

THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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Logical Criticisms of Textual Criticism

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The problem of New Testament textual criticism is very difficult, and therefore hard to explain to the general public. For a more definite reason it is also hard to explain to ministers, seminary students, and even to the professors themselves. Yet its importance and ramifications are such that the ordinary worshiper as he sits in church on Sunday mornings, or as he reads his Bible at home, cannot escape its effects.

Most Christians in this country know no Greek, but nearly all recognize that there are competing translations of the Bible. There is the *King James Version* of noble ancestry; there is the *American* and now the *New American Standard Version*; the *New International Version*; several versions that are more paraphrases than translations (all bad); the Roman Catholic *Jerusalem Bible*; and translations of all or parts of the Bible by individuals rather than by committees. Surely these different translations confuse the ordinary reader at several places. Can he find a basis for making an intelligent choice? Without guaranteeing infallibility, I think he can, sometimes.

But congregations, not to insist on individuals, during the second half of this century, have been perplexed, pummeled, plagued, and sometimes pleased by the plethora of new proposals. The session of one church banished the *King James* and ordered the pastor to use only the *New International Version* in the pulpit. A year later they discarded the *New International Version* and made the *New*

American Standard their official Bible. Advertisers of the several versions castigate the *King James* for its archaic terminology. True, it contains some antiquated words, though their number is usually exaggerated. The one or two new versions that merely replace an obsolete word with its contemporary counterpart are to be commended. But most of the new versions change the familiar terms simply for the sake of change. The result may be neither better nor worse: It is merely different.

Examples from the Old Testament

Here are some examples. *Psalms* 3:1 reads, "Lord, how are they increased that trouble me" (*KJV*). The *New American Standard* reads as, "O Lord, how my adversaries have increased." The *Revised Standard Version* puts it, "O Lord, how many are my foes." Aside from the fact that the *Revised Standard Version* omits the verb, the translations are equally accurate. The Hebrew word means both *troubles* and *adversaries*. But *troubles* is an easier and more familiar word than *adversaries*. Hence the new translation can neither claim to have replaced an obsolete word, nor even to have substituted an easier one.

Psalms 91:4 is another example of change for the sake of change. The new word is even less familiar to contemporary Americans than the *King James* word. The *King James* has, "He shall cover thee with his feathers." The Hebrew word means *feathers* or *wings*. The *Revised Standard Version*

and the *New American Standard* change *feathers* to *pinions*. Of course, *pinions* is a perfectly good English word, but it is less popularly used than *feathers* or *wings*. Nor is it a more accurate translation. Hence this seems to be change for the mere sake of change.

The first verse of the well known *Isaiah 53* begins with, "Who hath believed our report?" The Hebrew of the last word means *announcement, doctrine, news, report, rumor, or tidings*. The *Revised Standard Version* changes the single word to the phrase "what we have heard." This seems to make it a reference to what Isaiah heard, rather than to what he preached. The *New American Standard* makes better sense: "our message." Now, the words *message* and *report* are both common English words, so that any claim to clearer English or to the removal of archaic expressions has no basis.

To be sure, no one can legitimately forbid new translations, especially the present writer; for I have deliberately made some very harsh translations in my commentaries. The reason was to imitate Greek constructions and to shake sleepy readers out of their inattentive perusal of a printed page. Legitimate though they may be, they are not attempts to replace the *King James*, nor would they be suitable for the formal reading of the Scripture in the Sunday morning service.

New Testament Examples

Matthew 5:18, "Till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (*KJV*). The *Revised Standard Version* has, "Till Heaven and Earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished." Worse is the *New English Bible*, "So long as Heaven and Earth endure, not a letter, not a stroke will disappear from the Law until all that must happen has happened." The *New International Version* has, "Until Heaven and Earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."

The English word *jot* seems to have been derived from the Greek word *iota*, which is the name of the

letter *i*. On this point, the *Revised Standard Version* is the best of the quoted translations, for modern speech hardly recognizes *jot* as *iota*. But there is no good reason for changing *tittle* into *dot*, nor into *stroke*, and "not the least stroke of a pen" is an inexcusable paraphrase.

The word *tittle* is, to be sure, an unusual word in English. But there is none much better. It means a point or small sign used as a diacritical, punctuation, or similar mark, the dot over an *i* or *j*, a vowel point in Hebrew. The verb that the King James translates fulfilled is literally "has become." *Fulfill* and *accomplish* are both proper, though the latter is no real improvement over the former. Totally unacceptable is the phrase "until all that must happen has happened."

