provide a way of escape and preservation for His Word. This must be accepted by faith, something impossible for carnal man, but something quite simple and natural for the man whose heart has been changed, and whose faith has already been put in God.

D. Subjectivity in Secular Textual Criticism

Metzger:

The classical method of textual criticism regularly involves, as was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the exercise of conjectural emendation. If the only reading, or each of several variant readings, which the documents of a text supply is impossible or incomprehensible, the editor's only remaining resource is to conjecture what the original reading must have been.

A typical emendation involves the removal of an anomaly. It must be overlooked, however, that though some anomalies are the result of corruption in the transmission of the text, other anomalies may have been either intended or tolerated by the author himself. Before resorting to conjectural emendation, therefore, the critic must be so thoroughly acquainted with the style and thought of his author that he cannot but judge a certain anomaly to be foreign to the author's intention.³⁵²

Metzger continues: “The only criterion of a successful conjecture is that it shall approve itself as inevitable. Lacking inevitability, it remains doubtful.”³⁵³

Conjectural emendation,” “eclecticism,” or “rational criticism,” can probably be considered 'ultimate subjectivity,' as it follows little or no External Evidence, and takes readings from 'this manuscript and that,' as the editor judges expedient. Metzger informs us that, “almost all textual critics have paid attention to aspects of rational criticism.”³⁵⁴ As a matter of fact,

... One must not suppose that (any of the methods of textual criticism) are entirely ‘objective.’ Even Westcott and Hort’s criticism is subjective, for first they chose the method which they decided to follow, and then they judged that their so-called Neutral text is generally to be preferred above all other types of text.³⁵⁵

Metzger becomes, in fact, quite candid about the reality of secular textual criticism: “To teach another how to become a textual critic is like teaching another how to become a poet.” Resultantly, the content of the Bible becomes sheer personal opinion and skill and as individual and different as each textual critic himself. As if to prove just how subjective textual criticism is for the secular scholar, Metzger quotes A.E. Housman:

Textual criticism is not a branch of mathematics, nor indeed an exact science at all. It deals with a matter not rigid and constant, like lines and numbers, but fluid and variable; namely the frailties and aberrations of the human mind, and of its insubordinate servants, the human fingers. It is therefore not susceptible of hard-and-fast rules. It would be much easier if it were; and that is why people try to pretend that it is, or at least behave as if they thought so. Of course you can have hard-and-fast rules, and they will lead you wrong...³⁵⁶

Even on the first page of his *The Text of the New Testament*, Metzger explains,

The results of the practice of textual criticism have differed from one generation to another, partly because the balance in the quantity and quality of witnesses available has gradually altered owing to the acquisition of additional manuscripts, and partly because theories and procedures of evaluating textual evidence have varied over the years.³⁵⁷

Hort concurs, “In dealing with this kind of evidence equally competent critics often arrive at contradictory conclusions to the same variations.”³⁵⁸ Examples of the changing tides in thought in this area are numerous. After completing his seventh edition of the Greek New Testament, Tischendorf announced that it was perfect and without fault. Soon after, he discovered Codex Sinaiticus (B), and published an eighth edition, different in 3572 places,³⁵⁹ and still later, edited a different Greek text for the Roman Catholic Church!³⁶⁰ In fact, From Metzger, we understand that,

The Revised Standard Version is, in fact, still in the making, for the RSV Bible Committee is an on-going committee, and its annual meetings are devoted to taking into account the discovery and publication of still more ancients...³⁶¹

Moir explains that in the last 45 years new discoveries of manuscripts have rendered the old theories (not just "readings," but their entire method of deciding what is and isn't Scripture) obsolete,³⁶² and Martini suggests that the Chester Beatty and Bodmer Papyri have imposed "a reconsideration of textual history,"³⁶³ (not of merely a few details, but of the entire story)! Hills mentions eight readings previously omitted from modern Greek texts, and subsequently, from modern translations, and points out that "the R.S.V., the N.E.B., and the other modern versions which omit them are already out of date!"³⁶⁴

Martin aptly states that, "Textual criticism has become more and more subjective since Westcott and Hort opened the door of subjectivism wide."³⁶⁵ Metzger's closing words, in one of his books, the words of a secular (unbelieving) textual critic, commend themselves as a potent conclusion to this section:

By way of conclusion, let it be emphasized again that no single manuscript and no one group of manuscripts exists which the textual critic may follow mechanically. All known witnesses of the New Testament are to a greater or less extent mixed texts, and even the earliest manuscripts are not free from egregious errors. Although in very many cases the textual critic is able to ascertain without residual doubt which reading must have stood in the original, there are not a few other cases where he can come only to a tentative decision based on an equivocal balancing of probabilities. Occasionally none of the variant readings will commend itself as original, and he will be compelled either to choose the reading which he judges to be the least unsatisfactory or to indulge in conjectural emendation. In textual criticism, as in other areas of historical research, one must seek not only to learn what can be known, but also to become aware of what, because of conflicting witnesses, cannot be known.³⁶⁶

In other words, the volume considered one of the most authoritative in its field (of secular textual criticism), concludes by saying,... "you can't be sure, though!"

IV

MODERN LIBERAL THOUGHT, AND THE NEW TESTAMENT TEXT

THE BIBLE HAS warned us that non-Christian thought will infiltrate the Church.

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.

1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds;)

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous *are they*, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.

12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, *as they* that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots *they are* and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;

- 14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:
- 15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam *the son of Bosor*, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;
- 16 But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet.
- 17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.
- 18 For when they speak great swelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, *through much* wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.
- 19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.
- 20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.
- 21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.
- 22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. (Jude) II Pet. 1:19-2:22

As already seen, it is commonly thought among secular textual critics that principles governing their study of the texts of classical works can be used in study of the New Testament text - that New Testament textual criticism is a neutral science.³⁶⁷ This view has had tragic results.

