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A Study of the Significance of Certain Recently Discovered Greek Manuscripts with Reference to New Testament Translation

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A STUDY OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CERTAIN RECENTLY DISCOVERED
GREEK MANUSCRIPTS WITH REFERENCE TO NEW TESTAMENT TRANSLATION

by

Henry Karg

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of Problem

"The Basic document of the Christian Faith is the Greek New Testament."¹ The original sources for the Greek New Testament were the inspired autographs of the various writers of the New Testament books. None of these autographs, however, are known to exist today. All that has come down to us are copies of copies of the original manuscripts.

This question may then be asked: "How can a person be sure that the text of the New Testament in his possession today is accurate and free from error?" In answer to this question it can be stated that "A Study of the Significance of Certain Recently Discovered Greek Manuscripts With Reference to New Testament Translation" has shown that because of the work of textual criticism every Christian can know and understand for himself why certain recognized authorities in the field of textual criticism have believed that the present Greek text used as a basis for the most recent English translation very nearly approaches the Greek text of the original manuscripts.

B. Guiding Purposes of This Investigation

The recently discovered Greek manuscripts have been the most important, the oldest, and the primary source of evidence for the

present Greek text of the New Testament. The purpose of this investigation was to point out why the textual critics have placed so much confidence in the testimony of these manuscripts. In order to fulfill this purpose these chapter objectives were set up.

1. The objective of chapter two was to point out the fact that it has been the discovery of many more ancient Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, together with an increased knowledge of the New Testament Greek language, which has resulted in the demand for the various English versions of the New Testament.

2. A brief historical study was made of the development of the printed text of the Greek New Testament in chapter three to show that it has been the work of the textual critics that has produced more accurate printed editions of the Greek New Testament.

3. The objective of chapter four has been to point out the need of, the sources of, the principles of, and the results of the science of textual criticism, because it has been the work of that science to secure the most accurate Greek text of the New Testament possible.

4. In chapter five a study was made of the significance of the most important Greek manuscripts of the New Testament in order to enable one to understand the confidence Biblical scholars place in the evidence of these manuscripts.

C. Importance of This Study

The importance of this study has been most ably stated in the following words from the writings of one of the most widely recognized Biblical scholars of recent times.

The Bible being to us what it is, it is of the highest importance that we should be satisfied of the authenticity of the title - deeds of our faith; that we should be able to accept them, not with a blind and unintelligent belief, but with a clear understanding of the manner in which the several books came into existence, and of the means by which they have been handed down to us. The history of the Bible text is a romance of literature, though it is a romance of which the consequences are of vital import; and thanks to the succession of discoveries which have been made of late years, we know more about it than of the history of any other ancient book in the world.

For the vast majority of English-speaking people, the Bible is the English Authorized Version, first published in 1611. But everybody knows that this is not the original language of the Bible; and as soon as one begins to think about it, various questions present themselves. From what sort of texts was the translation of 1611 made? How had these texts been handed down? Were they accurate representations of the works as originally written by the authors of the books of the Old and New Testaments? What evidence have we about it? Why was it thought necessary, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, to make a Revised Version? What is the relation of the Revised Version to the Authorized? And why are the margins of the Revised Version full of references to alternative readings which are said to be found in "ancient authorities"? What are these ancient authorities, and what is their importance? How shall we judge which of these alternatives is to be preferred?²

The importance of this study lies in the fact that it has attempted to provide satisfactory answers to these questions based upon a study of the significance of the recently discovered Greek manuscripts of the New Testament and point out the most reasonable interpretation of the facts discovered by competent Biblical scholars from their study of these manuscripts.

Again in the words of Sir Frederic Kenyon:

It may be disturbing to some to part with the conception of a Bible handed down through the ages without alteration and in unchallenged authority; but it is a higher ideal to face the facts, to apply the best powers with which God has endowed us to the solution of the problems which they present to us; and it is reassuring at the end to find that the general result of all these discoveries and all this study is to strengthen the proof of the authenticity of the Scriptures, and our conviction that we have in our hands, in substantial integrity, the veritable Word of God.³

D. Method of Procedure

A vast amount of literature has been written in the related fields covered by this investigation. Out of this vast amount of material those writings which were considered most appropriate were selected for special study. By a study of these selected writings the problem was investigated. Special emphasis throughout the study has been made upon the significance to the solution of the problem which has been made by the recent discovery of certain Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. These Greek manuscripts considered of most significance for this study are the Codex Sinaiticus, the Codex Vaticanus and the Chester Beatty Papyri.

E. Definitions of Terms Used

1. Codex. "The term Codex means a manuscript in modern book form... as opposed to a roll, but it is in practice specially applied to old uncial manuscripts, particularly of the Bible."⁴

2. Manuscript. A manuscript is a literary composition written by hand, as opposed to a printed copy.⁵

3. Manuscript Copies. Manuscript copies are those manuscripts of the Greek Testament which were transcribed, or copied, from the original manuscripts. They are the manuscripts which are now known to be in existence and used, to a large extent at least, in determining the present text of our Bible.⁶ They are the manuscripts referred to in this study, unless the word "original" is also used.

There are two kinds of Bible manuscripts: uncial and minuscule. An uncial manuscript is a manuscript written in capital letters in which each letter is formed separately. It is sometimes called a majuscule manuscript. These manuscripts are the earlier - extending from the fourth (or earlier) to the tenth century, A. D. A minuscule manuscript is a manuscript which has been written in small letters. (The word minuscule means "rather small"). It is sometimes called a cursive (running hand) manuscript, but this term is inaccurate for all minuscules do not have the letters joined together in a running hand. These manuscripts are later and extend from the ninth to the fifteenth century, A. D.⁷

4. Original Manuscripts. An original manuscript is the one first in existence. It is the one which came from the hand of the author. It is also called an autograph. As far as is known no original manuscript of any book of the Bible now exists. They are all lost. No one knows for sure just how they came to be lost, but several causes may be suggested:

such as decay and other natural causes, the wear and tear of the fragile papyrus, destruction by enemies, war, and persecution, and the burning or burial of worn or soiled manuscripts by friends.⁸

5. Papyri. The papyri are collections of papyrus. The papyrus fragments are single sheets, or fragments of sheets, of papyrus, upon which are written, in Greek, parts of the Bible.⁹

Sir Frederic Kenyon has described the process of making papyrus:

Throughout the Graeco-Roman world, which included Palestine and Syria, books were written on papyrus, a material made out of the pith of the stems of the papyrus plant, which then grew plentifully in the Nile. This pith was cut into thin strips, which were joined by glue, water and pressure into sheets, which again were fastened together, side by side, so as to form long rolls, on which the writing was inscribed in columns. It is only within our own time that we have come to know much about papyrus books, and this is entirely due to the discoveries that have been made in Egypt. Papyrus, though it must have been fairly strong when new, is a delicate material. It is easily destroyed by damp, and when dry tends to become very brittle. Consequently, with the exception of some charred rolls found in the ruins of Herculaneum, which was buried by the great eruption of Vesuvius in A. D. 79, no papyrus books have survived save in Egypt, where the soil is so dry that even fragile objects, when once buried in the sands, may be preserved for centuries. It is from the graves and ruins and rubbish-heaps of Egypt that writings on papyrus have been restored to us in great numbers.¹⁰

Until quite recently it was supposed that the papyrus roll continued in general use for books until the early part of the fourth century, A. D., when it was superseded by the vellum codex¹¹ (see definition of "codex" above). But the discovery of the Chester Beatty papyri has proved that there was an intermediate stage between the papyrus roll and the vellum codex for the Chester Beatty papyri are a group of papyrus codices.¹²

6. Special use of word recently. In the statement of the problem under investigation the word "recently" was used in a special sense. It was used to mean the period of the last one hundred years. For it has only been within the last century that the most important Greek manuscripts have been discovered or made available to Biblical scholars.

7. Text. The term text, as used in this study:

denotes a body of words which make up an edition of a document or work; it is the very words themselves. It has no reference to the book itself, nor to the form and meaning of the words. The Bible contained one original text which, as far as anyone knows, does not now exist. The texts of the manuscript copies which do exist vary through copying, and it is the work of the textual critic to construct from these copies a text which will be practically equivalent to the original.¹³

8. Textual criticism. Because of the variety of the documentary sources from which the original text of the New Testament must be derived a special branch of Biblical learning is called for - this special branch of Biblical learning so needed is called textual criticism. Its objective is to ascertain, and restore, as far as is possible, the original text of apostolic writers, and thus to furnish a faithful substitute for the lost autographs. It aims to show what the apostolic writers actually wrote.¹⁴

9. Textus Receptus or Received Text. The Textus Receptus (commonly called the Received Text) was the Greek text of Erasmus, with various changes and improvements of Stephens, Beza, and the Elzevirs. This text assumed a stereotyped character, and acquired absolute dominion among scholars.¹⁵

The Textus Receptus, or Received Text was used as a basis for the Authorized, or King James Version of the New Testament.

For two hundred and fifty years, and to a great extent even to-day, this Greek text and this English Bible remained in possession of the field, and few people realized that they were not wholly satisfactory. It needed three centuries of work to collect the materials necessary for their improvement, to digest the results, and to set them before the world at large.¹⁶

F. Statement of Organization

Following this introductory chapter the remaining part of this study has been divided into five additional chapters. Chapter two shows that the development in the Greek text of the New Testament has brought about the greatest demand for the main English versions of the New Testament. In chapter three a brief historical sketch of the main epochs in the improvement of the printed text of the Greek New Testament is given. Chapter four points out the methods by which the science of textual criticism goes about seeking to restore the original text of the New Testament. In chapter five a study is made of the significance to the problem which the recent discovery of the most important Greek manuscripts has made. The final chapter, chapter six, sets forth a summary of the whole study and then lists the conclusions which have been arrived at as a result of this investigation.

CHAPTER II

THE GREEK TEXTS USED AS A BASIS FOR THE MAIN ENGLISH VERSIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

A. Introduction

The three great English translations of the Holy Bible made since the seventeenth century have been: The Authorized or King James Version, The Revised Version with its American counterpart - The American Standard Version, and The Revised Standard Version.

In this chapter a study was made of the significance of the Greek texts of the New Testament which were used as a basis for these English translations. As this study was made it was seen that it has been the discovery of many more ancient manuscripts, and an increased knowledge and skill in the use of the Greek language, that have made the greatest contribution to the need for these various English versions of the New Testament.

Following the study undertaken a summary statement concerning the results of this phase of the investigation was made and then conclusions have been stated based upon this study.