Luke 1:1: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us..." (*KJV*). "Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us..." (*RSV*). "The author to Theophilus: Many writers have undertaken to draw up an account of the events that have happened among us" (*NEB*). Forasmuch as this study aims generally to support the *King James Version* as being better or at least as good English as the new versions, it is only just to point out a deficiency now and then. The phrase "most surely believed among us" receives no support either from the critical texts or from the majority (Byzantine) manuscripts. The wording "have been accomplished" is quite satisfactory. But "compile a narrative" is distinctly inferior to "taken in hand," both from the standpoint of easily understood English and of correct translation. The word for *hand* (*cheir*) is the root embedded in the verb. Even the phrase "to set forth in order" is a fair translation of the infinitive there. *Anatasso* means to arrange in a row, to draw up in order. The *New English Bible's* transposition of *Theophilus* from the end of verse 3 to the beginning of verse 1 is merely mildly amusing.

The well-known words of *John 14:18* are, "I will not leave you comfortless." The last word in Greek is *orphans*. The *New English Bible* has *bereft*; the *Revised Standard Version* has *desolate*. I can

approve the *New International Version* when it says *orphans*, because it is a more accurate translation; but *bereft* and *desolate* are neither better translations than *comfortless*, nor are they a simpler English that avoids an alleged archaism. They seem to indicate a desire to be merely different.

Acts 7:54 describes the effect of Stephen's speech before the Sanhedrin: "they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth" (*KJV*). The *Revised Standard Version* has, "they were enraged, and they ground their teeth against him." "They were furious" is the *New International Version's* translation. The inimitable—who would want to imitate it?—*New English Bible* has, "This touched them on the raw and they ground their teeth with fury." Now, the Greek text has the word "hearts." Since this is no strange word, a translator should not change it. The verb means "to cut to the quick." It also occurs in *Acts 5:33* without the word *heart*. Perhaps *gnashed* is an uncommon word these days and hence the *Revised Standard Version's* "ground their teeth" can be considered an improvement. But the *Revised Standard Version's* *enraged* and the *New International Version's* *furious* are neither more accurate translations, rather less accurate, nor simpler English.

In *Romans 4:3* the *King James* translates *elogisthe* as *counted*, though in the next verse it uses *reckoned*. The *Revised Standard Version* and the *New American Standard* use *reckoned* in both verses. The *New International Version* uses *credited* twice. One can fault the *King James* for using two words and not the same word twice, but there is no more than a microscopic improvement in the latter versions. Liddell and Scott give both words, as well as *calculate*, *conclude by reasoning*; and Arndt and Gingrich have *consider*, *ponder*, *propose*, *think*, *believe*, as well as *reckon* and *count*. The English of the later versions is no better or clearer than that of the *King James*.

One should not conclude from this that all the modern changes are bad. In some, even in many places, the *Revised Standard Version* is better in English and more accurate in translation than the *King James*. *1 Corinthians 6:16* is a good example. But the *Revised Standard Version* changes the

meaning of the passage by punctuating with an interrogation point. The *Jerusalem Bible* and the *New American Bible* have a similar change in meaning. Without a comment on the change in meaning, one may say that the *King James* can be improved. A committee attempted this, and, in 1979, trying to preserve the great good and correct the few deficiencies, published the *New King James Version* (Thomas Nelson, Nashville). As an exercise, the reader is invited to dig into this passage on his own.

The *King James* at *Ephesians 6:11, 14* reads, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil ... having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness." The *Revised Standard Version* is very nearly the same. The *New American Standard* gives us, "Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil ... having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness." As usual, the *New English Bible* deviates considerably: "Put on all the armour which God provides so that you may be able to stand firm against the devices of the devil.... Buckle on the belt of truth, for coat of mail put on integrity." In the *New International Version* we have, "Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes....with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place."

Perhaps someone can argue that *loins* and *wiles* are archaic, though the *Revised Standard Version* has both words, while the *New American Standard* keeps *loins* but drops *wiles*. The *New English Bible* and the *New International Version* go their own merry ways. I must acknowledge that sometimes the best-accountered soldiers in antiquity wore something like a coat of mail, and they indeed used the term *thorax*. Liddell and Scott give this meaning, though strangely Arndt and Gingrich do not. However, the present question is not one of translation, but to what extent does the English of the *King James* need modernization.

The epistle to the *Hebrews*, being the best literary Greek in the New Testament, can hardly fail to

furnish several fanciful flourishes. The *King James* begins, "God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets...." The *New American Standard* destroys the Greek emphasis on "sundry times and diverse manners" by putting the phrase at the end of the verse instead of at the beginning. So does the *New International Version*. The *New English Bible*, as usual, lives up, or down, to its reputation. The *Jerusalem Bible* is even better than the *King James*, because it puts the word *God* after "various times...and in various different ways," thus preserving the Greek emphasis. The *New American Bible* is slightly poorer. Verse 5 is an even better example of inadmissible change. In fact, the *New International Version* obviously mistranslates it as, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father." In 2:3 it changes *neglect* to *ignore*. Not only does this fail to improve the English, it is also a poorer translation of *amelesantes*. Nor is *pioneer* in (in the *RSV*) 2:10 any better than *captain*. Indeed it is worse (compare Rienecker's *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, Volume II, or better, Liddell and Scott). The *Jerusalem Bible's* *leader* is fair, though not preferable. So also The *New American Bible*. I do not understand why The *New King James* Version substituted *author*. The figure of speech is military, not literary.