In all of this discussion one is struck by that which has been mentioned earlier: the entire lack of consideration for the supernatural element in the Scripture. There is nothing of verbal inspiration; indeed there could not be, since Westcott and Hort disavowed that doctrine. There is no sense of the divine preservation of the text, which one ought to find in a discussion of this type by Christians.³⁶⁸

Hort:

For ourselves, we dare not introduce considerations which could not reasonably be applied to other ancient texts, supposing them to have documentary attestation of equal amount, variety, and antiquity.³⁶⁹

“One of their own prophets,” M.M. Parvis, as quoted by Fuller:

As long as men held to a belief in an absolute, faultless, unerring, verbally inspired Scripture, it was essential to that belief that they should have the original text of that scripture before them. But that belief is no longer one that is generally accepted by most of us. And once we have given up that belief, we are oftentimes hard pressed to explain just why we continue our search for the original text. Here at least some of us are motivated, perhaps subconsciously, by a theological presupposition of the nineteenth century which has become meaningless for us today.³⁷⁰

5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. II Tim. 3:5

Colwell:

It is often assumed by the ignorant and uninformed- even on a university campus- that textual criticism of the New Testament is supported by a superstitious faith in the Bible as a book dictated in miraculous fashion by God. That is not true. **Textual criticism has never existed for those whose New Testament created under those auspices would have been handed down under them and would have no need of textual criticism.**³⁷¹

In comment, Pickering points out that Inspiration and Preservation naturally require each other. If there is no preservation of the Scriptures, “the doctrine of Inspiration is inapplicable.” It is “purely a matter with no relevance for us today.”

It is precisely because they claim that we do not and cannot know the exact working of the autographs that many liberals reject any concept of Scriptural inerrancy or infallibility. Thus Robert M. Grant feels that “it is generally recognized that the original text of the Bible cannot be recovered.” Colwell’s pessimism is profound. If we allow their basic assumption, due process of logic will lead us to their conclusion.³⁷²

Guthrie:

It is noticeable that challenges to traditional ascriptions of authorship went hand in hand with rejection of authority. In other words, the earlier critics never supposed a category in which authorship could be challenged and authority maintained.³⁷³

That the Traditional Text is irrelevant, is central to their beliefs. In other words, ninety per cent of all manuscripts are worthless, and we don’t know how to use the remaining ten per cent.³⁷⁴

13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*;

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. *II Tim. 3:13-17*

Textual criticism gave rise to the Form Criticism of Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann.³⁷⁵ Form Criticism has been described as the belief that the Synoptic Gospels are “popular” or “folk” literature rather than literary works in the classical sense. And the evangelists, according to Dibelius, “are only to the smallest extent authors. They are principally collectors, vehicles of tradition, editors.”³⁷⁶ It is interesting to note that this theory was held by two of the most visible names in recent textual criticism history, Kirsopp Lake, and B.H. Streeter, the latter of whom wrote what “is probably still the best presentation of the subject (*Form Criticism*) in any language.” This two-document theory suggests that the authors of Matthew and Luke used two documents: The Gospel of Mark, and “Q,” containing the sayings of Jesus. The authors

were mere editors.³⁷⁷ It is even more interesting to note that the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES Greek text, perhaps the second-most popular Greek text today, and an integral part of the latest (26th) edition of what is considered the most authoritative, the NESTLE-ALAND Greek text (see Aland, p. 47), works on the idea of the two-document theory!³⁷⁸ It is these two texts that are the basis for today's Bible translations (but the prefaces to these translations, the introductions that the man of God finds when he opens the front cover of his new Bible, do not tell him that the unbelieving, two-document theory is central to the translation that he is reading as the very Word of God). Wenham concludes: "As modern eclectic texts are based on a 'rational criticism' which assumes the priority of Mark, we need to be cautious about accepting the critical texts too readily."³⁷⁹ As if the Greek texts of today weren't bad enough, effectively perverting the beliefs mainly of those who read and study them, the modern translations have 'gotten into the act:'

"...Besides silently adopting most of those wretched fabrications which are just now in favour with the German school (form criticism, etc.), they have encumbered their margin with those other readings which, after due examination, they had themselves rejected... . What else must be the result of all this, but general uncertainty, confusion and distress! A hazy mistrust of all Scripture has been insinuated into the hearts and minds of multitudes who, for this cause, have been forced to become doubters; yes, doubters in the truth of Revelation itself."³⁸⁰

Especially do we deprecate the introduction into the margin of all this strange lore, because we insist on behalf of unlearned persons that they ought not to be molested with information which cannot, possibly, be of slightest service to them, together with vague statements about "ancient authorities" of the importance or unimportance of which they know nothing, nor indeed ever can know.

Unlearned readers on taking the Revision into their hand, (i.e. at least 999 readers out of 1000,) will never be aware whether these so-called 'Various Readings' are to be scornfully scouted, as nothing else but ancient perversions of the Truth; or else are to be lovingly cherished, as 'alternative' exhibitions of inspired truth, - to their own abiding perplexity and infinite distress.³⁸¹

This doubt and disbelief has unfortunately come about for the very nature of Evangelicalism: the fact that we have traditionally been NON-CONFORMISTS, we have been quite ready to follow non-conformist thought!

"Leaning heavily on (Westcott, Hort, and Lightfoot) as defenders of the faith, the English churches were led imperceptibly into a mildly critical view that prevented any serious shock from New Testament criticism ever developing. ... In the early decades of higher criticism in England the nonconformists followed the intellectual leadership of the Anglicans- Westcott, Lightfoot, and Hort," "...In accepting the Cambridge defence (by the "trio") against Strauss and Baier, the evangelicals accepted Higher Criticism in principle without being fully aware of what they had done."³⁸²

In the author's opinion, those conservative schools and scholars who have propagated Hort's theory and text (NESTLE-ALAND is essentially Hortian) bear a heavy responsibility for the growing doubt and disbelief throughout the Church. The "neo-evangelical" defection on Scriptural inerrancy is a case in point.³⁸³

WHAT OF THE RECENT MANUSCRIPT FINDS?

IT IS OFTEN claimed that, 'new manuscript finds have improved our knowledge of the original text. A number of manuscripts have indeed been either discovered or have come to the attention of international scholarship since Westcott and Hort. What is the testimony of these recent finds?

During the past decades several papyri have come to light which tend to increase one's uneasiness over Hort's reluctance to acknowledge the possibility that an ancient reading may have been preserved in the Antiochian text even though it be absent from all the great uncial manuscripts. Since the discovery of the Chester Beatty papyri (particularly **P**₄₅ and **P**₄₆) [published 1933-37³⁸⁴] and the Bodmer Papyrus II (**P**₆₆), [published 1956-62³⁸⁵] proof is available that occasionally the later (*sic*) Byzantine text preserves a reading that dates from the second or third century and for which there had been no other early witness. A few examples selected from a large number will serve to illustrate this changed situation in the textual evaluation of the New Testament.... Though this list could be expanded, enough examples have been cited to suggest that some of the roots of the Antiochian text go back to a very early date, antedating Lucian by several generations.... The lesson to be drawn from such evidence... is that the general neglect of the Antiochian readings which has been so common among many textual critics is quite unjustified.³⁸⁶

... What was said above regarding the presence of ancient readings in the Lucianic recension of the Old Testament ought to make one cautious about rejecting off-handedly and as a matter of course every Antiochian reading in the New Testament. In fact, since the time of Westcott and Hort, the acquisition of several new witnesses has tended to put the matter in a new light.³⁸⁷

*[Hills tells us that the Chester Beatty Papyri (**P**_{45,46,47}) (papyrus manuscripts or fragments) "agree surprisingly often with the Traditional (Byzantine) Text against all other types of text"³⁸⁸]*

Metzger describes this century's "most important" discoveries:³⁸⁹

P₄₅ (Papyrus 45) consists of the Gospels and Acts, is mixed in the kinds of variant readings that it evidences. In Acts it is similar to the Alexandrian type (typified by **Ξ** and **B**, and favoured by modern secular-thinking "scholars" as the best for their modern Greek texts and English translations. In the Gospels it steers away from this type of text.