B. The Authorized or King James Version of 1611

The beginnings of the movement that ended in the translation of the Authorized Version were apparently unpremeditated. King James had summoned a conference to meet at Hampton Court in January, 1604, to consider complaints which had been made by the Puritans that there were mistranslations of the Scriptures in the prayer book. At this

conference Dr. John Reynolds, president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, made a recommendation for a new revision of the Great Bible and the Bishops' Bible.¹⁷

So far as it is known this conference was adjourned without taking any definite steps towards the making of a new translation. But the words of the president of Oxford had been sown in fruitful soil. James I was thoroughly in agreement with the idea of a new revision of the Bible. So he, therefore, entered heartily into the preparation and execution of a plan to provide for the making of a uniform translation under royal authority.¹⁸

King James seemed to regard this as an opportunity to do a popular and permanent piece of work on the Bible. His own Bible-trained spirit made the whole enterprise of interest and challenge to him. By July 22, 1604, James had appointed fifty-four learned men for the task of translating the Bible. This group included Anglican churchmen, Puritans, and laymen. They were organized into six groups - two at Westminster, two at Oxford, and two at Cambridge. Each of these six groups worked on a specified portion of Scripture.¹⁹

The new version was completed seven years after the Hampton Court Conference. In 1611, at London, it was published in a large folio volume with a dedication "To the Most High and Mighty Prince James, by the Grace of God King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc." and with a very long and learned preface by Dr. Miles Smith.²⁰

In regards to the manuscript sources for the Greek text used as basis for the Authorized English version, the translators, as far as

is known, had no documentary sources available for their use. They were confined to a few printed editions of the Greek Testament. These editions presented a text derived from comparatively late cursive manuscripts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The translators relied chiefly on the text of Beza (fourth or fifth edition, 1598), from which they departed only in about one hundred and ninety places.²¹

The science of textual criticism had not yet been born when the Authorized Version was made because the material used by textual critics had not yet been discovered or made accessible. Of the oldest uncial manuscripts only two - Codex Bezae for the Gospels and Acts, and Codex Claromontanus for the Epistles - were known. Even these two manuscripts were scarcely used by Beza, who had come into possession of them. The Alexandrian manuscript did not reach England until seventeen years after the publication of the Authorized Version, and the still older and more important manuscripts, the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus were entirely unknown for they did not come to light until in the nineteenth century. The translators had no critical edition of the ancient versions available either, although they did use Jerome's Vulgate. They were also acquainted to some extent with the Peshito version and many modern versions which had no textual authority. The ancient fathers were known, but the critical examination of their writings for textual purposes did not begin until in the eighteenth century.²²

Schaff said,

With such a defective apparatus we need not be surprised at the large number of false readings and interpolations which obscure or mar the beauty and weaken the force of the primitive text.²³

The Greek learning of the translators was sufficient to enable them to read the original Scriptures with ease, but the more delicate shades of the Greek syntax were unknown in their age. The Greek grammars, dictionaries and concordances available were very imperfect. This is the reason why innumerable arbitrary and capricious violations of the article, tenses, prepositions and little particles have appeared in the translation.²⁴

In spite of these serious faults

For almost three centuries the Authorized, or King James, Version has been the Bible of the English-speaking world. Its simple, majestic Anglo-Saxon tongue, its clear, sparkling style, its directness and force of utterance have made it the model in language, style, and dignity of some of the choicest writers of the last two centuries. Its phrasing is woven into much of our noblest literature; and its style... has exerted very great influence in molding that ideal of simplicity, directness, and clarity which now dominates the writing of English. It has endeared itself to the hearts and lives of millions of Christians and has molded the characters of leaders in every walk of life. During all these centuries the King James Version has become a vital part of the English-speaking world, socially, morally, religiously, and politically.²⁵

C. The Revised Version of 1881
and the American Standard Version of 1901

For more than two centuries the Authorized Version held undisputed sway in the English-speaking world. Only occasional efforts were made to improve it, and these efforts were personal and unauthorized.²⁶

In the nineteenth century, however, the defects of the English Bible became more and more apparent as Biblical scholarship progressed.

First, an older and purer text had been brought to light by the discovery and publication of manuscripts, and the critical researches and editions of Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Alford, Westcott and Hort. Secondly, the Greek grammars, dictionaries, and philological commentaries, that had been published, furnished accurate renderings, some of them had even been accompanied with full translations.²⁷

"These textual, grammatical, and exegetical improvements greatly stimulated the zeal for new translations of the whole Bible or the New Testament in all Protestant countries."²⁸

Finally, on the 10th of February, 1870, the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury started the long-desired revision movement by adopting a resolution offered by Bishop Wilberforce, and seconded by Bishop Ellicott to the effect:²⁹

That a committee of both Houses be appointed to report on the desirableness of a Revision of the Authorised Version of the Old and New Testaments, whether by marginal notes or otherwise, in those passages where plain and clear errors, whether in the Hebrew or Greek text originally adopted by the translators, or in the translations made from the same, shall on due investigation be found to exist.³⁰

This important resolution was adopted and a committee was appointed to make the investigation. The committee was to report by the following May. After due consideration this committee recommended a resolution that a revision should be undertaken. Both Houses of Convocation adopted this resolution and in addition provided that a body of its own members should be nominated to undertake the work of revision. These members were to "be at liberty to invite the co-operation of any, eminent for scholarship, to whatever nation or religious body they may belong."³¹

The Church of England took the lead in the management of the movement. A committee of sixteen men was appointed to carry out the letter and spirit of the revision resolution. The full number of the Revision Committee was fifty-four. This general committee was organized into two companies, the Old Testament and the New Testament, of twenty-seven members each. The New Testament Company was formally organized and began work on June 22, 1870, in the famous Jerusalem Chamber of Washington Deanery in London. On the thirtieth of June the Old Testament Company began its long and arduous toil.³²

In 1870 Dr. Angus, one of the members of the Revision Committee, visited America and held a conference with some American scholars on the possibility of co-operation with the British Revision Committee. A plan for such co-operation was framed and a representative list of American Biblical scholars was drawn up. After this plan and list of names was approved by the British Revision Committee, a body of thirty men was organized on December 7, 1871. This group of men began active service on October 4, 1872, divided into Old and New Testament companies, after the pattern of the British organizations. Details of the plan of co-operation with the British Revision Committee were not easily arranged or adjusted and it was not until 1875 that a mutually agreeable and workable scheme was concluded.³³

The New Testament companies completed their task first. The whole time devoted to the work by the British New Testament Company was ten and one-half years. The first revision was completed at the end of six years, and the second by the end of two and one-half years more. The remainder of the time was occupied with the consideration

of the suggestions made by the American New Testament Company on the second revision, and with many other details and special questions that had arisen. Finally on May 17, 1881, Bishop Ellicott, one of the two men who had made the first resolution in 1870 to undertake the revision, laid the first copy of the Revised New Testament before the Convocation of Canterbury. On that day, May 17, 1881, the Revised New Testament was published and put on sale in England, and on May 20, 1881, in the United States.³⁴

In the Revised New Testament thus published, under the terms on which the two committees worked together, there was included an "Appendix" that included a list containing all the remaining important differences of reading and rendering suggested by the American Committee, but which the British Committee should decline to adopt. This "Appendix" was to be included in every copy of the Revised Version published during a period of fourteen years. The American Committee pledged themselves, for the same period, not to sanction the publication of any other edition of the Revised Version than the ones issued by the University Presses of England.³⁵

The British Committee disbanded soon after the conclusion of its work, but the American Committee continued for it saw the possibility that an American revision of the Revised Version might be desired sometime in the future. In a few years it became apparent that such an American revision was needed. On August 26, 1901, this version was issued to the public by Thomas Nelson and Sons of New York City. Its title page was the same as that of the Revised Version with this significant additional note, "Newly Edited by the American

Revision Committee. A. D. 1901. Standard Edition" - thus it has come to be known as "The American Standard Version." This version embodied the ripest Biblical scholarship of Great Britain and America.³⁶

The chief peculiarity of the Revised New Testament lay in the fact that it represented a much older, and, in the judgment of all competent scholars, a more accurate Greek text. The discovery of the original Greek text of the New Testament had been the task of textual critics, since the latter part of the eighteenth century. The labors of the textual critics during this period had convinced New Testament scholars that the original text had been substantially recovered.³⁷

While in minor details there was room for discussion, the position of both the English and American New Testament Companies was decidedly in favor of accepting the text resulting from the labors of these critics, in preference to the uncritical text on which the Authorized Version was based. But neither company attempted 'to construct a continuous and complete Greek text,'....³⁸

The revisers did not construct a complete Greek text, but the Greek Testament of Westcott and Hort harmonized essentially with the text adopted by the revisers for they differed in only about two hundred places.³⁹

The Revised Versions of the New Testament were well received both in England and America although there was adverse criticism from many.

But no one can successfully deny that the English Revised Version and the American Standard Version provided the most faithful and accurate translation of the New Testament which had yet been produced. An advance to a more perfect translation could only begin by building on their achievements.⁴⁰

D. The Revised Standard Version of 1946

In 1929 the copyright on the American Standard Version was offered by Thomas Nelson and Sons to the International Council of Religious Education. It was accepted promptly and proceedings were set in motion for a revision. The American Standard Bible Committee was constituted. This committee was composed of leading Biblical scholars of the country. They were instructed to consider the advisability of revision, and to make recommendations as to the character and basic principles of such a version, if it should be decided a new version was needed.⁴¹

The issue was debated long and earnestly, but, after two years of wrestling with the question it was decided that a revision was needed. Financial troubles overtook the committee and not much was done for several years. Finally, in 1936, Dr. Roy G. Ross, General Secretary of the International Council, was able to negotiate an agreement for the advance of working capital against prospective royalties. With this financial aid for expenses involved the International Council at its meeting in February, 1937, took up once more the consideration of the revision.⁴²

The action of that meeting of the council was formalized in a motion which became a sort of charter for the entire project. The council stated their motion in the following words:

That we record the conviction that there is need for a version which embodies the best results of modern scholarship as to the meaning of the Scriptures, and expresses this meaning in English diction which is designed for

use in public and private worship and preserves those qualities which have given to the King James a supreme place in English literature. We, therefore, define the task of the American Standard Bible Committee to be that of revision of the present American Standard Edition of the Bible in the light of the results of modern scholarship, this revision to be designed for use in public and private worship, and to be in the direction of the simple, classic English style of the King James Version.⁴³

The committee agreed that their task was one of revision of the American Standard Version in the light of the King James Version. The objective was not a new translation.⁴⁴ Dr. Luther A. Weigle, Chairman of the Revision Committee, has stated that the reasons for undertaking the revision were threefold:

1. The English Revised Version of 1881 and its variant, the American Standard Version of 1901 are mechanically exact, literal, word-for-word translations, which follow the order of the Greek words, as far as this is possible, rather than the order which is natural to English. "These versions convey the meaning of the Scriptures more accurately than the King James Version, but they have lost much of its beauty and power."⁴⁵

2. Partly because of the evidence afforded by newly discovered manuscripts of the New Testament, but chiefly because of the vast body of Greek papyri that have been unearthed in Egypt, scholars are better equipped today than they were sixty years ago both to determine the original text of the Greek New Testament and to understand its language.⁴⁶

3. The Bible is not merely an historical document and a classic of English literature. It is above all the Word of God. "That

Word must not be hidden in ancient phrases which have changed or lost their meaning, it must stand forth in language that is direct and clear and meaningful to the people of today."⁴⁷

Frederick T. Grant said:

Even if there had been no other reason for a fresh revision of the New Testament, it would have been required by the discovery of additional manuscripts and the change that has come over textual criticism since 1881, the date of the English revision upon which the American edition of 1901 was based.⁴⁸

Undoubtedly the most important of these newly discovered manuscripts was the discovery in 1931 of fragments of three New Testament papyrus manuscripts referred to as the Chester Beatty Papyri. The discovery and importance of these papyri was studied in Chapter V of this thesis, but it should be mentioned here that:

These fragments are of extraordinary importance, as the leading experts agree that they were copied for the most part in the third century - a hundred years, ^{presumably,} before Vaticanus and Sinaiticus!⁴⁹

In addition to the discovery and publication of Greek and Syriac manuscripts, considerable attention had been given to other versions, such as the Sahidic, the Armenian and above all the Latin. The result of this study has been a quantity of fresh discoveries and new publications including better editions of existing manuscripts and versions already known.⁵⁰

In light of this Frederick C. Grant further wrote:

All this new material for textual criticism has to be evaluated and assimilated by New Testament scholars. Its influence upon both the editing and the translating of the New Testament is apparent in all the standard editions of the text since 1881, and in many

of the newer translations. And it simply demanded a fresh revision of the Revised Version.⁵¹

The members of the revision committee used no one Greek text as the basis for their work of translation. Instead they followed an eclectic principle in guiding them in the selection of the variant readings. The 17th edition of Nestle's Greek New Testament (Stuttgart, 1941), will be found to contain either in the text or in the margin the readings adopted by the revisers.⁵² However, Price wrote that the authoritative original text employed by the revisers in the case of the New Testament was Westcott and Hort's Greek text.⁵³

A statement made by Frederick C. Grant has thrown further light on the matter of the textual basis for the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament.