In *Hebrews* 11:11, the *King James* has, "through faith Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because *she* judged *him* faithful who had promised." To one's utter astonishment, the *New International Version* has "by faith Abraham [!] even though *he* was past age—and Sara herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he...." I do not know of a single manuscript that has this reading. The *New International Version* has made an incredible and utterly unjustifiable blunder.

These examples should be sufficient to cast doubt on the claim that the new versions are better English. Sometimes they are more accurate, but usually they are not. Several of the examples are instances of paraphrase rather than of translation. Such are ordinarily controlled by an individual's or the committee's unorthodox theology, or, which in

effect is equally bad, one man's aesthetic preferences.

Logical and Textual Criticism

Unfortunately for the communicant members, even for the pastor, and for most of those who have recently graduated from seminary, something far more difficult and complicated hides beneath the English versions. Not only should a translation be accurate, as many are not, but even more important, the Greek text to be translated should be accurate, or as accurate as possible. Toward the end of the last century, Westcott and Hort substituted a different Greek text, and this development has carried over to the present date. Nearly all the modern versions are based on a text that differs in a thousand ways from the Greek underlying the *King James*. This new development must be carefully considered.

Because of the vexations and innumerable complexities of the problem—did I say 1000 discrepancies? make it 3000 in the Gospels alone—textual criticism is a very difficult and delicate procedure, quite unsuited to the purposes of the present study and admittedly beyond the competence of the present writer. The scholar's material includes five thousand New Testament manuscripts, several ancient versions, and hundreds of quotations in the early church fathers. Such a mass of complications, requiring knowledge of a half dozen or more ancient languages, is no playground for the ordinary church member—nor for the pastors, who are supposed to know both Greek and Hebrew. But even the church member, since the text of the Bible is so important, ought to know at least a little bit about the sources of the many Bibles now being published.

Because of such intricacies, because of their importance, and because of the probability of great misunderstandings, the exact scope, purpose, and limitations of the present study need to be clearly stated. The professional textual critics will expect too much and make a negative judgment. The others will not know what to expect and should therefore

be favored with the clearest possible statement of purpose.

Although the present writer is not a textual critic, he will be bold enough to make some small claim to acquaintance with logic. He taught the stuff for a good fifty years in college. If someone argues, "All insects are quadrupeds, and all quadrupeds are edible, therefore all edibles are insects," the writer can with some degree of assurance declare the syllogism invalid, even though he may not know whether or not a bumblebee is an insect. Or, if someone says, "All the heroes of Homer's *Iliad* died young; Alexander was a hero of Homer's *Iliad*; therefore Alexander died young," he knows that the syllogism is valid, even if he thinks that the *Iliad* was written by Virgil. Similarly, if a textual critic asserts that manuscript *B* has the correct reading for *Luke* 5:33, and that therefore *B* has the correct reading for *Jude* 22, we must suggest a course in logic for the critic, even though we might think that *B* was discovered in 1624 and represents the Byzantine text.

These, of course, are ludicrous examples; but the aim here is to show that much of textual criticism is not noticeably better. If Aland or Metzger says that *B* gives a certain reading, I shall not question it. I have never seen manuscript *B*. But the methodology of textual criticism cannot claim immunity from logical analysis.

If the critics are not interested in the validity of their methodology, but nonetheless make use of manuscript evidence, I would like to recommend some studies of their professional resources. A small, interesting, and powerful brochure, *The Ancient Text of the New Testament*, by Jakob Van Bruggen (Premier Printing, Ltd; 1976, 1979, 40 pages) devastates the liberal criticism. The footnotes provide a good bibliography. An earlier work, *The King James Version Defended*, by Edward Hills, while valuable, suffers from some deficiencies, one of which is an excursion into the philosophy of science which—even if it were without other errors—would be irrelevant anyway. Zane Hodges wrote at least three papers between 1961 and 1975. More recently, with Arthur L. Farstad (and some consulting editors), Hodges

edited a critical edition of *The Greek New Testament according to the Majority Text* (Thomas Nelson Publishers)—a major work that required incredible patience. It contains a bibliography of about 150 entries.

Perhaps the best production for immediate reading is Wilbur N. Pickering's *The Identity of the New Testament Text* (Thomas Nelson, 1977). Further references to this excellent book will be made as we proceed. In particular, he contrasts the painstaking procedure of the usually despised Burgon with the sloppy methodology of his detractors. Even the least academic member of the ghetto congregation in East Podunk, Missovania, ought to read some of Pickering's book.

But it may be that the people of Podunk are not only turned off from reading Pickering, they may also doubt that logical analysis can be at all interesting. Interesting or not, it is far more important than Homer, Alexander, and Virgil. For that reason, I shall partly repeat and more fully extend some of these introductory inducements.