P₄₆ contains: Romans, Hebrews, I and II Corinthians, Ephesians, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, and, originally, I and II Thessalonians. Slightly older than **P**₄₅, it dates to @ 200. It has readings typical of the Alexandrian.

P₄₇ consisting now of only Rev. 9:10 to 17:2, and dates to the second part of the third century. It leans toward the Alexandrian, "though it often shows a remarkable independence."

P₅₂ consists now of only John 18: 31-33 and 37-38. The fragment is considered by many to date to the first half of the second century, and to thus be the oldest portion of manuscript in existence today.

P₆₆ consisting now (pieces have been lost) of only John 1 - 6:22 and 6:35b-14:15, the papyrus is thought to date to about the year 200.

The text of **P**₆₆ is a mixed text, with elements which are typically Alexandrian and Western. It is noteworthy that the manuscript contains about four hundred and forty alterations, introduced between lines, over erasures, and in the margins. Most of them appear to be the scribe's corrections of his own hasty blunders, though others seem to imply the use of a different exemplar. Several passages present unique readings that previously had not been found in any other manuscript. In xiii. 5 a picturesque word is used in connexion with the washing of the disciple's feet; according to **P**₆₆ Jesus took not a 'basin' (νιπτηρα) but a 'foot-basin' (ποδονιπτηρα). In vii. 52 the presence of the definite article in a difficult passage now supports what scholars had long thought was the required sense, namely 'Search [the Scriptures] and you will see *the* prophet does not rise from Galilee'.

P₇₂ is the earliest known copy (third century) of Jude and I and II Peter. It also contains such apochryphal books (in the following order) as: the Nativity of Mary, the (apochryphal) letters of Paul to the Corinthians, eleventh ode of Solomon, Eleventh Ode of Solomon, Epistle of Jude, Melito's Homily on the Passover, a fragment of a hymn, Apology of Phileas. "The textual affinities of its text of I Peter belong definitely with the Alexandrian group, and particularly with codex Alexandrinus."

P₇₄ edited in 1961, dates to the seventh century. It consists of Acts, James, I and II Peter, I, II, III John, Jude. "The type of text it preserves agrees frequently with Alexandrian witnesses."

P₇₅ was published in 1956-62 and contains the text of Luke 16:9-21. According to Metzger, this find is important in showing that the Alexandrian text was current in Egypt at the beginning of the third century. *Since its discovery, it has replaced **Σ** as the supporting manuscript for B!*³⁹⁰

In The Writings of Didymus the Blind, (313-398), which include commentary on Scripture, with Scriptural quotes, discovered at Toura in 1941 and published starting in 1962,³⁹¹ no new readings were discovered.³⁹²

In fact, some 80 different papyri have been discovered since the turn of the century. Metzger chooses to mention only some 9 which are "among the most important." These are "among the most important," says he, because they reflect the Alexandrian type of text, as, when speaking of **P**₇₅, "The textual significance of this newly acquired witness is hard to overestimate, presenting, as it does, a form of text very similar to that of Vaticanus. Occasionally it is the only known Greek witness which agrees with the Sahidic in supporting several interesting readings."³⁹³ (One may understand the great importance Metzger places upon these select manuscripts, when he considers the extremely few manuscripts indeed that have any readings at all similar to those found in his beloved **Σ** and B - the supposed "Alexandrian text"!)

Regarding the quality and thus the reliability of these "important" finds, Fuller quotes Colwell:

In general, **p75** copies letters one by one; **p66** copies syllables, usually two letters in length. **p45** copies phrases and clauses.

The accuracy of these assertions can be demonstrated. That **p75** copied letters one by one is shown in the pattern of the errors. He has more than sixty readings that involve a single letter, *and* not more than ten careless readings, that involve a syllable. But **p66** drops sixty-one syllables (twenty-three of them in "leaps") and omits as well a dozen articles and thirty short words. In **p45** there is not one omission of a syllable in a "leap" nor is there any list of "careless" omissions of syllables. **p45** omits words and phrases.

As an editor the scribe of **p45** wielded a sharp axe. The most striking aspect of his style is its conciseness. The dispensable word is dispensed with. He omits adverbs, adjectives, nouns, participles, verbs, personal pronouns-without any compensating habit of addition. He frequently omits phrases and clauses. He prefers brevity. He shortens the text in at least fifty places in *singular readings alone*. But he does *not* drop syllables or letters. His shortened text is readable.

p66 has 54 leaps forward, and 22 backward; 18 of the forward leaps are haplography (*opposite of dittography*).

p75 has 27 leaps forward, and 10 backward.

p45 has 16 leaps forward, and 2 backward. From this it is clear that the scribe looking for his lost place looked ahead three times as often as he looked back. In other words, the loss of position usually resulted in a loss of text, an omission.³⁹⁴

Recent manuscript finds have therefore done absolutely nothing for the cause of the secular textual critic. The finds of this century have indeed uncovered, among other manuscripts, ones that are both very poor in transcriptional quality and which support Alexandrian readings; but these show only the occurrence of such *in Egypt, an area commonly recognized as a hotbed of both early heresy, and intentional, heretical corruption of the text. These manuscripts prove only that such was the state of theology and the text in Egypt, a very limited and questioned area of Biblical transcription.*

Other manuscripts have been discovered which support the Traditonal text. These are usually almost completely discounted and ignored by modern secular textual critics.

- CONCLUSION -

WHAT, THEN, DO WE FOLLOW?