It was a part of our commission to take into account the progress of modern Biblical research. This most certainly includes textual research or criticism. We have endeavored to discharge this part of our commission as faithfully as we could and it is really extraordinary how often, with the fuller apparatus of variant readings at our disposal, and with the eclectic principle now more widely accepted, we have concurred in following Westcott and Hort. Not that we agreed in advance in favor of Hort - quite the contrary, there was no such unanimity; our agreement is really a tribute to Westcott and Hort, which is still the great classical edition of modern times.⁵⁴

The revisers state that they made considerable use of the Chester Beatty fragments. In fact they consulted them constantly, and in several places adopted readings from that source when supported by other sources. Usually it was found that the Beatty fragments agreed with the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts. In the most important

passages where the Revised Standard Version differs from the American Standard Version it will be found that the new revisers have followed Codex Sinaiticus - Codex Vaticanus - Chester Beatty papyri (or some one or two of them) in the changed passages.⁵⁵

On February 11, 1946, the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament was published by Thomas Nelson & Sons, New York, under copyright by The International Council of Religious Education. The publication was celebrated with a service of thanksgiving and dedication conducted by the council which was then in session in Columbus, Ohio.⁵⁶

It should be stated here that:

It will be obvious to the careful reader that still in 1946, as in 1881 and in 1901, no doctrine of the Christian faith has been affected by the revision, for the simple reason, that out of the thousands of variant readings in the manuscripts, none has turned up thus far that requires a revision of Christian doctrine.⁵⁷

E. Summary and Conclusions

Summary. The process of the revision of the English Bible has never reached a complete standstill. The changes in language usage alone over a considerable period of years have demanded a fresh revision of the Bible in any living language. For the purposes of this study, however, of primary interest has been the need for new English revisions of the New Testament as demanded by the results of Biblical scholarship in textual criticism. The discovery of new Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, and the better understanding of New Testament Greek grammar have been the most important factors in bringing about all the revisions of the English Bible made since the Authorized Version.

Conclusions. The following conclusions are based upon the study made in this chapter.

1. The King James Version has become a literary classic. Because of its literary excellence it will perhaps never be completely replaced by any other one English version. However, it is a translation based on an inferior Greek Text.

2. The Revised Version of 1881 and the American Standard Version of 1901 are based on the best available Greek text. Some think these translations lose much of the beauty of the King James Version because of their strict literalness in translation, but they are superior versions because they are based on a more accurate Greek text.

3. The Revised Standard Version of 1946 claims to be based on a better Greek text than even the American Standard Version of 1901, but upon examination it was found to follow essentially the same Greek text as that used by the revisers of the American Standard Version.

4. The student of the Word of God can read and study any of these English versions with complete confidence in the fact that he has in his hands the true Word of God.

CHAPTER III

THE HISTORY OF THE PRINTED TEXT OF THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

A. Introduction

The history of the printed text of the Greek New Testament has been divided into four main periods as follows:⁵⁸

(1) The period of the unlimited reign of the Textus Receptus, from 1516 to 1770.

(2) The transitional period from the Textus Receptus to the older Uncial Text, from 1770 to 1830.

(3) The period of the restoration of the oldest and purest text, from 1830 to 1881.

(4) The modern period, from 1881 to the present.

In this chapter an historical study of the main editions of the printed text of the Greek New Testament has been made. The men, the materials and the methods of textual criticism stand out in bold relief.

B. The Period of the Unlimited Reign of the Textus Receptus, From 1516 to 1770

The Textus Receptus. The text of Erasmus, with various changes and improvements of Stephanus, Beza and the Elzevirs, assumed a stereotyped character, and came to acquire absolute dominion among scholars. The Greek New Testaments printed in England were usually based on Stephanus and Beza while those printed on the continent were based on the Elzevirs.⁵⁹

The Protestant versions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (German, French, Dutch, English) in common use were made from this Erasmo - Elzevirian text, and gained the same authority among the laity which the former enjoyed among scholars. Both were practically considered to be the inspired Word of God, and every departure from them was looked upon with distrust. This pious superstition, although gradually undermined during the present century, still lingers, and will die very reluctantly; for religious prejudices and habits are exceedingly tenacious.⁶⁰

Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536). The first published edition of the Greek New Testament was that of the famous Desiderius Erasmus. This edition was published in 1516, just one year before the Reformation. Erasmus was the best classical scholar of his age. He furnished Luther and Tyndale the text for their vernacular versions. These versions of Luther and Tyndale became the most powerful levers of the Reformation in Germany and England.⁶¹

The entire critical apparatus of Erasmus never exceeded eight manuscripts. The oldest and best one of the manuscripts he had was used least because he was afraid of it. This manuscript was a curative of the tenth century which agrees better with the uncial text than it does with the received text. He also took the liberty of occasionally correcting or supplementing his text from the Vulgate, therefore, in more than twenty places his Greek text is not supported by any known Greek manuscript.⁶²

The Complutensian Polyglot. The Complutensian New Testament is a part of the Polygot Bible of Complutum. This "opus magnum," the greatest of its kind since the Hexapla of Origen, was prepared under the direction and at the expense of Cardinal Francis Ximenes de Cisneros, Archbishop of Toledo, Great Inquisitor, and Primeminister of

Spain. The Complutum Polygot Bible was first published in 1520, with papal approbation.⁶³

The text of the New Testament was mostly derived from late and inferior manuscripts which were unspecified, and not described, except in vague and exaggerated terms.⁶⁴

In its original shape this Complutum Polygot Bible may be called the Roman Catholic Text, as far as there is such a text.⁶⁵

Robert Stephanus (1503-1559). The editions of the great printer and scholar, Robert Stephanus, were published in Paris in 1546 and 1549. His "royal edition" of 1550 was the most celebrated, and the nearest source of the "textus receptus," especially for England. The text for this edition was taken mainly from Erasmus with marginal readings from the Complutensian edition, and fifteen manuscripts of the Paris library.⁶⁶

The edition of 1551, which was published by Stephanus at Geneva (where he spent his last years as a professed Protestant), though chiefly an inferior reprint of the "royal edition" of 1550, is remarkable for the verse divisions which appear for the first time. This edition contains the Greek text in the middle of the page, with the Latin Vulgate on the inner side, and the Erasmusian version on the outer side. The verse division breaks up the text sometimes into fragments instead of presenting it in natural sections; but it is convenient for reference and has become indispensable by long use.⁶⁷

Theodore Beza (1519-1605). Theodore de Beza, Calvin's friend and successor in Geneva, and the surviving patriarch of the Reformation, prepared four editions of Stephanus' Greek text, with some

changes and a Latin translation of his own. He came into possession of two uncial manuscripts of great value, but he made very little use of them, because they differed greatly from the Erasmus and Stephanic texts. The time had not yet arrived for the safe use of the science of textual criticism.⁶⁸

Beza was an eminent classical and Biblical scholar. Next to Calvin and Bullinger, he enjoyed the greatest respect and authority in the Church of England during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I.⁶⁹

His editions of the Greek New Testament were chiefly used for the authorized Version of 1611, along with the two last editions of Stephanus. This fact alone gives to Beza's editions a peculiar historical value.⁷⁰

The Elzevirs-Bonaventure Elzevir (1583-1652), and Abraham Elzevir (1592-1652). Two brothers, Bonaventure and Abraham Elzevir, who were enterprising publishers in Holland, issued, with the aid of unknown editors, several editions of the Greek New Testament at Leyden in 1624, 1633, and 1641. These editions were neatly printed, and of a handy size. They were popular and authoritative for a long period. In the preface to the second edition these words were boldly proclaimed: "Textum ergo habes, nunc ab omnibus receptum: in quo nihil immutatum aut corruptum damus."⁷¹ ("Therefore thou hast the text, now received by all, in which we give nothing altered or corrupt.")⁷² Hence the name "textus receptus," or commonly the "received text." This received text became a part of orthodoxy on the Continent, while in England Stephanus' text of 1550 acquired the same authority. Both editions, however, substantially agree.⁷³

It can be said that Erasmus is the first author, so to say, and the Elzevirs' and their editors, the last of the "textus receptus."⁷⁴

John Mill (1645-1707). John Mill issued his Novum Testament Graecum in 1707 following thirty years' labor. The text was from Stephanus' edition of 1550, but a vastly increased critical apparatus, gathered from manuscripts, versions and especially from patristic quotations, was added.⁷⁵

Mill may be regarded as the founder of textual criticism. He did not construct a new text, but provided a large apparatus of about 30,000 various readings for the use of others. He expressed the hope, in his very learned Prolegomena (p. clxvii. b), that the stock of evidence at the foot of his pages would enable the reader to discover the true reading in almost every passage.⁷⁶

Richard Bentley (1662-1742). Dr. Richard Bentley, the illustrious classical scholar and critic made extensive and expensive preparations for a new edition of the Greek and Latin Testament. Unfortunately he failed to execute his design, but he discovered the true principle which a century later was to be reasserted and executed by the critical genius of Lachman.⁷⁷

Bentley proposed to go back from the "textus receptus" to the oldest text of the first five centuries. He issued his "Proposals" for such an edition in 1720, with the last chapter of Revelation in Greek and Latin done as a specimen of what he wanted to do with the whole New Testament. This scheme was frustrated by an angry controversy and never issued, but if it could have been issued it would have shaken the foundations of the "textus receptus," and would have made a valuable contribution towards the establishment of a settled text.⁷⁸

Following Bentley's death active interest in Biblical criticism ceased in England for nearly a century. The work was carried on mainly by German scholars.⁷⁹

Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752). Johann Albrecht Bengel, Superintendent of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Wurtemberg, was a most original, profound, pregnant and devout commentator and author. He edited a Greek Testament at Tübingen, 1734, together with a critical apparatus, containing in three parts critical dissertations.⁸⁰

Bengel became a critic from conscientious scruples, but was confirmed in his faith by thorough research. When he studied theology at Tübingen, his inherited faith in the plenary inspiration of the Bible was disturbed by the thirty thousand variations in Mill's Greek Testament, and he determined to devote several years to the study of the text, and at last to prepare a new edition. He found that the variations leave the evangelical faith intact. His excellent motto in biblical criticism and exegesis was:

'Te totum applica ad textum,
Rem totam applica ad te.'⁸¹

This means literally: "Apply yourself to the entire text and the whole thing will have meaning for you."⁸²

He used mainly the "textus receptus," for the time was not yet ripe for a text of his own. However, he did make a few changes, and inserted some better readings into the text when he could show that they had already been printed in some good edition. In the margins he had five classes of readings: the genuine readings, those better than the text, those just as good, those not so good, and those to be rejected. He was the first one to divide the textual witnesses into groups. He also said that manuscripts should be weighed not counted.⁸³

J. J. Wetstein (1693-1754). Wetstein had a natural passion for the study of manuscripts. He made extensive literary journeys and collated about 102 manuscripts with greater care than had been done before.⁸⁴ He was the first textual critic to use the modern methods of manuscript notation, designating the uncials by capital letters and the minuscules by numbers.⁸⁵

C. The Period of Transition From the Textus Receptus to the Older Uncial Text, From 1770-1830

This period shows enlarged comparison of the three sources of the text, the discovery of critical canons, a gradual improvement of the "textus receptus" and approach to an older and better text; but the former was still retained as a basis on a prescriptive right.⁸⁶

Johann Jacob Griesbach (1745-1812). Griesbach was professor of divinity at Halle and then at Jena. He made the study of the textual criticism of the Greek New Testament his life-work. In him were combined those qualifications of accurate learning, patient industry, and sound judgment which are necessary for a good textual critic.⁸⁷ "His editions... and critical dissertations... mark the beginning of a really critical text, based upon fixed rules."⁸⁸ His theory of textual criticism commanded attention and challenged the text of the "textus receptus."⁸⁹

C. F. Matthaei (1774-1911). Matthaei was a professor and a most accurate philologist, but a very poor textual critic. He found a large number of manuscripts at Moscow which had not previously been examined. In 1782-1788 he published a New Testament in twelve parts, containing the Greek text with the Latin Vulgate, a critical apparatus, much information, and twenty-nine fascimiles of manuscripts.⁹⁰

J. M. A. Scholz (1794-1852). Scholz was the Roman Catholic professor at the University of Bonn in Germany. He did some valuable pioneer work in compiling a long list of manuscripts known to be in existence. His work as a collator is almost nullified by his poor work as a textual critic. In 1830-1836 he published at Leipsic an edition of the Greek New Testament in two volumes. He adopted Bengel's twofold classification of manuscripts. The text of his edition is very similar to that of Griesbach's, although his critical principles were the reverse.⁹¹

His judgment and ability were not equal to his zeal and industry, and all the critics who have examined his collations (Tischendorf, Bleek, Tregelles, and Scrivener) charge him with a great want of accuracy.⁹²

The edition of his Greek New Testament was received in England with more favor than in Germany, and was republished by Bagster in London.⁹³

The work of Matthaei and Scholz mark no advance upon the labors of Griesbach, but the work and new discoveries of these scholars went far to confirm Griesbach's critical judgment.

D. The Period of the Restoration of the Oldest and the Purest Text, From 1830-1881

During this period of fifty years a new era dawned in the history of textual criticism.

Karl Lachmann (1793-1851). Lachmann was professor of classical philology at Berlin. He was one of the greatest classical scholars and philologists in the world. When he turned his attention to

the Greek New Testament text he applied the same principles which he had used in editing the Greek and Latin classics.⁹⁴

He made an innovation in textual criticism by boldly casting aside the Received Text and the mass of late manuscripts, and reconstructing the text from the most ancient manuscripts, versions, and Fathers. By them he thought that he might recover, not always the exact words of the earliest form of the text circulated in the churches at the end of the 4th century. The Sinaitic manuscript had not yet been found, and the Vatican had not yet been edited; but he used the Vatican somewhat, with what few manuscripts and fragments he had (5th to 9th centuries), Origen and a few remains of Irenaeus, a few Latin Fathers, and the Latin version.⁹⁵

To him belongs the credit of having broken a new path. He established, with the genius and experience of a master critic, the true basis for restoring the text of the original Greek New Testament. He had the boldness to destroy the tyranny of the "textus receptus," and to substitute for it the older uncial text. The chief authority used by Lachmann was Codex Vaticanus.⁹⁶

The principles used by Lachmann are now generally acknowledged as correct. The great textual critics, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Westcott and Hort, built on his foundation, but with vastly increased resources and facilities.⁹⁷

Constantin Von Tischendorf (1815-1874). Tischendorf was by far the most industrious, enterprising, and successful textual critic of the nineteenth century. He began his preparations for the publishing of a critical edition of the Greek text of the New Testament in 1839 and 1840. He was challenged by the industry of Scholz and by the principles of Lachmann. As he began his work he was aiming at a text

based on the oldest authorities from the fourth to the sixth century. He visited all the principal libraries of Europe in search of documents. Repeated journeys were made by him to France, England, and Turkey. He also visited the Orient in 1844, 1853, and 1859. Tischendorf discovered, collated, copied and edited many important manuscripts. He has been especially noted for discovering, editing and publishing Codex Sinaiticus and for making available a more accurate edition of Codex Vaticanus.⁹⁸

Between 1841 and 1873 he issued no less than twenty-four editions of the Greek Testament.⁹⁹

Tischendorf started his work upon the basis of Lachmann, but with a much larger number of authorities. He intended to give the oldest and best text available with the aid of all authorities. In his last critical edition of the Greek New Testament, completed in 1872, he shows a decided preference for his favorite Sinaitic and other uncial manuscripts of the oldest date. His critical apparatus and digest below the text were the richest yet in existence. In fact this critical edition of Tischendorf is still not completely superseded.¹⁰⁰

Unfortunately Tischendorf did not live to prepare the indispensable "Prolegomena" to his critical edition. In this "Prolegomena" he was to have given a full description of his critical material and a key to the multitudinous and at times almost hieroglyphic abbreviations, together with such a list of "Addenda" and "Emendanda" as might have been suggested by his own further researches and the labors of other scholars. A stroke of apoplexy (May 5, 1873), followed by paralysis and death (December 7, 1874), stopped his labors,

and terminated a career of indomitable industry and great usefulness.¹⁰¹

Samuel Prideaux Tregelles (1813-1875). Tregelles was an English scholar and contemporary with Tischendorf. As Tregelles began his critical work he ignored the received text, and started anew with the most ancient manuscripts, versions, and Fathers. He personally examined all the more important existing uncial manuscripts throughout Europe. He collated all that had not been previously published. His edition, containing the Greek text, the Latin Vulgate, and a critical apparatus which was much fuller than that of Lachmann and not so full as Tischendorf's, appeared in parts from 1857 to 1872. On the whole, his edition does not differ very much from that of Tischendorf, although the Gospels were published before the discovery of Codex Sinaiticus and the appearance of Tischendorf's edition of the Vatican.¹⁰²

Schaff said of Tregelles:

...He was far behind Tischendorf in the extent of his resources, but more scrupulously accurate in the use of them. He left behind him a monumental work of painstaking, conscientious, and devout scholarship. But it needs to be corrected and supplemented from the Codex Sinaiticus, and the critical edition of the Codex Vaticanus, which he was not permitted to collate in Rome by the jealous authorities.¹⁰³

Like Tischendorf, he was prevented from completing his work for in 1870 he was struck down by paralysis while engaged in concluding the last chapters of Revelation. He never recovered, and so he could not take part in the labors of the English Revision Committee of which he was appointed a member.¹⁰⁴

Henry Alford (1810-1871). Alford deserves mention as a textual critic and a most zealous promoter of the revision of the English version. At first in his critical work he paid too much attention to the traditional text (the received text). But in the fifth edition of his Greek Testament he nearly rewrote the text and digest, chiefly based on the labors of Tregelles and Tischendorf, and in the sixth edition he collated also the Codex Sinaiticus and incorporated its readings.¹⁰⁵

He became disposed, as research and comparison went on, to place more and more weight on the evidence of few ancient manuscripts and versions, and less on the great array of later manuscripts.¹⁰⁶

F. H. A. Scrivener (1813-1891). Scrivener was an English scholar and textual critic. He edited and collated many manuscripts. He also carefully examined and reported on the earliest printed Greek Testaments and the Authorized Version and was one of the English revisers (1870-1881). He also wrote Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament which appeared in two large volumes. This work was full of material on textual criticism. It is still the fullest English authority. Three editions of this work appeared during his lifetime (1851, 1874, 1883), and one in 1884 after his death. In the main Scrivener was a defender of the received text.¹⁰⁷

B. F. Westcott (1825-1901) and F. J. A. Hort (1828-1892). These two Cambridge scholars and friends worked for nearly thirty years in the study of the New Testament text. At first they worked independently, then together. They studied the material collected by others, and worked out a theory of the history of the early transmission of the text which has been called the genealogical theory of

Westcott and Hort. In 1881 they published their edition of the Greek New Testament called, The New Testament in the Original Greek. This work was published in two volumes. Volume I contains their revised Greek text (580 pages) with critical notes on special passages; Volume II, written by Hort, contains the "Introduction" (324 pages) and "Appendix" (188 pages) and "Quotations from the Old Testament" which are marked by uncial type in the text.¹⁰⁸

The Greek Testament of Westcott and Hort presented the oldest and purest text which could be attained with the means of information at the command of textual critics in their generation. Their text will never entirely supersede the editions of Tischendorf and Tregelles, because these editions will long continue to be indispensable for their critical apparatus, and in a number of readings may deserve preference, but on the whole the text of Westcott and Hort was a decided advance towards a final text on which scholars may before long unite.

The aim of Westcott and Hort was

...not only to restore the Nicene text as a basis for further operations (as Lachmann did), but to reproduce at once (with Tischendorf and Tregelles) the "autograph" text, that is, "the original words of the New Testament so far as they now can be determined from surviving documents." They rely for this purpose exclusively on documentary evidence, without regard to printed editions. They make no material addition to the critical apparatus (like Wetstein, Scholz, Tischendorf, and Tregelles), but they mark a decided progress in the science of criticism (like Bentley, Bengel, Griesbach, and Lachmann). They follow with independent judgment and sound tact in the path of Lachmann in the pursuit of the oldest text, but go beyond the Nicene age and as near the apostolic age as the documents

will carry them with the use of the critical material of Tregelles and Tischendorf; they build on Griesbach's classification and estimate of documents; they advance upon all their predecessors in tracing the transcriptional history of the text and in the application of the genealogical method as the only way to rise up to the autograph fountainhead.¹⁰⁹

Westcott and Hort in their genealogical theory distinguished four types of text in surviving documents:

1. The Graeco-Syrian Text. This type of text was matured by the Greek and Syrian fathers in the latter part of the fourth century. "It is an eclectic text, which absorbs and combines readings from the early texts of different lands."¹¹⁰

2. The Western Text. This text was most easily recognized in the Old Latin Version, and in the few existing bilingual uncials which were written in the West. "It spread very rapidly and diverged from the original standard before the middle of the second century."¹¹¹ The text of the ante-Nicene fathers not connected with Alexandria is substantially Western. Its prevailing characteristics are a love of paraphrase, a tendency to enrich the text by parallel passages in the Gospels, and additions from traditional and even perhaps apocryphal sources.¹¹²

3. The Alexandrian or Egyptian Text. This text was found in the abundant quotations of the Alexandrian fathers. "It is characterized by the absence of extraneous matter and a delicate philological tact in changes of language."¹¹³

4. The Neutral Text. This text has been found to be the most free from later corruption and mixture, and comes nearest the autographs. It is best represented by Codex Vaticanus and next by Codex

Sinaiticus. These two manuscripts seem to have been independently derived from a common original not far from the autographs. Their agreement has been conclusive in determining the text when not contravened by strong internal evidence.¹¹⁴

Westcott and Hort believed that from these various types the apostolic text was to be restored by the genealogical method which was by the careful study of the history of the written text and the relations of descent and affinity which connect the several witnesses. All the existing documents are more or less mixed and embody a number of departures from the autographs. The autographs began to be corrupted in the first generation after the apostles. The great majority of changes date from the first and second centuries and were current by the fourth century, when the text began to assume a stereotyped form in the East because of the controlling influence of Constantinople.¹¹⁵

The influence of the work of Westcott and Hort has been tremendous. It has been widely received with favor and approval.