The Greek Text

Enemies of the Bible occasionally try to destroy the faith of believers by emphasizing the impossibility of discovering what the apostles actually wrote. The four or five thousand Greek manuscripts differ in many places. Once when I quoted a verse from John's Gospel to a modernist, she quickly replied, "But how do you know that he actually said that?" By the grace of God, I was able immediately to shoot back, "How do you know Jesus said anything?" The other faculty members at the lunch table gave vocal evidence of a point scored. The modernist woman professor and missionary to India wanted to use some verses, but not others. But she saw then that if she insisted on her verses, she could not object to mine. At any rate the attempt to destroy Christian faith by an appeal to the difficulties of textual criticism has been based on considerable exaggeration. Someone has calculated that there is a textual variant for one word in seven, but only one in a thousand makes any difference in the sense. Still, since the New Testament contains about 200,000 words, it would mean 200

theological errors in the book as a whole. This is too many for comfort. Examples of both the nocuous and the innocuous will be given.

Variant Readings

In *Mark* 14:52, a few manuscripts have "naked he fled"; a few others have "he fled naked"; and a large number have "he fled naked from them." Perhaps only three have "he fled from them naked." Another example is *2 Corinthians* 11:32. A few manuscripts read "to seize me"; many more have "wishing to seize me," where *me* in the accusative is still the object to be seized. And there are thousands of such insignificant alternative readings. However, there are many variants that are substantial. In both these categories the overwhelming majority of even mature Christians have no resources to judge which Greek manuscript preserves the words of the original author. But they can understand some of the methods textual critics use. In fact, they ought to. If they do, they will not be so overawed by the revisers.

When we come to examine the passages chosen, the particular textual method used in each case will be analyzed in detail. In order that the reader may not be completely discombobulated by their strangeness, a few of the more general rules can serve as a preparation.

First, the number of manuscripts of the type underlying the *King James Version* far exceeds all other types combined. This would seem to be conclusive for the Byzantine text. The critics, however, propose a rule that number is less important than weight. A dozen or a hundred manuscripts all copied from a single original ancestor count only as one, and therefore a lone manuscript of a different type equals the other hundred in weight.

This argument, which seems so plausible at first, is not so weighty a criterion as the critics seem to believe. There is another factor involved, which, if they have mentioned it, I have missed the mention. It is this. If a score or two score manuscripts have a single ancestor, it implies that a score or two score

copyists believed that ancestor to be faithful to the autographs. But if a manuscript has not a numerous progeny, as is the case with *B*'s ancestor, one may suspect that the early scribes doubted its value. Possibly the early orthodox church knew that *B* was corrupt, while the later heretics were less interested in wasting time copying their own altered text.

Furthermore, the argument that pits weights against number, if it were to have much force, would require a far more extensive knowledge of manuscript genealogies than anyone now has. Even in the case of the Byzantine text alone, while the manuscripts are basically similar, a true genealogy has never been completed. The western text of *D* is somewhat like Melchizedek, without ancestors or descendants. Attempts by Westcott and Hort, and others, to establish Syrian, Alexandrine, Neutral, Caesarean, Antiochan, and Western families—running into insuperable difficulties—have produced competing results in the last seventy-five years.

The critics use other criteria also. When several manuscripts differ at a given place, they prefer the reading that is harder to understand rather than the easier reading. They justify this principle by assuming that the scribe is likely to think that the harder reading was a mistake, with the result that he guesses his easy interpretation is the original. No one can prove that this never happened. But it is also possible, for a number of reasons—fatigue, brilliance, the mispronunciation of a reader—that he changed an easy reading into something more difficult.

Similarly, the critics often assume that the shorter reading is correct and the longer one corrupt. The underlying idea is that the copyist has several manuscripts before him, and he wishes to preserve all their readings in his copy. But could not some scribe, if he had different manuscripts before him and was not listening, with a room full of copyists, to a reader—could he not have been sufficiently devout to remember the Scriptural injunction neither to add nor to subtract? Examples of how these and other criteria are used and misused will now constitute a list that could be much further extended.

Textual Criticism of Matthew

Matthew 1:16: "Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom [feminine singular] was born Jesus." This first example is indeed a case of textual criticism, but it is much more importantly a case of dishonesty on the part of the *Revised Standard Version's* translators. Before they completed their work on the Old Testament, they published the New Testament alone in 1946. It was well advertised and made quite a stir. People who picked it up would probably look at the first page and then leaf through. On the first page they would see nothing suspicious. There was the genealogy of Christ, and that was not very fascinating.

When the entire Bible first appeared, those interested might look at the first page of *Genesis* and then leaf through. It was unlikely that anyone would pay attention to the first page of the New Testament. But the first page of *Matthew* in 1952 was not the same as its first page in 1946. A footnote had been added. It would have generated widespread criticism in 1946, but it would be generally overlooked when hidden by the preceding Old Testament pages.

The footnote reads: "Other ancient authorities read: Joseph, to whom was betrothed the virgin Mary, was the father of Jesus who is called Christ."