MUCH HAS BEEN made of recent manuscript finds, as though they actually support the theory promulgated by the secular textual critic. In fact, the manuscripts generally support either one or the other of two types, or families, of text. In the course of this volume we have therefore discovered that in the present controversy there have been really only two choices open to those concerned with the subject of textual criticism of the Sacred text:

- a) **TRADITIONAL TEXT** (also referred to as, Byzantine, Majority, Koiné, Received, etc.)
- b) **ALEXANDRIAN TEXT** (also referred to as, Egyptian, "Neutral.")
- c) Out of roughly 5,366 Bible manuscripts or fragments known to exist today, the Alexandrian type of text is found in fewer than 5% of the total, yet is the type chosen by modern secular and secularly-minded textual critics to be the "text" making up modern versions of the Greek text, and of modern translations. In actual fact, *the manuscripts used to form modern secular Greek texts (and consequently modern translations) number, for the most part, ONLY ABOUT 2-4 INDIVIDUAL DOCUMENTS.* The Traditional text, on the other hand, occupies the vast majority of the rest of the 5,366 manuscripts and has been the text that the Church in general has always used.
- d) Because the documents containing the Alexandrian text are generally older than the rest, secular (and 'unbelieving' Christian) textual critics have claimed that this text is the closest to the autographs (original Bible text), and therefore the one that we should follow in Bible translation.

Thus is the choice we must make. We have reviewed the histories, manuscripts, theories, and various related facts behind the controversy. In summation, let us first review the reasons for which the Believer who understands the facts and issues involved will feel compelled to himself choose the text that until this century has been almost universally recognized by the Church, and then let us recognize the facts and the faith of the matter.

A. WHY REFUSE THE *ALEXANDRIAN* ("NEUTRAL") TEXT? (AND THEREFORE CHOOSE THE *TRADITIONAL* TEXT?)

1. THE LATEST MANUSCRIPT FINDS ARE EITHER TRADITIONAL OR ALEXANDRIAN

It is of course of no surprise that many of the recent finds have displayed the Traditional text; this is the genuine text! Nor is it a surprise that the Alexandrian text has been found in many of the recent finds (in the papyri): these have been found in Egypt, where this type of text was not uncommon. (*The Alexandrian text, in fact, is exclusive to Egypt.*)

All the oldest manuscripts come from Egypt. That the Alexandrian text is found in the oldest (the Egyptian) manuscripts follows for two reasons:

a) Egypt's Dry Climate

Alexandria (the city originating this text) is of course located in Egypt, which has what is perhaps the world's most ideally-suited climate for preservation of anything organic. Its hot, dry conditions have preserved everything from mummified human remains, to grains and cereals (which, when found in ancient tombs, have occasionally even been planted and grown). Manuscripts produced in other areas of the globe did not have the same benefit, and would have succumbed long ago to the ravages not only of the 'wear-and-tear' of general use, but also of the vagaries and attacks of the damper and harsher climates of those other areas.

b) Disuse Because of Dislike

The Church, recognizing the evil nature of these (Alexandrian) manuscripts (pp. 41-47), simply did not use them. Intentional heretical changes were made to these manuscripts very early in their history (p. 15). The manuscripts therefore did not wear out. Regarding **X** and **B**, in particular, it seems that their existence is due, also, to the fact that they are written on vellum (animal skins), rather than the papyrus usual at that time (p. 44). A manuscript, having taken perhaps half a year or more to produce, was not a disposable item to discard if simply disliked. Moreover, if it were the Word of God, one did not simply discard a worn copy as one might at that time possibly discard an unused item or even book of a non-sacred nature. Just as today's Christian would probably be more likely to shelve an old or unused Bible, than to simply throw it away, so, these faulty Books were relegated to a 'top shelf,' out of the way, and forgotten about for years, rather than discarded. Meanwhile, their fellows, few in mistakes and treasured by their users, would in due time be literally destroyed by repeated use and wear-and-tear. When their usefulness was eventually completely exhausted they *would* be destroyed lest something of that sacred nature fall into profane hands, and, as commonly done by the heretics of Egypt at the time, reproduced with profane and subjective changes (see pages 12-13). Also, the fact that no exemplar has been found of an extant manuscript, the suggestion has been made *by secular textual critics* that the early church made a policy of destroying the exemplar after a copy had been made (p. 44). So, ironically, the good manuscripts would be destroyed from much use, while the bad would be preserved from lack of use.

2. EGYPT WAS THE CENTRE OF EARLY HERESY

Established, is the fact that the Alexandrian text is found in many of the oldest texts, oldest because they come from the preserving influences of the Egyptian climate and because they were not used. But why was this text, unseen elsewhere, so corrupt? We examined, on pages 13, 15, 17, 62, etc., the fact that Egypt was known for its heresies. Egypt was a centre of secular knowledge (the greatest library of the time was located in Alexandria), and of the varying philosophies, secular and heretical, that typically follow. Many of the early heretics that were disfellowshipped were residents of Egypt, or soon after, not surprisingly found their way there.

3. THE OLDEST MANUSCRIPTS SHOULD HAVE THE MOST COPIES- IF NOT, WHY NOT?

The older the text-type, the greater the number of manuscripts that can be expected to have come from it. So why are there so very pitifully-few manuscripts in existence, that bear the Alexandrian text-type? A number of possible reasons have been forwarded: i) the Alexandrian text-type is not very old (unlikely possibility - the text-type is commonly recognized to be of extreme antiquity); ii) the text was a very exclusive aberration, confined to an extremely limited geographical area; iii) the text-type was so universally recognized as being an extremely poor *representation* of the original that it was commonly and quickly rejected by the Church.

4. WIDE TESTIMONY PROVIDES GREATER PROOF THAN DOES EXCLUSIVE TESTIMONY

When a text-type is widely dispersed its weight of testimony is far greater than that of a family which is confined to one geographical area. While the Traditional text is found everywhere else in the world that the Bible was carried, the Alexandrian text is confined to only Egypt. If it is the true text, why is it confined to only one area, and, for that matter, why is it found not even in the area in which, if it were the original text, it would have originated?

5. ITS USE BY THE CHURCH TESTIFIES TO THE TRADITIONAL TEXT

That the Church of God, the tangible representative of Christ on earth, has always used the text that for that very reason is now called the Traditional, witnesses to the correctness of that text.

13 Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, *that* shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come.

14 He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew *it* unto you. *John 16:13-14*

In just the same manner that God determined that all Scripture (the inspired Word of God), and only the Scripture would be included in the Bible, by means of the common recognition and useage by the Church (compared to, for instance, common concensus determined by a church-wide meeting), so also He determined that by common recognition and useage by the Church, the true form of the Scripture would be both recognized and preserved. God led the Church to recognize the true text.