...the Westcott-Hort text soon became a standard for general usage, and other critical texts have not varied greatly from it. It marked, therefore, the final rejection of the "received text," and itself became a sort of *textus receptus* in Britain and America.¹¹⁶

E. The Modern Period From 1881 to the Present

The theory of Westcott and Hort, which produced their edition of the Greek New Testament, has not been accepted completely by all textual critics.

Dean Burgon and Dr. Scrivener, advocates of the received text, argued against the acceptance of the work of Westcott and Hort. Textual critics in the main, however, have accepted the theory of Westcott and Hort, although, in recent years there has been some modification of their theory by the emergence of a new classification of textual families.¹¹⁷

This new classification has been developed within the last few years as the result of the researches of many scholars. The greatest and most decisive part in this work was played by Dr. B. H. Streeter and Professor Kirsopp Lake.¹¹⁸

...Dr. Streeter proved that this type of text, which stood midway between neutral and Western, was used by Origen in certain commentaries and other works of his, written during the latter part of his life, when he was resident at Caesarea. Streeter accordingly felt justified in dubbing it the "Caesarean" text, and claiming for it a right to recognition as a definite family. Lake subsequently showed that there is reason to believe that Origen may have used this type of text before he left Alexandria for Caesarea; and the possibility that it may have been of Egyptian origin was strengthened when the Chester Beatty Gospels papyrus... was found to have a text of "Caesarean" character.¹¹⁹

Textual critics have awaited with interest the more exact critical value of this family.¹²⁰ For it may be that the so-called Caesarean text was "merely a correction of the Western text by the Alexandrian, and therefore later than both and secondary to them in importance."¹²¹

Progress will go on, but it will be along the lines of Westcott and Hort.¹²² For Westcott and Hort's system of textual criticism has prevailed more or less from 1881 to the present time. It has met

with some difficulties and opposition, yet, by most Biblical scholars it is still considered the best method of securing the purest text of the Greek New Testament.¹²³

F. Summary and Conclusions

Summary. This chapter has traced the history of the printed text of the Greek New Testament from the rise of the received text through to the publishing of Westcott and Hort's Greek New Testament in 1881. This brief historical sketch has shown that the textual critics by applying sound rules of textual criticism have given to us today a text of the New Testament which very nearly approaches the original text of the Greek New Testament. In all this process the hand of God can be seen in the preservation and restoration of the text of the Greek New Testament which scholars have made available to the Christian church today.

Conclusions. The following conclusions based on the study presented in this chapter have been reached:

1. The Greek New Testament available today has given us a text which most Biblical scholars believe very nearly approaches the autographic text.
2. As more and earlier manuscripts became available, more and more confidence could be placed in the printed text of the Greek New Testament.
3. Numerous variant readings have existed, but all the witnesses, and all the textual families into which the manuscripts may

be divided, agree on a Greek text which supports every article of Christian belief and practice.

CHAPTER IV

SECURING THE TRUE TEXT BY THE METHODS OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM

A. Introduction

The variety of documentary sources, from which the original text of the New Testament has been derived, calls for a special branch of Biblical learning, called "Textual Criticism."¹²⁴ The object of textual criticism

...is to ascertain and restore, as far as possible, the very text of the apostolic writers, and thus to furnish a faithful substitute for the lost autographs.... It is confined to the original form and integrity of the text, as far as it can be established by documentary evidence. It aims to show, not what the apostles and evangelists might have written or ought to have written, but simply what they actually did write. It has nothing to do with sectarian notions and tenets, or subjective likes and dislikes, but only with facts.¹²⁵

The science of textual criticism is of comparative recent origin having matured with the discovery and collection of the material obtained during the eighteenth century. Since then it has been given a mighty impulse by the discovery and study of the great Biblical manuscripts which were made available to Biblical scholars during the past one hundred years.¹²⁶

The importance of this branch of Biblical study and learning can hardly be overestimated for a pure text is the basis of exegesis and exegesis is the basis of dogmatics and ethics.¹²⁷ It has been the aim of textual criticism to obtain the purest text possible.

In this chapter it has been the author's purpose to show why there has been a need for the science of textual criticism. Then to point out the main sources for the work of the textual critic and to state the main principles of textual criticism which have been more or less accepted by the best modern textual critics. Next the results obtained by the textual critics have been briefly stated. Following this a summary statement was made based on this study and finally the conclusions reached as a result of the study were made.

B. The Need of Textual Criticism

"If we only had the autographs of the New Testament writers... the whole great library on the textual criticism of the New Testament would be needless."¹²⁸ But no autographs have ever been discovered. Providentially, however, the autographs were copied before they became illegible or lost.

From the end of the first century until our own day the process of copying and recopying has gone on. At first it was done by hand, but since the fifteenth century the copying and recopying has been done by means of the printing press. It has been difficult to copy any documents without making errors even with modern printing methods, where repeated revisions in the proof by a variety of readers have reduced the chance of error to a minimum. If misprints have often crept into the published text in spite of all the care and exactness of modern printing methods, how much more likely and easier would it have been for errors to occur when long texts were copied out laboriously by hand.¹²⁹

The necessity of textual criticism has arisen due to the vast number of variations in the documentary sources of the New Testament text due to the errors which were made by copiests and correctors.¹³⁰

The variations of the Greek text are partly unintentional or accidental, partly intentional or designed. Errors of the first class proceed either from misreading, or from mishearing (in case of dictation), or from fault of memory. Errors of the second class are due either to misjudgment, or to an innocent desire to correct supposed mistakes, to supply defects, to harmonize apparent discrepancies, or to wilful corruption for sectarian or ascetic purposes. Examples of wilful mutilation or corruption of the text are, however, exceedingly rare. Transcribers had too much reverence for the words of Christ and his inspired apostles to be guilty of it, though in making their choice between conflicting readings they would naturally be biassed by their theological opinions.¹³¹

The variations, which began very early with the first copies, continued to increase till the art of printing made unnecessary the work of transcribing the Scriptures and substituted typographical errors of copyists.¹³²

The variations which really involved the sense may be reduced to three classes - omissions, or additions, or substitutions, of words or phrases.¹³³

1. Omissions occur frequently from like endings. "When two lines or sentences end with the same word, the intervening words were often unconsciously overlooked and omitted."¹³⁴

2. Additions may be divided into several classes.

- a. Additions caused by transferring a genuine word or passage from one book to another.

- b. Amplifications of quotations from the Old Testament.¹³⁵

c. Insertions of words and proper names instead of pronouns from Lectionaries for the church service.¹³⁷

d. Additions from a love of paraphrase.¹³⁸

e. Additions from oral tradition, ancient literature, and explanatory notes.¹³⁹

3. Substitutions occurred when one word is substituted for another similar in spelling or sound, or apparently better suited to the context.¹⁴⁰ Other errors of substitution were made due to the aim of harmonizing passages, or of correcting a supposed error.¹⁴¹

C. The Sources of Textual Criticism

It has been stated that it is the task of the textual critic to reconstruct the text of the New Testament.

Wherever there are more readings than one, two classes of evidence are available for making the decision between them. We may compare the probability of the readings themselves, that is, employ internal evidence; and we may compare the authority of the documents which attest them, that is, employ external or documentary evidence.¹⁴²

The documentary evidence for the text of the New Testament consists of Greek manuscripts dating from the fourth to the sixteenth century, most of the earlier being in a fragmentary state; of ancient Versions in different languages; and of quotations found in the extant remains of the Fathers, written in Greek, in Latin; and to a small extent in Syriac.¹⁴³

The Greek manuscripts have furnished direct evidence for the text of the New Testament. Indirect evidence was furnished by the versions and by the quotations of the church fathers.

1. Greek Manuscripts. The earliest manuscripts of the New Testament were written on papyrus. The papyrus manuscripts were all

thought to have perished except a few scraps,¹⁴⁴ but there have been important discoveries of papyrus manuscript fragments within the past generation. "The most important of these are the Chester Beatty Biblical papyri, the discovery of which was announced by Sir Frederic Kenyon in The Times of Nov. 17, 1931."¹⁴⁵ The discovery and value of the Chester Beatty Biblical papyri is discussed in Chapter V of this thesis.

Most of the manuscripts which have been used by the textual critics were written on vellum or parchment. Manuscripts were divided into two main classes: uncials, or majuscules, and cursives or minuscules. Uncials were written in capital letters. Each letter was formed separately and there were no divisions between the words. Cursive manuscripts were written in smaller letters, in a running hand, the letters being connected and the words separated. Uncial manuscripts were the earliest, from the fourth to the ninth century; while cursives range from the ninth to the fifteenth century.¹⁴⁶ For the sake of brevity it has become customary to distinguish uncials by capital letters in Latin, Greek or Hebrew (A, B, *Σ*, etc.), and cursives for the most part by Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, 13, 22, 33, etc.).¹⁴⁷ Throughout this thesis, however, the manuscripts have been designated by the common names such as, Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus, etc., for the sake of clarity.

The most important vellum Greek manuscripts are: Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus. The importance of these great uncial manuscripts is described in Chapter V of this thesis.