First of all, note the word *authorities*. What is an authority? No doubt Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, or its parts, are authorities. Is Jerome's *Vulgate* an authority? Are Scriptural quotations or references found in Christian writers of the next few centuries, authorities? Well, maybe; but as one goes beyond the Greek manuscripts, the authorities become less and less authoritative. Now, second, note that the word *authorities* in the *Revised Standard Version* note is plural. That means six or seven, or at least two. But the fact is that the *Revised Standard Version* had only one "authority," a Syriac version. The translators deliberately deceived the public by using a plural noun instead of a singular. Even the liberal Metzger in his *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (United Bible Societies, 1971) acknowledges,

"There is no evidence that reading (3) ever existed in a Greek manuscript of the first Gospel" (7).

This *Revised Standard Version* attempt to discredit Matthew's account of the virgin birth soon produced protests from knowledgeable conservatives, and the *Revised Standard Version* was compelled to delete its deception from later editions.

What has not been done, so far as I know, is some similar change in the Old Testament where the *Revised Standard Version* alters the radicals—*not* just the Massoretic points—without even a footnote calling attention to their unsupported changes.

Matthew 7:13 says, "for wide is the gate and broad is the road leading to destruction." The Aland text gives the word *gate* only a "C" rating. *Aleph's* first hand omits it; *Aleph's* second corrector inserted it. No other Greek manuscript omits it, and it is attested by a long list of uncials and plenty of minuscules. Is it not most reasonable to suppose that *Aleph*, itself corrected by a second hand, made a mistake and that all the rest give the words of the autograph? Surely *gate* deserves a "B" rating, or why not an "A"?

Matthew 8:12 warns that "the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out." Again the Aland text gives a "C" rating to a word that is almost certainly correct. "Shall go out" is the reading of *Aleph* and an unimportant eighth century uncial. "Shall be cast out" is in the first corrector of *Aleph* plus ten other major uncials and about fifteen other manuscripts. In itself the item is trivial, but it is evidence of pervasive subjectivity in textual criticism.

Matthew 9:4: "And Jesus knowing their thoughts...." Again the word disputed here is distressingly unimportant. It is included merely to inform students and laymen that though there are a thousand or so variant readings, the New Testament is not utterly corrupt. Someone has estimated that there are variations for one word in every seven; but only one case in a thousand make much difference. The present case does not make much difference.

The word in question is *knowing*. The *Textus Receptus* has *idon, seeing*; the first edition of Aland

has *eidōs*, *knowing*; and Metzger's note says that his Committee preferred *idon*. Their reason is that *seeing* is less appropriate than *knowing*, and that therefore *seeing* must be original while *knowing* must be a correction. Naturally one cannot expect the original author to have used the more appropriate word, can one? It is the logic of the reasoning that I am contesting, not the genuineness of *idon*. The defense of *idon* is in its superior textual evidence.

The manuscript evidence for *knowing* is *B*, *Pi*, and several minuscules. The evidence for *seeing* is *Aleph*, ten other uncials, and about fifteen minuscules. Though the Committee's reasoning in support of *idon* is faulty, this is the word with the better manuscript support. One also wonders how, if the Committee preferred *idon*, the printed text has *eidōs*. Who changed the wording after the Committee adjourned?

Matthew 18:7 warns, "Woe to the world because of offences [scandals]; for it needs must be that offences come; but woe to the man by whom the offence cometh."

This verse presents a very insignificant textual problem. However it is solved, the meaning remains the same. Nor is there the least theological difficulty. Nevertheless, for these very reasons, it is a pure and excellent example of textual criticism. The question is, Did Matthew write "the man" or "that man"? *The man* is *to anthropo*; *that man* is *to anthropo ekeino*. Did Matthew write the extra word or did he not? This is so difficult to decide that the Aland-Black-Metzger-Wikgren text gives the shorter text a "C" rating.

There are relatively few manuscripts that omit the *that*. Many more include it. The two manuscripts which most present-day critics think are the best divide: *Aleph* has only the article; *B* adds the demonstrative pronoun. Metzger's *Commentary* explains: "Except for the possibility of accidental oversight, there seems to be no reason why a copyist should have omitted *ekeino*. On the other hand, since the context seems to call for such a demonstrative, it is altogether probable that the

word was added by more than one transcriber, either before *ouai* or after *anthropo*."

Metzger's reasoning is peculiar. He admits the possibility of accidental oversight. Not many people copy Greek manuscripts these days. But typists, following handwritten manuscripts, often make peculiar mistakes. In fact, when I myself type my own handwritten material, I sometimes omit a word. Hence the pronoun may very well be genuine, as the large majority of the copies testify. Therefore a modern critical text should have very good reasons for omitting it. But Metzger's reason is very bad: Since the context seems to require the pronoun, Matthew could not possibly have written it—it just must have been added by a copyist! Stunning logic!