IV

6. THE WORD OF GOD IS UNIQUE AND REQUIRES BELIEVING EXAMINATION

The Word of God is unlike any secular volume; it cannot be examined by unbelieving minds. Examination must employ believing principles, not the methods or practices employed in the examination of secular volumes. We have already listed many such principles suggested by Christian scholars. We must thus begin our examination of the Greek text of the Word of God with some pre-requisite ideas, with the mind of a regenerated being, with a predisposition *for* the Word of God, as follows:

7. GOD INSPIRED; GOD PRESERVES.

Unlike the unbelieving textual critic, the Christian must begin any examination of Scripture with faith in what the Word of God says about itself. And these statements must and will govern every conclusion he makes as a result of his study. The Christian is therefore unlike the non-Christian textual critic, in that he believes God's statement that all Scripture was inspired by God.

16 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: *II Tim. 3:16*

And if God did indeed go to the trouble of *inspiring* the original text, and the original text was indeed as pure and perfect as it claims to be, God has also *preserved* His Word intact. One is pointless without the other.

6 The words of the LORD *are* pure words: *as* silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever. *Psalms 12:6-7*

Nor did God allow His Word to be concealed from the world from approximately A.D. 200 to approximately A.D. 1850, when it (**B**) was supposedly found on a back shelf in the Vatican and also (**X**) pulled from the waste-basket of a monastery on mount Sinai. The Word of God in its original and unadulterated form has been available to the world constantly, ever since it was written. And it will be available to the world until Christ returns to judge the living and the dead.

With the Alexandrian Text thus made transparent and disqualified, we see once again only the Biblical Greek text that has always been recognized by the Church. This is the text which is represented by the vast majority of Greek manuscripts. This is the text that was put into print and given the name, *Textus Receptus*.

B. IN CHOOSING THE *TEXTUS RECEPTUS*, WHAT IN FACT SHOULD WE RECOGNIZE?

Let it not be mistaken: THIS WRITER DOES NOT CLAIM THAT THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS IS INFALLIBLE - *it is not!* The Textus Receptus is simply a very good representation of the Traditional Text of the Scriptures.³⁹⁵

To depreciate it (the Textus Receptus), is easy: to deny its critical authority, is easier still: to cast ridicule on the circumstances under which Erasmus produced his first (very faulty) edition of it (1516), is easiest of all. But to ignore the 'Traditional Test,' is impossible.³⁹⁶

One cannot say that the Textus Receptus, for example, is verbally inspired. It contains many plain and clear errors, as all schools of textual critics agree. But it embodies substantially the text which even Westcott and Hort admit was dominant in the church from the middle of the fourth century on.³⁹⁷

Dr. David Otis Fuller says, regarding the need for a revised Greek Text:

It will not do to modify Westcott and Hort and to proceed from there. The only road to progress in New Testament textual criticism is repudiation of their theory and all its fruits. Most contemporary criticism is bankrupt and confused, the result of its liaison with liberal theology. A Bible-believing Christian can never be content to follow the leadership of those who do not recognize the Bible as the verbally inspired Word of God. The Textus Receptus is the starting-point for future research, because it embodies substantially and in a convenient form the traditional text. Admitted, it will have to undergo extensive revision. It needs to be revised according to sound principles which will take account of all the evidence.³⁹⁸

The Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint, furthermore, have been used to show that there are flaws in our Old Testament (Masoretic) text. It is granted that there are, but that, also, these can be removed by comparison with those two versions.³⁹⁹

It is agreed that a revision is needed of the Textus Receptus. Once this is done, we will have an absolutely correct printed Greek text, as our knowledge of the true text, as shown by the Greek manuscripts, is sure. It has been said that, if the Textus Receptus were to be revised, the improvement would take place in between 500 and 1000 places. If, however, the modern Greek texts were to be revised in light of the Traditional Text, the changes would number over 5000!⁴⁰⁰

Is it probable then, that, as suggested by the theories of Deism, God created (the Bible), and then abandoned it to its own devices?⁴⁰¹ Is it possible that Scripture was lost for fifteen hundred years, and has:

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“... Run a very narrow risk of being lost forever to mankind. Dr. Hort contends that it more than half lay ‘*perdu*’ on a forgotten shelf in the Vatican Library; - Dr. Tischendorf that it had been deposited in a waste-paper basket in the convent of St. Catherine at the foot of Mount Sinai; - from which he rescued it on the 4th of February, 1859; - neither, we venture to think, a very likely circumstance.”⁴⁰²

It is hard to see how God would allow the true text to sink into virtual oblivion for fifteen hundred years only to have it brought to light again by Cambridge professors who did not even believe it to be verbally inspired.⁴⁰³

Burgon justly states that it is illogical to believe that after eighteen hundred years 995 out of every 1000 manuscripts are wrong, compared to the remainder, “whose contents were till yesterday as good as unknown...”⁴⁰⁴

This author suggests, therefore, that until the Textus Receptus is revised, and a new translation made, the KING JAMES VERSION be used, as probably the closest translation available, of the original Scriptures.

In Conclusion,

Hence, if we believe in the special providential preservation of the Scriptures and make this the leading principle of our biblical textual criticism, we obtain maximum certainty, all the certainty that we need. For we are led by the logic of faith to the Masoretic Hebrew text, to the New Testament Textus Receptus, and the King James Version.

But what if we ignore the providential preservation of the Scriptures and deal with the text of the Holy Bible in the same way in which we deal with the texts of other ancient books? If we do this, we are following the logic of unbelief, which leads to maximum uncertainty. When we handle the text of the Holy Bible in this way, we are behaving as unbelievers behave. We are either denying that the providential preservation of the Scriptures is a fact, or else we are saying that it is not an important fact, not important enough to be considered when dealing with the text of the Holy Bible. But if the providential preservation of the Scriptures is not important, why is the infallible inspiration of the original Scriptures important?⁴⁰⁵

GLOSSARY

OF THE TERMS OF NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM USED IN THIS BOOK

* Indicates a term that may be found also in another place in this *GLOSSARY*

^ Directs the reader also to the subject's own entry in the *GENERAL INDEX*

Ⲁ (*Aleph*, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet) is the name given to the manuscript* referred to as, Codex Sinaiticus, found in the mid-nineteenth century in the monastery of St. Catherine, on Mount Sinai. The manuscript is considered, by secular,* and by secularly-thinking textual critics, to be the best and most authoritative* manuscript extant.*^

Alexandrian Text That group of approximately 55 manuscripts* which display a type of text* commonly found only in early Egypt. Although it is quite confused by transcriptional mistakes, and perverted by heretical* changes of reading,* it is typically found in the Biblical manuscripts (generally Egyptian papyrus*) that, having passed the centuries in the parched climate of Egypt, have managed to survive the millenia. For this reason they are our oldest extant* manuscripts and are consequently considered by modern secular* and secularly-thinking textual critics* to be representative of the text of the Bible closest to the autographs.*

Ante-Nicene Fathers Those Church Fathers* previous to the First Council of Nicaea,* held in A.D. 325.