2. Versions. Versions have been important in textual criticism because they are earlier than existing manuscripts, because their ages are known, and because they are generally authorized translations made either by a body of men or by a single recognized authority. On the other hand the evidence of the versions has been less direct than that of the manuscripts because the versions have had to be translated back into their original text where there was any case of doubt.¹⁴⁸

Versions by themselves are not able to establish any reading. They have only been used to supplement manuscript evidence.¹⁴⁹

3. Quotations From the Church Fathers. The third source of textual evidence has been furnished by quotations from the Greek Testament by other writers, especially the Church Fathers. This kind of evidence is called "the Evidence of Patristic Quotation." This source of evidence has been of limited value. The

testimony of the Fathers to the New Testament text is to be received with great caution, and not without the support of the oldest manuscripts and the versions. Where these agree with patristic testimony, the conclusion is as nearly decisive as it is possible to reach.¹⁵⁰

D. The Principles of Textual Criticism

By the judicious use of textual materials Biblical scholars have been able to detect and remove scribal errors and are now able to give us a text of the New Testament which very nearly approaches the autographs of the New Testament.¹⁵¹

Various "rules" for procedure in textual criticism have been

developed by the textual critics in their work of restoring the original text. Certain of these rules have proved of undoubted value, and some have become axioms.¹⁵² A summary of the rules of most importance can be given as follows:¹⁵³

- (1) The critic must be a trained scholar having a general knowledge of what must be looked for in order to make a choice of readings.
- (2) Every kind of evidence, internal and external, concerning a manuscript must be taken into account according to its intrinsic value: the place where and the conditions under which it was found, how it was preserved, character of the writing, materials, etc.
- (3) The sources of the text must be sifted and classified, and the authorities for the variants must be weighed rather than numbered. A reading must be judged by its value, not by the number of its witnesses. One independent manuscript may be worth a score that were copied from the same original.
- (4) The restoration of the pure text must be founded on the history and genealogy of the textual variations. The ancestry of a manuscript must be traced as far back as possible.
- (5) The reading of an older manuscript is preferable to that of a later, because it is presumably nearer the source. This is not rigid, for sometimes a later copy may represent a more ancient reading.
- (6) In general, the shorter reading is preferable to the longer, because insertions and additions are more probable than omissions.
- (7) The more difficult and obscure reading is preferable to the one that is more simple and easy in construction. A difficult reading might trouble a scribe and lead to a change.
- (8) That reading is preferable which best explains the origin of the other readings or variations.
- (9) That reading is preferable which best suits the literary style of the author, for copyists usually disregard the idiosyncresies of the author.
- (10) That reading which bears the earmarks of doctrinal controversy should be ruled out in favor of one which no suspicion is attached.
- (11) The agreement of the most ancient witnesses of all classes decides the true reading against all mediaeval copies

and printed editions. (12) The primary uncials, Sinaitic, Vatican, Ephraem, and Alexandrian, especially the first two, if sustained by ancient versions and ante-Nicene citations, outweigh all later authorities, and give us presumably the original text.¹⁵⁴

In application these "rules" have to be employed together and used wisely.

E. The Results of Textual Criticism

The mere existence of such an enormous number of variations in the text of the New Testament has continued to startle many Christians. Some fear that the whole question of the discovery of the true text has been thrown into hopeless confusion. The exact autograph text may never be completely recovered, yet the text that the textual critics have made available at the present very nearly approaches the autographs.¹⁵⁵

Westcott and Hort have said:

The whole area of variation between readings that have ever been admitted, or are likely to be ever admitted, into any printed texts is comparatively small; and a large part of it is due merely to differences between the early uncritical editions and the texts formed within the last half-century with the help of the priceless documentary evidence brought to light in recent times. A small fraction of the gross residue of disputed words alone remains after the application of the improved methods of criticism won from the experience of nearly two centuries of investigation and discussion. If comparative trivialities, such as changes of order, the insertion or omission of the article with proper names, and the like, are set aside, the words in our opinion still subject to doubt can hardly amount to more than a thousandth part of the whole New Testament.¹⁵⁶

The twentieth century has seen no greater authority in the field of textual criticism than Sir Frederic Kenyon, who died in 1952.¹⁵⁷ This great Biblical scholar has said:

No fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith rests on a disputed reading. Constant references to mistakes and divergences of reading... might give rise to the doubt whether the substance, as well as the language, of the Bible is not open to question. It cannot be too strongly asserted that in substance the text of the Bible is certain.... The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true Word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries.¹⁵⁸

F. Summary and Conclusions

Summary. This chapter has pointed out the fact that, because of scribal and other errors, corruptions have entered into the text of the New Testament. The science of textual criticism came into being in order to recover the form of the original text as nearly as possible. The evidence by which the Bible text has been examined and restored by textual criticism was threefold. It consisted of (1) Manuscripts, (2) Versions, (3) Quotations in the Church Fathers. As the textual critics have undertaken their work they have operated on certain guiding principles or rules. Today, as a result of the extensive labors of the textual critics, there exists a text of the Greek New Testament that very nearly approaches the original text.

Conclusions. According to certain recognized authorities in the field of textual criticism the following conclusions have been reached:

1. The textual critics have recovered very nearly the true text which was contained in the autographs.

2. The primary uncial manuscripts, Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, together with the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri, outweigh all later authorities in manuscript evidence for the work of textual criticism.

3. The testimony of these great manuscripts must be verified, however, by the ancient versions and quotations from the Fathers.

4. The Christian may be assured that the Bible he reads and studies today is truly the Word of God, handed down without essential error from generation to generation.

CHAPTER V

THE MOST IMPORTANT GREEK MANUSCRIPTS SUPPORTING THE PRESENT TEXT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

A. Introduction

The Greek manuscripts are the most direct and important source used by the textual critics in their work of restoring the purest possible text of the New Testament. Manuscripts are divided into two classes: the vellum manuscripts and the papyrus manuscripts. The vellum manuscripts are further divided into two groups: uncials (written in capital letters), of which 212 have been cataloged, and minuscules (written in cursive style), of which 2,429 have been cataloged.¹⁵⁹ The uncial manuscripts have been known for the longest time. They are commonly designated in a critical apparatus by capital letters of the Roman and Greek alphabets, and by one Hebrew letter א (Aleph). Thus, the two oldest vellum manuscripts, Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus are referred to, respectively, as B and א (Aleph). However, in this study these two manuscripts are designated by their full names - Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus.

The manuscripts made of papyrus are commonly listed separately from those made of vellum. Only fifty-one Greek papyri are actually known to exist. It is customary to refer to the papyri by the letter "P" followed by a small superior number. The most important manuscripts in this class are the Chester Beatty Papyri of the New Testament.¹⁶⁰ In this study these manuscripts are called by their book

names (codex of the Gospels, etc.), instead of by their critical designation, p46, etc.

Some 2,692 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament are known to exist.¹⁶¹ But not all of this number are of equal importance to textual critics. In fact only a small number of manuscripts are of primary importance for use in textual criticism. The earliest manuscripts of the Greek Bible, the Vaticanus, the Sinaiticus, the Alexandrinus, and the Chester Beatty papyri, are the earliest records available to the text of the New Testament.¹⁶² Therefore, these manuscripts are the most important for use in textual criticism.

In this chapter a special study has been made of the significance of this group of manuscripts, except one, for the Codex Alexandrinus has not been dealt with in this study. By a special study into the importance of the other three oldest and most important Greek manuscripts it was pointed out how textual critics have been able to arrive at the present Greek text of the New Testament which all competent Biblical scholars believe very nearly approaches the original text.

B. Codex Sinaiticus

The crowning achievements of the life of Tischendorf were the discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus and the editing of the Codex Vaticanus. The story of his discovery of Codex Sinaiticus is a story full of romance and adventure.¹⁶³

As a young man of twenty-nine, with three editions of the New Testament already to his credit, Tischendorf set out to carry his researches further afield. This journey was made under the patronage

of King Frederick Augustus of Saxony. During the course of his journey one day he visited the monastery of St. Catherine at the foot of Mount Sinai.¹⁶⁴ This was a fitting place for the discovery he was to make, because from Mount Sinai the law of Jehovah had been proclaimed for all generations to come. Here this precious document had been providentially preserved for many centuries, unknown and unused, till discovered by Tischendorf on the fourth of February, 1859.¹⁶⁵

Tischendorf was allowed to visit in the monastery of St. Catherine. One day during the course of a visit he saw in a basket a number of leaves of vellum with fine and obviously very early uncial writing on them. He was informed that these leaves were about to be destroyed, as many similar leaves had already been. He asked for and was granted permission to keep these leaves, which were forty-three in number. They were found to contain portions of the Septuagint, from the books of I Chronicles, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, and Esther. The writing on these sheets impressed Tischendorf as being older than any he had previously seen. He also saw a considerable number of leaves from the books of Isaiah and Maccabees, but these he was not allowed to take away. There was nothing that suggested the manuscript included or had ever included, the New Testament.¹⁶⁶

For the present Tischendorf was satisfied with his forty-three leaves as this was no small haul. He returned in triumph with his find to Leipzig, and there, with the name of Frederick Augustus attached to it, he deposited his treasure in the University Library. He then proceeded to edit these leaves, all the time being very careful not to tell whence he had obtained them. For he was sure there

were more leaves to be had, and he did not want to put anyone else on the track. So he merely said that the leaves appeared to have been always lying in hiding in Egypt or at any rate in the neighborhood of Egypt. This was a true statement but a very ingenious economy of truth.¹⁶⁷

Nine years later Tischendorf was able to revisit the monastery at Sinai, but this time he could obtain no news of the manuscript. He supposed then, that some more fortunate traveller had carried off the prize for which he was seeking. Six years later, however, he was back again. This time he worked on the manuscripts visible in the library of the monastery, but still he received no word of the lost treasure he was seeking until, on the last evening of his stay, he showed to the steward of the monastery a copy of the edition of the Septuagint which he had produced a few years before. Whereupon the steward replied that he also had a copy of the Septuagint. He then took from a shelf a parcel wrapped in cloth. As he unwrapped the cloth there was revealed to Tischendorf's astonished eyes a mass of leaves which he easily recognized as belonging to his long-sought manuscript.¹⁶⁸

This was a far greater prize than Tischendorf had ever had reason to expect or even hope for. Not only were there 199 more leaves of the Old Testament, but the whole New Testament was there, complete from beginning to end, with the Epistle of Barnabas and part of the "Shepherd" of Hermas. As one can well imagine Tischendorf was almost beside himself with delight.¹⁶⁹ In his own writings he describes this discovery thus:

Not till I reached my chamber did I give myself up to the overpowering impression of the reality; my wildest hopes and dreams were more than accomplished. I knew that in my hands I held an incomparable treasure for Christian learning. While in the deepest emotion I now recognized, too, on the leaves before my eyes in pale characters, the superscription 'The Shepherd.' In fact, there lay before me not only the entire Epistle of Barnabas, but also a portion of the Shepherd of Hermas. Both these writings were regarded by many congregations before the middle of the fourth century as constituent parts of the New Testament, but had well-nigh disappeared after the Church had once declared them apocryphal. The books of the New Testament were complete: what an immense advantage over our most renowned Bible manuscripts - the Vaticanus and the Alexandrine! Of the Old Testament, not only were those eighty-six leaves recovered, but - and how precious was every single leaf - one hundred and twelve others besides, including all the poetical books.