Matthew 21:44: Although textual criticism is legitimate and necessary, and although textual critics have done much good work—particularly in collating manuscripts—there are surprising exceptions. This verse is one of the latter. After giving the Pharisees the parable of the wicked husbandmen—a parable of profound theological meaning—Jesus adds, "And he who falls on this stone shall be smashed to pieces; on whom it falls shall be crushed to powder."

The Aland text brackets this sentence. Brackets indicate a passage which is regarded as a later insertion, but which nevertheless is evidently ancient and important. Metzger's note is, "Many modern scholars regard the verse as an early interpolation (from *Luke* 20:18) into most manuscripts of *Matthew*. On the other hand, however, the words are not the same, and a more appropriate place for its insertion would have been after ver. 42. Its omission can perhaps be accounted for when the eye of the copyist passed from *outes* (ver. 43) to *auton*. While considering the verse to be an accretion to the text, yet because of the antiquity of the reading and its importance in the textual tradition, the Committee decided to retain it in the text, enclosed within double square brackets."

But the textual apparatus acknowledges only one uncial (a sixth-century uncial of dubious lineage) and one ninth-century miniscule without the verse; while there is a long list of uncials, including the

critics' favorite *Aleph* and *B*, plus about twenty minuscules that have the verse. How then can one logically infer that the verse is an interpolation, early or late?

Matthew 24:6: Here is another textual note. The critical edition reads, "for it must happen." This reading is supported by five uncials, a couple of minuscules, and a few versions. Yet the Aland text gives it a "B" rating. The other readings say either "all must happen," or "all these things must happen." These other readings are numerous, many more than those cited by the textual critics for the shorter reading. But the critics are wedded to the idea that the shorter readings must nearly always be the originals. Having suffered at the hands or fingers of various typists, I cannot accept this criterion. They more often omit word sand phrases than make additions. The critics will reply: The typist copies only one manuscript; those who copied manuscripts have several copies in front of them. Did they? Maybe sometimes. Maybe not. Who knows? In this case the preponderance of evidence favors a longer reading, even if we cannot be sure of the order of the words *all* and *these*.

Matthew 28:9: "And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them saying, All hail" (*KJV*). "And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them" (*NASB*). Its marginal note has "saying hello."

The Aland text favors the shorter reading and gives it a "B" rating. It is supported by *Aleph*, *B*, *D*, *K*, *W*, *Theta*, family 13 (about a dozen manuscripts of lesser importance), and several minuscules. The longer reading occurs in *A*, *C*, *K*, *L*, *Delta*, *Pi*, family 1, and about ten minuscules. The modern critics put great emphasis on the combination of *Aleph* and *B*. Their argument, in my opinion, is not convincing. Metzger is kind enough to suggest that the shorter reading was the result of a *homoeoteleuton*: *i.e.*, the copyist looked at his text and wrote down a phrase in his copy; then he looked at his text again and his eye struck the same last word occurring a line or two below, thus omitting a certain amount from his copy. Such mistakes occur, but these two verses do not make a very obvious *homoeoteleuton*. Metzger concludes that the longer reading is a copyist's unwarranted

expansion of the preceding verse. So far as I can see, no firm conclusion can be drawn. Either reading could be chosen and rated "C," or even "D"; but neither merits a "B".

The examples from *Mark* and *Luke*, now to follow, will prove tedious, trivial, and boring to many communicant members, though perhaps not to all seminary students. Those who wish may therefore skip to the discussion on *John* 7:53-8:11. It should interest everyone. However, the examples from *Mark* and *Luke* are included to show that the flaws in the revised text are not incidental and unintentional lapses. They are the result of a pervasive and controlling methodology. This, I believe, is more convincingly shown by trivialities than by major theological confrontation.

Mark

Mark 1:1: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God." This is also a case of ratings. Devout laymen of ordinary intelligence and seminary students who have paid little or no attention to the actualities of textual criticism are probably inclined to rate ratings "D" in importance. Nevertheless, these examples are given because seminary students really should have more than vague ideas on the subject. Even the laymen, who know no Greek, can by these examples perceive a measure of subjectivity in the work of the liberal critics.

The question in the opening verse of Mark's Gospel is whether the two words "Son of God" should be included or omitted. The Aland text encloses them in brackets and gives them a "C" rating. Metzger thinks that their absence could be due to an oversight in copying, since *Christ*, *Son*, and *God* all end in the same two letters, *ou*. But he prefers to think that copyists like to expand what they were copying, especially in titles. However, since support for the words "is extremely strong," they decided to put the words in brackets. Apparently "extremely strong support" barely balances three manuscripts plus conjectures about scribal insertion.

The evidence is as follows. "Son of God" occurs in the first corrector of *Aleph*, *B*, *D*, *L*, *W*, *A*, *K*, *Delta*,

Pi, family 1, family 13, and about twenty numbered manuscripts, and some versions and quotations. The two words are absent from the original *Aleph*, *Theta*, and not much else. It therefore seems to me that there is no objective justification for giving the two words less than a "B" rating. In fact, the only important evidence for the omission is *Aleph* before it was corrected. The *New American Standard* surely exaggerates when in its margin it says that "many Mss. omit, *the Son of God*."