Antiochian Text The name given by Ropes to the Majority,^ or Traditional^ Text.*^

Apologetic In the Greek, literally, *defense*. A defense of the Gospel or the Word of God, by means of spoken or written word. An attempt to convince of Christ by means of an **A.** will be ultimately successful only if it has convinced the mind of one whose *heart* is ready. A mind convinced without the concurrence of the heart will be overthrown when convinced otherwise.^

Authority To the Catholic, the Church; to the Protestant, the Bible. The individual's **A.** is that which he recognizes has the ultimate right to make demands of, or to expect of him. To the Christian it is that which, "has the final say," regarding God's expectation of him.^

Authorized Version That Translation* of the Bible, published for the first time in 1611, and with the approval, sanction, and under the auspices of King James* of England. The King James* Version* is as such appointed, or **A.**, to be read in the church buildings and gatherings of the Church of England.^

Autograph The original copy of any part of the Inspired * Writings, called, the Bible.^

B An abbreviated name given to the Manuscript,* Codex Vaticanus. Produced about the middle of the fourth century, it contains both Testaments and the Apocrypha, is known to have been in the Vatican library since at least 1475, and is of a poor quality similar to Aleph* (Sinaiticus*). Once again, however, because of its similar antiquity, like Aleph,* it is given incredible reverence and authority* in secular* New Testament Textual* Criticism.^

Byzantine Text The name given by Burnett Streeter to the Majority, or Traditional* Text.*^

Caesarean Text A text* type with readings thought by some to be different from the Alexandrian.* Based on the second half of Origen's commentary on the Book of John, the half written after Origen's move to Caesarea. As it is the least homogeneous of any, "Text-type," its legitimacy as a separate Text* is questioned by many; it is therefore often recognized to be merely a conglomeration of many different readings.^

Canon 1. List of Books in the Bible. Decided by common Church usage through the Universal Priesthood of Believers,* rather than by committee consensus; the only such role of a committee might be in its official statement of the Church's historical and common recognition of the C. 2. A decree or rule required by the Church, or a doctrine central to a way of thinking.^

Catholicity Universality.^ Does not refer to the Roman Catholic religion.

Codex A manuscript* in book form. In other words, rather than a scroll, it consisted of pages bound at a spine. Found early and popular use among Christians, perhaps because of the added ease with which various volumes, such as Biblical Books, could be bound together, and for the added ease with which one could find a particular reference. Pluralized either, Codexes or Codices.

Conflate Meaning, "blown together." It is suggested by secular* textual* critics that when a copyist of a manuscript* had two manuscripts,* each presenting the same verse or phrase with a slightly different reading,* he would combine, or C. the two into one verse or reading.* By this theory they claim that most manuscripts* have been lengthened, so that when two or more manuscripts* at the same point in the Scriptures present the same verse or phrase slightly differently from each other, the shorter of the two will generally be the preferred. Modern Bibles are thus shorter than the King James* Version.*^

Conjectural Emendation A term (designed to sound legitimate) for, "educated guesswork." The guess is made according to what the editor *feels* the author would have said. The editor, it is claimed, uses such criteria as the author's style,* vocabulary, etc. This approach has been called, "ultimate subjectivity,*" as it follows no visible guidelines.^

Constantinopolitan Text The name given by Griesbach to the Majority, or Traditional,* text.*^

Continuity Refers to whether or not a certain reading* or text-type continues steadily from one period of time to another. Its continued presence would indicate a greater reliability, as the more numerous manuscripts* with that type of text* would seem to indicate a more universal text* than one occurring merely occasionally, as upon a whim of whatever copyist.

Criticism Examination. Indicates not merely negative comments, but objective* examination.^

Critical Apparatus The notes found in the margins of Hebrew and Greek texts, that include comments on various matters of textual* interest. Such matters might include: the various manuscripts* from which the present readings were taken, the variant* readings otherwise found in some manuscripts,* as different from the ones used in the present text,* the reasons for which the editors of the present text* used the readings they did, etc.

Dittography The mistake that occurred when a copyist of Scripture inadvertently wrote the same words more than once. The words thus occur twice or more often, usually in succession.^

Ecclesiastical Referring or pertaining to the Church.^

Ecclesiastical Text The name given by Kirsopp Lake to the Majority, or Traditional* Text.*^

Errancy The question of whether the Bible contains errors. Inerrancy* is the term used to describe the fact that the Bible is without error. Plural, Errata.^

Evangelicalism A system of belief within Christianity that emphasizes New Testament Christianity, salvation by faith, the literal interpretation of the Bible, and the importance of living a life in accordance with the literal directives of the New Testament.^

Exemplar The source manuscript of a copy.

Extant (Existent); Remaining in existence and known to scholars. Used to indicate that a certain manuscript(s)* still remains, compared to having been destroyed or lost.

External Evidence The measurement of the quality of the readings within a manuscript* according to the reliability of the manuscript* in which they are found. Because of the overt and extreme bias of secular* textual* critics toward Aleph* and B*, the consideration of E.E. is usually all but limited to comparison of the manuscript* at hand to those two MSS*.*^

Family Text-type, as in, Traditional,* Alexandrian,* Western,* Caesarean,* etc. Each F. is supposedly determined and specified by the type of readings found in the manuscripts* making up each F. Each manuscript* in each F. supposedly contains readings common, for the most part, to the other manuscripts* of that particular F.* The very existence of F.s, however, is itself very questionable, and in no way accepted by all textual* critics, as the readings in many manuscripts* can be highly fluid. F.s, furthermore, are said by their proponents to be the product not of chance, but of ancient recensions,* a theory unproven.^

Form Criticism The heretical* philosophy that the New Testament is little more than a series of ideas, traditions, legends, etc., that were formed around the original true facts of Christ's Words and deeds, and seeks to sift out the false from the historical. Passages in the Bible and various sayings, words, deeds, etc., are rejected according to the opinions of the F.C. critic.^