It was past eight in the evening; one lamp feebly lit my chamber; there were no means of warming, although in the morning it had been icy cold in the convent. But in the presence of the found treasure it was not possible for me to sleep. I immediately set myself to work to copy off the Epistle of Barnabas, whose first part was hitherto known only in a defective Latin translation. It was clear to me that I must copy the whole manuscript, if I should not be able to get possession of the original.¹⁷⁰

The next day Tischendorf asked if he might take the entire manuscript to Cairo in order to copy it. The Superior was absent, and one monk objected, so Tischendorf departed without it. On applying to the Superior at Cairo, where a branch of the monastery was located, the latter gave permission for Tischendorf to copy the manuscript. A camel-rider was sent by the Superior to fetch it. From Cairo, then, the manuscript was handed out sheet by sheet for Tischendorf and his assistants to copy.¹⁷¹

Meanwhile Tischendorf suggested to the monks that they should present the manuscript to the Czar of Russia who was the protector of the Greek Church. The monks at that time desired the Czar's influence in connection with a disputed election to the Archbishopric of Sinai, so they were inclined to accept the proposal. But, as is apt to be customary in the East, the negotiations dragged on for a long time. Finally after nine months of negotiations Tischendorf was allowed to take Codex Sinaiticus to St. Petersburg in order to superintend the printing of it. Shortly afterwards the desired appointment of the archbishop was made. Throughout the proceedings Tischendorf acted in full accord with the heads of the monastery, and when the Czar failed to make the return gift which Eastern custom expected, he again intervened, and procured the gift of the very substantial sum of 9,000 roubles plus a number of decorations.¹⁷²

By this discovery Tischendorf had brought to light a manuscript of the whole of the New Testament and nearly half the Old, a hundred years older than any extant manuscript except the, as yet, very imperfectly known Codes Vaticanus. The Sinaiticus is a magnificent book, written with four columns to the page in the most beautiful uncial writing on pages of fine vellum which measure fifteen by thirteen and one-half inches. The whole is in admirable preservation. It was first published in full by Tischendorf in facisimile type in 1862. Then in 1911 the Oxford University Press published a photographic facsimile of the New Testament, followed in 1922 by the Old Testament, both from photographs taken by Professor Kirsopp Lake and published under his editorship.¹⁷³

Codex Sinaiticus is the most complete, and one of the oldest manuscripts available to textual critics. Tischendorf assigned it to the middle of the fourth century, or to the age of Eusebius, the historian, who died in 340 A. D. He thinks its not at all improbable that it was one of the fifty copies which Constantine had ordered to be prepared for the churches of Constantinople in 331. Then it was sent by the Emperor Justinian to the Monastery of Mount Sinai, which was founded by him. It is much disfigured by numerous corrections made by the original scribes or several later writers. It often confirms Codex Vaticanus in characteristic readings, and omissions. It frequently agrees, also, with the old Latin Version, but in many and important cases it supports other witnesses and thus proves its independence. It has contributed very much towards the settlement of the text, and was instrumental in stimulating the progress of the revision movement in England which ultimately led to the Revised Version and the American Standard Version.¹⁷⁴

The Codex Sinaiticus remained in the great Imperial Library at St. Petersburg for nearly three-quarters of a century. During the Russian Revolution this manuscript, along with other priceless collections which had been gathered by the Czar, fell into the hands of the Soviet Government. In December, 1933, the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (U. S. S. R.) sold it to the British Museum for about \$500,000. The Literary Digest said that this is "the greatest book purchase on record."¹⁷⁵ The Sinaiticus now resides in the British Museum where it lies side by side with the Codex Alexandrinus.

Codex Vaticanus

After having discovered and published the Codex Sinaiticus, Tischendorf turned his attention next to Codex Vaticanus.

Codex Vaticanus was brought to Rome shortly after the Vatican Library was established in 1448 by Pope Nicholas V. Dr. Scrivener and others conjecture that it was perhaps brought to the Vatican Library by the learned Cardinal Bessarion, formerly archbishop of Nicaea, who labored at the Council of Ferrara-Florence with great zeal, but in vain, for the reunion of the Greek and Latin churches. Vaticanus was entered in the earliest, catalog of that library, made in 1475. It first became known about 1533 when Erasmus' attention was directed to it. It was watched with jealous care by the papal authorities, and kept from public use until the middle of the nineteenth century.¹⁷⁶

The Vaticanus was first partially and imperfectly collated, under considerable restrictions, by Bartolucci, librarian of the Vatican, in 1669. Several other men published editions of it, but all were very imperfect. During the empire of Napoleon, the manuscript was transferred to Paris. While there it was inspected in 1809 by Dr. Hug, a Roman Catholic scholar. He was the first one to fully recognize its paramount value. After the manuscript was restored to Rome it was still for a long time inaccessible. Nevertheless the manuscript was examined to some extent by several famous Biblical scholars.¹⁷⁷

Two editions of the Vaticanus were published in 1857 and 1859 by Cardinal Mai. But these two editions differed so much from one another that both were evidently untrustworthy. Following these two untrustworthy editions of the Codex Vaticanus, Tischendorf felt it was time someone published an accurate edition of this manuscript. So he visited Rome in 1866, and with great difficulty obtained permission to examine particular passages of the manuscript over a period of fourteen days. He was only allowed three working hours in each day. In his eagerness he exceeded terms of his permission by copying twenty pages in full and as a result the manuscript was withdrawn. Nevertheless as the result of his examination he was able to publish in 1867 an edition which was a great help in placing the evidence of this supremely important manuscript in the hands of scholars. Tischendorf's edition was supplemented in 1868 by an edition of the New Testament prepared for the Vatican itself by Vercellone and Cozza. This was followed in later years by an edition of the Old Testament.¹⁷⁸

Under the auspices of Pope Leo XIII in 1889-1890, the Vatican Press issued a photographic facsimile of the entire manuscript, thus it became obtainable by libraries and accessible to scholars throughout the world.¹⁷⁹

The Codex Vaticanus dates from the middle of the fourth century. It is written on fine thin vellum, in small, but clear and neat uncial letters. There are three columns, of forty lines each, to a quarto page. The pages measure ten by eleven and one-half inches. It is more accurately written than the Sinaiticus manuscript, and is

probably a little older, but it is not as complete. It was apparently copied in Egypt by two or three very skillful scribes. Tischendorf has observed the fact that the scribe of the New Testament in the Vaticanus manuscript was the same who wrote a few pages in the New Testament of Codex Sinaiticus along with the opening verses of the Apocalypse, beside corrections. This fact seems to point out the fact that both manuscripts belong to the same age and country. On the other hand, the corrections, the remarkable differences in the order of the books of the New Testament, and other peculiarities, clearly indicate different and independent sources from which each one was derived. These facts make their united testimony all the stronger and the corrections in both enable scholars to some extent to follow the history of the text.¹⁸⁰

The Vaticanus contains the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament minus some passages. The New Testament is complete as far as Hebrews 9:14. At that point the manuscript breaks off. The Pastoral Epistles, Philemon, and the Apocalypse are lost.¹⁸¹

Most modern textual critics agree that the Vaticanus is, upon the whole, the best as well as one of the oldest manuscripts now known (the Chester Beatty papyri exceed it in age, but not in value). However, it must be used with proper regard to all other sources of evidence. It has numerous corrections made by a contemporaneous hand, and was supplied with accents and breathings by a third hand in the tenth century or later. It is more free from Western or Alexandrian readings than is Codex Sinaiticus, but with the Sinaiticus manuscript it presents on the whole the simplest, shortest, and concisest text.

The agreement of Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus presents (with few exceptions) strong evidence for the genuineness of a reading, and, when supported by other ante-Nicene testimony, the evidence is conclusive.¹⁸² Schaff says:

Their concurrent testimony from independent sources gives us the oldest attainable text, which may be traced to the early part of the second century or the generation next to that of the autographs.¹⁸³

As a result of the critical work which had now been done on the Codex Vaticanus, combined with the previous discovery of Codex Sinaiticus,

...New Testament scholars had in their hands by the end of 1868 two great copies of the sacred books earlier by a century than those they had hitherto been able to use. A powerful stimulus was thus given to the demand for a thorough revision of the Greek text in common use; for these two great manuscripts plainly did not support the "received" text, and in the eyes of nearly all trained scholars were evidently superior to it.¹⁸⁴

Tischendorf himself in 1869-72 issued a revised text of the New Testament which was based largely on the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. With this text he provided a full apparatus of various readings from all the important existing texts, and the principal versions and quotations in the early Fathers. This edition is still the most serviceable critical edition for the use of scholars, though it needs to be brought up to date by incorporating the results of the later discoveries made since Tischendorf's work ended.¹⁸⁵

D. The Chester Beatty Papyri

In 1930 a discovery was made which has come to be realized as

the greatest discovery of Biblical manuscripts since the discovery of Codex Sinaiticus by Tischendorf. This important find was the discovery of the group of papyri now known as the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri. All the circumstances of the find have never been fully revealed, and perhaps never will be for the natives who made the discovery do not tell all they know. The papyri are said to have been found in a Coptic graveyard, enclosed in one or more jars. Other papyri from time to time have been similarly found. It was an ancient custom to use jars or buckets as receptacles for books.¹⁸⁶

The natives who found these papyri sold them to dealers. The dealers in turn sold to collectors and other interested people. The bulk of the collection was in time acquired by a Mr. Chester Beatty, a well-known American who was residing in England. He was the owner of a magnificent collection of illuminated manuscripts, both Western and Oriental. Some of the leaves and fragments, however, were acquired by the University of Michigan, and a few are in other hands. It is quite possible that others of this group may yet turn up for native discoverers are apt to divide their spoils, and dealers sometimes will hold back a portion of a collection.¹⁸⁷

The discovery consisted of portions of twelve manuscripts, eight containing books of the Old Testament and the other three containing books of the New Testament.¹⁸⁸

The New Testament books are of exceptional importance. One was originally a copy of all four Gospels and the Acts, written in a small hand which palaeographers agree in assigning to the first half of the third century - that is to say, a century older than the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.¹⁸⁹

In the first manuscript of the group, thirty leaves have been preserved out of an original total of 110: two are of Matthew, six of Mark, seven of Luke, two of John, and thirteen of Acts. Those of Matthew are almost negligible fragments, and those of Mark and Acts are small, but sufficient to be very useful. Michigan University acquired several small fragments of this manuscript which they generously transferred to the Beatty collection. In addition there are at Vienna some scraps of Matthew which combine with the Beatty fragments.¹⁹⁰

The second New Testament manuscript was announced originally as containing ten imperfect leaves of a codex of the Pauline Epistles, which included portions of Romans, Philippians, Colossians, and I Thessalonians. However, subsequent discoveries have increased the number of leaves in this group. First it was announced that the University of Michigan had acquired thirty leaves of the same manuscript in much more perfect condition, and then later Mr. Beatty announced that he had acquired forty-six more leaves, also, in excellent condition. Therefore, now Biblical scholars have in their hands nearly the whole of a copy of the Epistles of Paul. This manuscript is written in a fine hand and is dated as having been written not later than the middle of the third century.¹⁹¹ In this manuscript scholars have

...a notable addition to the textual apparatus of the Epistles of St. Paul, in a copy written only about a century and a half after his death.¹⁹²

And it may be further stated that:

...the Chester Beatty Papyrus of the Letters of Paul presents substantially the same text

with which we are familiar in the best modern versions of the Bible. Indeed this very fact is the most significant thing about the manuscript. Here is our oldest copy of Paul's letters, and it emphatically confirms the accuracy and soundness of the general textual tradition....¹⁹³

The third New Testament manuscript in the Beatty group consists of ten leaves (about one-third of the whole) of the book of Revelation. This manuscript was written in the third century. Professor U. Wilcken, who is one of the greatest papyrologists, places it as having been written near the beginning of the third century, or just after 200 A. D.¹⁹⁴

It will be seen, then, that in these three papyrus manuscripts all the books, more or less, of the New Testament are represented in copies which can be confidently assigned to the third century. A large part of the gap which had existed between the original writers and the earliest manuscripts hitherto available has thus been filled.¹⁹⁵

Bruce Metzger adds this further comment as to the value of the Chester Beatty Papyri to the knowledge of the New Testament text.

The question may be asked, How does the discovery of these three manuscripts modify our knowledge of the history of the transmission of the New Testament text? It may be said, first of all, that they emphatically confirm the general soundness of the text of the Greek Testament. They agree, by and large, with the text which the Church has always regarded as canonical. Their importance, moreover, is of the highest in shedding more light upon the vexing problems concerning the distribution and antiquity of certain types of variant readings. The papyri do not support wholeheartedly any one of the previously isolated types of families of New Testament text. To use the terminology popularized by Westcott and Hort, the text of...