Mark 1:34: "because they knew him." If these examples seem always to charge the critics with underrating, here is a possible overrating. They give it "A". Incidentally, the *Textus Receptus* also has the reading. The rejected reading is "because they knew him to be the Christ." Admittedly, the shorter reading has excellent attestation: the original *Aleph*, *A*, possibly *D*, *K*, *Delta*, *Pi*, and about eight numbered minuscules. The longer reading has the third corrector of *Aleph*, *B*, *C*, *L*, *W*, *Theta*, families 1 and 13, and a half dozen numbered manuscripts.

Aside from the recorded evidence, Metzger argues, "It is clear [?] that Mark terminated the sentence with *auton* [him] and that copyists made various additions.... If anyone of the longer readings [all using the same words but indifferent orders as is possible in Greek] had been original in Mark, there is no reason why it should have been altered or eliminated entirely." No good reason, certainly; but copyists sometimes make mistakes. Pardon the personalism, but writing a manuscript in longhand, I sometimes think a word but neglect to write it on the paper. The shorter reading here is probably correct, but a "B" rating seems sufficient.

Mark 1:41: "feeling compassion" versus "being enraged." Here is an example where there is a sharp difference in meaning. In favor of "feeling compassion" are *Aleph*, *A*, *B*, and on and on. The only Greek manuscript that has "enraged" is the peculiar *D*. *D* is so often and so badly mistaken that the rating should at least be "B" instead of only "C". Note also that while the Aland text gives it "C," Metzger in his *Textual Commentary* reduces it to "D". This is indefensible.

Mark 5:1: "And they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the G...."

The problem here has as little to do with theology as is possible. For this reason, it is a pure example of method. Cases where there are clear theological inferences might raise doubts as to the writer's objectivity. The last word of the verse is *Gadarenes* in *A*, *C*, *K*, *Pi*, family 13, and about thirteen numbered manuscripts. *Gerasenes* occurs in the original *Aleph*, *B*, and apparently no other Greek manuscript. *Gergesenes* has the support of a third corrector of *Aleph*, *L*, *Delta*, *Theta*, family 1, and less than ten numbered manuscripts.

It should be noted that the parallel passage in *Matthew* 8:28 gives slim support to *Gadarenes*—though the critics give it a "B" rating—abundant support to *Gergesenes*, and no Greek support for *Gerasenes*. In *Luke* 8:26, *Gergesenes* has some support; *Gerasenes* has *papyrus* 75, *B*, and *D*; while *Gadarenes* has a long list of supporters. *Luke* 8:37 has moderate support for *Gergesenes*, not much for *Gerasenes*, and strong support for *Gadarenes*.

By this evidence one could conclude that Matthew wrote *Gergesenes*, Mark wrote *Gadarenes*, and that Luke wrote *Gadarenes*. The critical text has *Gadarenes* in *Matthew*, *Gerasenes* in *Mark*, and *Gergesenes* in *Luke* both times.

To establish these critical conclusions, Metzger in his *Commentary* argues, "Of the several variant readings a majority of the Committee preferred *Gerasenon* on the basis of (a) superior external evidence (early representatives of both the Alexandrian and Western type of text), and (b) the probability that *Gadarenon* is a scribal assimilation to the prevailing text of *Matthew* [8:28], and that *Gergesenon* is a correction, perhaps originally proposed by Origen.... The reading of *W* (*Gergustenon*) reflects a scribal idiosyncrasy."

In reply one may insist first that the "superior external evidence" favors *Gadarenes* in *Mark*. Then second, one may question the alleged "scribal assimilation" to *Matthew*, for *Gadarenes* in *Mark* could not have been copied from *Gergesenes* in *Matthew*. Indeed, there is no evidence that any

copyist assimilated anything to anything. The critics' argument is mainly unsupported speculation.

Mark 8:38: "For if anyone be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man shall also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." This verse contains two textual problems that form a strange contrast. "Words" near the beginning of the verse has almost unanimous support. Only *papyrus* 45 seems to omit it, and *W* is the only other Greek omission. The Aland text rates it an "A". Toward the end of the long verse the preposition *with* has the same attestation, and its deletion—with *and* replacing it—has essentially the same few supporters. But Aland rates it only "B". Here are two cases where the evidence in Greek is identical, and the slightest of differences in the non-Greek sources; yet they are rated differently. Metzger is at least consistent, but in my opinion wrong, by giving them both "B". With greater probability, and justifiably I would say, Metzger in *Mark* 9:49 gives a "B" rating to what is rated "A" in the Aland text.