Genealogical Relationship An hitherto unreached goal, which seeks to identify the relationships between manuscripts*: ie., which manuscripts* are descendants from which others, and how these relationships have affected the various readings found in the descendants. No

extant* manuscript* has ever been able to have been shown to have been the exemplar* of any other certain extant* manuscript.* Nor has there even been any success in establishing a genealogical* relationship between any of the so-called families.* The discovery of such a relationship has also been the goal of secular* textual* critics, as they feel that it would help reduce the value of the fact that approximately 95% of all manuscripts* extant* are of the (Traditional*) text-type behind the Textus Receptus* and the King James* Version.* In their view, if ten manuscripts* can be proven to have descended from one particular exemplar,* the numerical witness* of the ten is reduced to one, as they are merely copies of the first. Although the idea of this shown relationship has been a cornerstone of secular* textual* criticism,* it has never been demonstrated, and has therefore never been able to have been used.^

Greek Vulgate (Vulgate:* "common," "commonly used," or, "current") The name used for the Traditional,* or Majority text,* in the days of Jerome.^

Harmonization The supposed tendency of a copyist to make the passage he is copying harmonize, or follow the reading* of, a similar passage found elsewhere in the Bible.^

Heresy A doctrine contrary to orthodoxy.* A false doctrine that is contrary to the basic beliefs of Christianity.^

Higher Criticism The evaluation of the Scriptures without faith in Scripture's own claims of inspiration,* authorship, and authority.* The idea that the Scriptures must be evaluated as any other (secular*) volume.^

Homooteleuton Two different lines in a MS* ending in the same or similar words.^

Inerrancy; Infallibility The fact that the Bible is without error, or mistake.^

Inspiration ("God-breathed") The term used to describe the fact that God, by way of the Holy Spirit, caused His writers of Divine Scripture to write the Scriptures. Nor did He cause merely the ideas to be written, but the very Words that He desired them to write; indeed, every letter of every Word was written by Divine ordination - this despite the fact that God used the personalities, experiences, and circumstances of His authors. The concept of inspiration,* or, "God-breathed," is further seen in the fact that in the Greek in which the Bible was written, the ideas of, "breath," and, "spirit," are portrayed by the same word.^

Internal Evidence The determination of the right readings* by means of the opinion of the editor. It is claimed that considerations are made of the Bible Book author's style.*^

Interpolation An addition to the original Scriptures.^

Intrinsic Probability What the editor considers is most likely to have been written by that Bible Book's author.^

Kappa; Koiné Text (Common Text*) The name given by Von Soden to the Majority, or Traditional text.*^

King James Version See Authorized Version.^

Koiné Greek (Common Greek) The common Greek dialect of the New Testament world. The New Testament was written in the language of the people.^

Lectionary A book of daily Scripture lessons. Often incorporated much Scripture. ^

Lector The reader of Scripture in a Scriptorium* or in an Ecclesiastical* service. In a Scriptorium* the L. would read aloud the manuscript* being copied; the scribes would write from his dictation.

Liberal Inclining toward or open to the unorthodox, or away from that which is commonly understood and followed. Regarding things Spiritual, this would indicate an openness toward the Heretical* and unBiblical. ^

Lower Criticism The study of the manuscripts,* Greek Text,* and other philological considerations of the study of the Bible. This present book deals mainly with L.C. ^

Manuscript A document hand-written, in contrast to one that is printed by machine.

Masoretic Text That version* of the Old Testament text* that, since its completion in about 894 A.D. by Masoretic scholar Moshe ben Asher about 895, has been accepted by Christians as the authentic and authoritative Word of God in the Old Testament. ^

Mechanical Inspiration The claim by some that God inspired* the Scripture writers in such a way that He dictated Word for Word what was to be written, completely oblivious and outside the contexts of the lives and personalities of the writers themselves. The logical consequences of this would see all portions of Scripture given in the same vocabulary and style,* despite the variety of authors. This theory would see inspiration* as coming solely from an, "uncontextualized," God, oblivious to the world of man. Inspiration,* as commonly understood, recognizes the fact that God fore-ordained the lives and circumstances of man, or at least used those, in such a way that it was by those, added to the truth, that God wished to portray, to give to man His truth in such a manner as man could understand.

Miniscule A manuscript* of the Bible written in small letters (compared to the capital letters of earlier manuscripts), of a running, "written," hand similar in comparison to present-day handwriting. First used in a Biblical MS* in approximately 835, it became the dominant style* after the tenth century AD. ^

Monastery; Monasticism A M. is the centralized buildings or colony in which monks live and work. ^

MS; MSS The abbreviation for, "manuscript;*" for, "manuscripts.*"

Neutral Text The name given to the supposed text* represented by the MSS* Aleph* and B*. Now usually considered by secular* textual critics to be an earlier and better form of, if not identical to the main, "Alexandrian* text." ^

Objective The opposite of, "subjective," is to examine or accept on the basis of only the evidence. Personal opinion and bias are excluded. ^

Orthodoxy That which is commonly accepted and normalized. In Ecclesiastical* terms, orthodoxy is that which is basic to proper belief, maturity, and practice in the Christian walk. ^

Eastern Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, etc. Various church groups originating in the East. The Eastern Orthodox at a very early date split with Rome and formed what is now the third of a trio of main church groups, the other two being the Roman Catholic and the Protestant.^

Ostraca Shards (pieces) of pottery subsequently used as a writing surface.^

Pachetta; Peshitta (Simple) The Authorized* Bible of the Syrian church.^

Papyrus A paper made out of the Egyptian plant by that name. Plural, Papyri.

Papyrus (P) A particular document written on papyrus. Textual critics will have given it a name beginning with the letter, "P," followed by a number.

Parablepsis (A looking by the side) When copying Scripture, the accidental omission of a portion of Text* by concluding the copying of a passage by the inadvertent addition of another, similar, but later portion of Text.* This, it is suggested, might happen when the copyist, after looking away momentarily from the exemplar* to write the copy, looked back not at the same line in the exemplar,* but at a later but similar line (homoeoteleuton*), and finished the passage being written with the ending of the later passage.^

Parchment Animal hides prepared and used for a writing surface.

Patristic Quotation Quotation of a Church Father - an influential Ecclesiastical* writer from the first centuries of the Church.^

Preservation The term used by Bible-believing Christians for the fact that God has preserved the Bible intact and, when the mistakes of copying (all are known) are removed, completely without error.^

Primitiveness The degree to which an Ecclesiastical* subject aligns with the early Church, usually before the sixth century. A primitive error is one which occurred in a MS* prior to our earliest extant* MS.*

Proto-Alexandrian Text What is considered by secular* textual critics to be an earlier form of their Alexandrian* text,* and which they say is composed of their favorite, "Alexandrian,*" MSS.*

Q The supposed second, and no-longer-extant* source in the Two-Document Theory.* Some liberal* minds thus contend that Matthew and Luke were written by editors who combined the Book of Mark and a second document, they have named, "Q" (compared to the *verbal** origins contended by Form Criticism*).