[the codex of the Gospels and Acts] and...
 [the codex of the Pauline epistles] is intermediate between the Neutral and Western families of the text of the New Testament, standing somewhat closer on the whole to the former than to the latter.... The most exhaustive investigation of the textual affinities of... [the codex of the book of Revelation] reveals it to be quite closely related to codex Sinaiticus of the fourth century and to the ninth century minuscule 1841, both of which represent a type of text current at Alexandria....¹⁹⁶

E. Summary and Conclusions

Summary. The Greek manuscripts are the most important source for the textual critic in his work of restoring the purest possible text obtainable of the New Testament. In this chapter a special study was made of the significance of the discovery of three manuscripts: Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus, and the Chester Beatty Papyri. By this study it has been pointed out that Biblical scholars are confident that they now have in their hands copies of God's Word that were written within about one to two hundred years of the original books. The text supplied by these three manuscripts shows remarkable agreement. When a variant reading of one of these manuscripts is also verified by the testimony of an ancient version and, or, a quotation in the church fathers, then textual critics are almost sure that the variant reading is correct. In addition the Chester Beatty Papyri have given much information upon the matter of variant readings.

Conclusions. As a result of the study made in this chapter it has been pointed out that according to the findings of recognized Biblical scholars:

1. The three manuscripts, Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus and the Chester Beatty Papyri, agree remarkably as to the general soundness of the text of the Greek New Testament.

2. These manuscripts give a text that approaches very nearly the autographic text of the New Testament.

3. These manuscripts are further evidence of God's miraculous care in the preservation and restoration of His Word.

4. A study of these manuscripts has enabled textual critics to understand better how the many variant readings came into being.

5. These manuscripts give absolute confidence to the Christian that the New Testament in his hands is truly the Word of God, preserved for him by God's providential care and restored to its present integrity through the patient labor of textual scholars.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Summary

The guiding purpose of this investigation was to point out why every person can have complete confidence in the fact that the New Testament text in his hands today is accurate and free from any essential error. In order to carry out this purpose it seemed best to divide the study into the following four parts: (1) the Greek text used as a basis for the main English versions of the New Testament; (2) the history of the printed text of the Greek New Testament; (3) securing the true text by the methods of textual criticism; and (4) the most important Greek manuscripts supporting the present text of the New Testament. By the division of the study into these four main parts a progression in the work was possible that lead naturally to the goal sought.

In chapter two a study was made of the development of the Greek text used as a basis for the main English versions of the New Testament. The three main English translations made since the seventeenth century are: The Authorized or King James Version, the Revised Version with its American counterpart--the American Standard Version, and The Revised Standard Version. By the study made in this chapter it was seen that it has been mainly the discovery of new Biblical manuscripts that has demanded the various English revisions of

the New Testament. Every age of fresh manuscript discovery seems to have demanded a new revision of the New Testament.

In chapter three an historical study was made of the main editions of the printed text of the Greek New Testament. In this study the men, the materials, and the methods of textual criticism stand out in bold relief. This chapter added new material to the investigation by pointing out the fact that it was the development of the science of textual criticism that has brought forth better printed editions of the Greek New Testament. Beginning with the text which Erasmus printed, and on through to the printing of Westcott and Hort's Greek New Testament, it was found that there has been development in the purity of the Greek Text obtained according to the word of recognized authorities in the field of textual criticism.

The Greek text of the New Testament printed by Westcott and Hort is still the standard text and their theory of textual criticism, though somewhat modified by recent textual critics, is considered even today the best method of securing the purest text of the Greek New Testament.

It was found in chapter four that the science of textual criticism has arisen to fill a definite need in Biblical study. The original autographs of the New Testament text are now all lost, and all that remains are copies of copies of the original New Testament writings. Due to this process of recopying from one manuscript to another variant readings have entered into the text. So the science of textual criticism was developed by Biblical scholars in order that they might obtain the purest text possible.

It is one thing to have a goal, but it is another thing to realize that goal. The textual critics knew that the science of textual criticism was needed, but how they were going to develop that science was another matter. The textual critics came to adopt a general set of rules of procedure which even apply, more or less, today. It was found that in the main there were three important classes of evidence bearing testimony to the text of the New Testament. These three main evidences for the text of the New Testament were: (1) the manuscripts (2) the versions (3) quotations from the Church fathers. The manuscripts have been the most important, but their testimony has needed to be corroborated with the other evidences. Where a variant reading in a manuscript was supported by evidence of such a reading in the versions and in a quotation from a Church father, then, there was strong support for the fact that such a variant was authentic. As a result of their work textual critics believe that they have very nearly recovered the true text which was contained in the original autographs.

The significance of the most important Greek manuscripts supporting the present text of the New Testament was studied in chapter five. From the many important manuscripts three were selected as being of special importance. These three were: Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus (vellum manuscripts); and the Chester Beatty Papyri (papyrus manuscripts). The Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus are the two most important vellum manuscripts and their concurrent testimony give us a text which most textual critics believe may be traced to the early part of the second century. The Chester Beatty Papyri

emphatically confirm the general soundness of the text of the Greek Testament, and they agree, by and large, with the text which the Church has always regarded as canonical. As a result of the discovery and study of these manuscripts, Biblical scholars are confident that they now have in their hands copies of God's Word that were written within about one to two hundred years of the original books. The text supplied by these three manuscripts shows remarkable agreement.

B. Conclusions

1. Every sincere student of God's Word should seek to study the various English versions to enable him to see for himself the good qualities and strong points of each revision.

2. Because of their work textual critics believe that they now have recovered a Greek text of the New Testament which very nearly approaches the true text contained in the autographs.

3. Numerous variant readings exist, but all the witnesses, and all the textual families into which the manuscripts may be divided, agree on a Greek text which supports every article of Christian belief and practice.

4. The three manuscripts: Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus and the Chester Beatty Papyri, agree remarkably as to the general soundness of the present text of the Greek New Testament.

5. Every Christian should have knowledge of how God has preserved, and transmitted His Word to us.

6. It is especially important that all ministers who possibly can should be acquainted with the Koine Greek - the original language in which the New Testament was written.

7. Evangelical Biblical scholarship must be ever kept vitally alive.

C. Suggestions for Further Investigation

A profitable study could be made of the value of the Greek papyri, both Biblical and non-Biblical, with reference to their significance to New Testament translation. In this study only an investigation of the importance of the Chester Beatty Papyri was made. There are numerous other fragments of Biblical papyri whose discovery has added greatly to a better understanding of the Greek New Testament. Then, too, the non-Biblical papyri have added greatly to the knowledge of the Koine Greek.

FOOTNOTES

FOOTNOTES

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17. Price, op. cit., pp. 268 and 269.
18. Ibid., p. 269.
19. Ibid., pp. 270 and 271.
20. Schaff, op. cit., p. 323.
21. Ibid., p. 348.

22. Ibid., pp. 348-350.
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26. Ibid., p. 278.
27. Schaff, op. cit., pp. 364-365.
28. Ibid., p. 365.
29. Ibid., pp. 381-382.
30. Ibid., p. 382.
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41. Price, op. cit., p. 305.
42. Ibid., p. 307.
43. Ibid., p. 308.
44. Ibid., p. 309.

45. Luther A. Weigle, "The Revision of the English Bible," An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, pp. 11-12.
46. Ibid., pp. 12-13.
47. Ibid., p. 13.
48. Frederick C. Grant, "The Greek Text of the New Testament," An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, p. 37.
49. Loc. cit.
50. Ibid., p. 38.
51. Loc. cit.
52. Ibid., p. 41.
53. Price, op. cit., p. 310.
54. Grant, loc. cit.
55. Ibid., p. 42.
56. Price, op. cit., pp. 314-315.
57. Grant, loc. cit.
58. Schaff, op. cit., p. 225, gives three main periods in the history of the printed text of the Greek New Testament, but another period was added in this study to bring the history from 1881 to the present time.
59. Ibid., p. 228.
60. Ibid., pp. 228-229.
61. Ibid., pp. 229-230.
62. Ibid., p. 231.
63. Ibid., p. 232.
64. Ibid., pp. 234-235.
65. Ibid., p. 236.
66. Ibid., pp. 236-237.
67. Ibid., p. 237.

68. Ibid., pp. 237-238.
69. Ibid., p. 238.
70. Ibid., p. 239.
71. Ibid., p. 240.
72. Translation from Miller, op. cit., p. 294.
73. Ibid., p. 240.
74. Ibid., pp. 240-241.
75. Ibid., p. 244.
76. Loc. cit.
77. Ibid., pp. 244-245.
78. Ibid., pp. 245-246.
79. Ibid., p. 246.
80. Loc. cit.
81. Ibid., pp. 246-247.
82. Translation by Dr. H. E. Mueller, Western Evangelical Seminary, Portland, Oregon, in a personal interview with the author, February 15, 1955.
83. Miller, op. cit., p. 295.
84. Schaff, op. cit., pp. 248-249.
85. Miller, op. cit., p. 296.
86. Schaff, op. cit., p. 249.
87. Ibid., p. 250.
88. Loc. cit.
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90. Loc. cit.
91. Ibid., p. 297.
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96. Schaff, op. cit., p. 256.
97. Loc. cit.
98. Ibid., pp. 257-258.
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100. Ibid., p. 259.
101. Ibid., p. 260.
102. Miller, op. cit., pp. 299-300.
103. Schaff, op. cit., pp. 263-264.
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105. Ibid., p. 267.
106. Ibid., p. 268.
107. Miller, op. cit., p. 300.
108. Schaff, op. cit., pp. 268-269, and Miller, op. cit., pp. 300-301.
109. Schaff, op. cit., pp. 270-271.
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118. Ibid., p. 117.

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126. Ibid., p. 172.
127. Loc. cit.
128. Robertson, op. cit., pp. 52f.
129. Ibid., p. 169.
130. Schaff, op. cit., p. 173.
131. Loc. cit.
132. Ibid., p. 174.
133. Ibid., p. 183.
134. Loc. cit.
135. Loc. cit.
136. Ibid., p. 184.
137. Ibid., p. 185.
138. Loc. cit.
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141. Ibid., p. 202.
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143. Ibid., p. 547.
144. Marvin R. Vincent, A History of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament (New York, The Macmillan Co., 1899), p. 8.
145. Bruce, op. cit., p. 172.
146. Vincent, op. cit., pp. 8 and 12.
147. Westcott and Hort, op. cit., p. 567.
148. Vincent, op. cit., p. 24.
149. Ibid., p. 25.
150. Ibid., pp. 36 and 40.
151. Price, op. cit., p. 202.
152. Ibid., pp. 220-221.
153. For a full discussion of these critical rules cf. Schaff, op. cit., pp. 202-205; Price, op. cit., pp. 220-222; and Miller, op. cit., pp. 289 f.
154. Miller, op. cit., p. 290.
155. Price, op. cit., p. 222.
156. Westcott and Hort, op. cit., pp. 564-565.
157. Bruce, op. cit., p. 180.
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164. Ibid., pp. 73-74.
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170. From Die Sinaibibel (1871), pp. 13-14, quoted by Schaff, op. cit., pp. 108-109.
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