Rational Criticism Conjectural emendation.* See also, p. 53 ^

Rationalism The insistence upon reason and logic over supernaturalism and faith.

Reading A **R.** is a spelling of a word, or is the words found, in a particular place in Scripture. A variant* **R.** will see a different spelling, or alternate words used, or a lack or addition of words in this location.

Rendering Alternate term for Reading.*

Recension Under the theories of secular* textual criticism,* ecclesiastics or scribes in the early centuries combined what they felt were the best readings from what they considered were their best manuscripts,* to correct ancient perversions of the Scriptures; modern secular* textual critics* claim that it is these that are behind what they consider various text-types, such as Traditional,* Alexandrian,* Western,* etc.

Reformers The men behind the Reformation.

Revised Version The new version* of the Bible that was published in 1881, was accompanied by the New Greek text* of Westcott and Hort, and spawned a new era: one of widespread acceptance of a liberal* and Roman Catholic view of the Word of God, of textual criticism,* and of the thenceforth diluted authority* of the Word of God. The term, **R.V.**, is deceptive, and is reflective of the fact that the mandate of the Revision Convocation was merely to revise the Authorized* Version.* Under the malign influences of Westcott and Hort, however, the product of this work was an entirely new Version,* and one based on an entirely different and perverse Greek text.*

Rezensierende Philologie Genealogical* Witness.*

Samaritan Pentateuch The first five Books of the Bible, written in Hebrew, and revered as the sacred Scripture of the Samaritans. Since ancient times this religious sect, centered in Nablus, has claimed to be the remnant of ancient Israel.^

Scriptio Continua The practice followed in early manuscripts,* of writing without word-separating spaces.^

Scriptorium Establishment in which manuscripts* were copied, often with the use of a Lector.*^

Secular Non-Christian; unconverted; unregenerate. Usually used in reference to the inanimate, to ideas, or to titles, rather than to persons. A person, though, may have a role title, opinion, etc., that is **S.**^

Septuagint (Seventy; LXX) A Greek version* of the Old Testament, produced by seventy-two scholars in about seventy days, hence the numerical name. The source for the Roman Catholic Old Testament.^

Stemmatology Genealogical* method. See Genealogical Relationship; Rezensierende Philologie ^

Style As God did not employ a so-called mechanical inspiration* but inspired* the Biblical writers to write in the context and abilities that were natural to them, their unique **S.**'s are evident in the writings of each author.^

Subjective The opposite of, "objective,*" is the entrance into one's judgement, of personal opinion or other matters that would prevent one from making an unbiased appreciation.^

Synoptic Gospels Those Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) which give primarily a synopsis, or overview of the ministry of Christ, compared to the didactic, or teaching approach of the Gospel of John.^

Text(s) **1.** The actual set of Words composing the Word of God in written form. **2.** In the opinions of many secular* textual critics,* the various forms of the Bible supposedly composed by recension,* and copied in the various resulting forms such as their claimed, Traditional, Alexandrian,* Caesarean,* Western,* etc.^

Textual Criticism Regarding the New Testament, the practice of eliminating from our copied Greek texts mistakes made by copyists through the centuries. When performed by textual critics* that do not hold to the Divine preservation* of the Scriptures, such a practice is conducted as one would upon any secular* volume of antiquity, and the results are similarly uncertain. When performed by believing scholars, however, the practice is both potentially successful, and conducive to faith and assurance in the believer.

Textus Receptus The printed Greek Text* representing the Traditional* or Majority written Greek Text* that through all antiquity since Christ has been the text* faithfully transmitted from the original writers. First edited and printed by Desiderius Erasmus in 1535, the edited version* in 1633 by Bonaventure Elzevir was presented to the public with the statement in Latin, "Textum ergo habes, nunc ab omnibus receptum: in quo nihil immutatum aut corruptum damus," or, in English, "(The reader has) therefore the text* which is now received by all, in which we give nothing changed or corrupted." "The Received Text,*" from what has sometimes been called a, "printer's blurb," has therefore become the term used for the Greek text* that we have received from the original writers, and from the Person of God.

Theology The study of God.^

Traditional Text The text* which has been copied faithfully from the autographs* and their descendents. Also called: Majority Text; Antiochian, Greek Vulgate, Kappa; Koiné Text, etc.^

Transcriptional Probability Seeks to establish what the author is likely to have written, based on his style;* the textual critic is expected to ensure that each Gospel has its own proper character. Often considered to be the most subjective* of all criteria, it is nevertheless also considered to often be a very very important consideration. This is yet another example of the secular textual critics' reliance on and love of 'internal evidence.'[^]

Translation (Version*) Copy of the Biblical text* into another language.^

Two-Document Theory That supposition by some unbelieving teachers, that the Biblical Books of Matthew and Luke were formed by editors working from the Book of Mark and a second, no-longer-extant,* written document (compared to the verbal* origins contended by Form Criticism*), which they have named, "Q."* The theory behind more modern Greek texts. See also, Q.^

Uncial **1.** Written capital letter. **2.** The name given to ancient (up to about the ninth century A.D.) MSS* that employ these in the production of their text.*^

Universal Priesthood of Believers The Biblical (Rev. 1:6, II Cor. 3:6) doctrine that all regenerate believers are in fact priests, and without need of any intermediary between them and God. Regarding the text* of the Bible, the doctrine is combined with the doctrine that Christ's sheep know and recognize His Voice (John 10:3-5), to explain the fact that the true text* of the Bible, like the Bible's canon* itself, has been recognized by the Church univer-

sally, and therefore without need of any official decision. As such, the Traditional,* or the Textus Receptus,* has always been recognized and used by the regenerate Church of Christ and is thus the one Christ Inspired.*^

Variant See, Reading

Vaticanus, Codex See, B

Vellum A high-quality parchment,* made of the skins of calves, lambs, or kids, and, because of its higher price, used for high-quality documents.

Verbal Inspiration The Orthodox* doctrine that the Scriptures were inspired,* not merely in their ideas, but in the very Words, despite the fact that God has not employed mechanical inspiration,* but has incorporated the unique circumstances of each of the authors themselves.^

Version (Translation*) Copy of the Biblical text* into another language.^

Vulgate ("Common," "Commonly used," "Current") ^

Western Text A very perverse kind of so-called text,* a full 10% longer than any, "other." Usually found in MSS* from Gaul, Italy, and Africa.^

Witness Example of manuscript* or reading* type; case in point.^

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