Those readers who know more than most may expect a discussion of Mark's final paragraph. Unfortunately, it is too complicated for the present purpose. But before swallowing all the liberal critics say, those interested should read John W. Burgon's *The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel according to Mark*, reprinted in 1959 by The Sovereign Grace Book Club. I am well aware how greatly the modern critics despise him, but he seems to me to do a more thorough job than the critics usually do. The latter, to put it a little loosely, think that the combination of *Aleph* and *B* virtually outweighs all the other manuscripts together. This assumption permits a modicum of doubt, and it seems that Westcott and Hort are beginning to lose some of their hold on contemporary scholars.

Luke

Luke 9:59: "He said to another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, allow me to go first and bury my father."

The critical text puts *Lord* or *Sir* in brackets and gives it a "C" rating. Metzger's explanation is: "The

omission of *kurie* from ... is puzzling; what motive would have prompted copyists to delete it? On the other hand, the word might well have been added, either from ver. 61 or from the parallel in *Matthew* 8:21. Since, however, the absence of *kurie* may have been due to a transcriptional blunder ... it was thought safer to retain the word in the text, but to enclose it within square brackets indicating doubt that it has a right to stand there."

Note that the critics find the omission puzzling. Had they held *B* in less esteem, they would hardly have been puzzled at all. Before the evidence is cited, note that a person in declining an invitation to be a disciple, unless he were very antagonistic (but then Jesus would not have invited him), would have been rather polite. Possibly also, unlike Americans, but in the tradition the Europeans have inherited from antiquity, the people of that day would almost automatically have used the polite form of address. But of course this is speculation.

The textual evidence against the word *Sir* or *Lord* is the original *B*, *D*, and apparently only two numbered manuscripts. The evidence in favor of the word is *papyrus* 45, *papyrus* 75, *Aleph*, *A*, *B*'s third corrector, *C*, *K*, *L*, *W*, *Delta*, *Theta*, *Xi*, *Pi*, *Psi*, family 1, family 13, and twenty numbered manuscripts. The critics could not ignore this overwhelming weight of evidence, but such was their prejudice in favor of *B* that they put the word in brackets and gave it a "C" rating. Indefensible.

Luke 10:15: "shalt be cast down into Hades." This verse presents a most peculiar confusion. Greek has two verbs for "cast down." There is a shorter and more common verb, and there is a longer, rarer verb. The meaning of both is the same.

Now, the Aland text has the longer verb. Yet Metzger's *Commentary* says, "A majority of the Committee, impressed by the superior external testimony of *papyrus* 75, *B*, *D*, *al*, adopted [the shorter verb]." But the printed text has the longer verb. Furthermore, the "superior external testimony" is anything but. In contrast with the shorter form, the longer form has the support of *papyrus* 45, *Aleph*, *A*, *C*, *K*, *L*, *W*, *X*, *Delta*, *Theta*, *Xi*, *Pi*, *Psi*, family 1, family 13, plus about twenty

numbered manuscripts. How can one place much reliance on the critics when such confusions as this occur?

Luke 11:2: "Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name" (*KJV*). "Father, hallowed" (*NASB*). The marginal note in the *New American Standard* is "some mss. insert phrases from *Matt. 6:9-13* to make the two passages closely similar." This is, of course, an accusation of willful dishonesty.

The Aland text gives the simple *pater* an "A" rating on the basis of *papyrus 75*, *Aleph*, *B*, and not much else. It rejects "Our ... which art in Heaven," as found in *A, C, D, K, P, W, X, Delta, Theta, Pi, Psi*, and a dozen or more cursives. Yet in the next line, they give a "B" rating to "Thy kingdom come," which is supported by essentially the same evidence they rejected in the preceding line. Similarly, in *Luke 11:4*, the Aland text omits "Deliver us from evil," and ends the verse with the word *temptation*. The critics' favorite combination of *Aleph* and *B* support the omission, plus *papyrus 75*, but *Aleph* was corrected to include it, plus ten other uncials and many cursives.

In connection with nearly every item in the preceding discussions, something should be said about the critics' favorite combination of *Aleph* and *B*. They are both fourth-century uncials. That means they were written, let us guess, about A.D. 350. They are supposed to have marked similarities which distinguished them from other uncials, not to mention cursives, such as *A, C, K*, etc. This leads to the supposition that they were both copied from an earlier, now lost, manuscript. Frederick G. Kenyon, *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (56), says, "If Tischendorf's opinion as to the identity of the corrector of *Aleph* and the scribe of *B* be true, it is more than probable that the two manuscripts were written in the same place; and in any case [regardless of Tischendorf] the similarity of text suggests at least the possibility of a community of origin." On the next page, Kenyon reports that Tischendorf's edition of the New Testament after his discovery of *Aleph* differed from his previous edition in more than 3000 places. He adds, "it is primarily, though not by any means

entirely, to their influence that the textual differences between our Authorized and Revised Versions are due." I would delete from his statement the three words "by any means."

For such reasons, the critics regularly minimize the importance of the very numerous Byzantine copies. That the numerical superiority of the Byzantine text might have been due to its early widespread acceptance of that type as being closest to the autographs does not seem to impress them. Furthermore, while it is reasonable to treat all descendant so f one source as one, there is more difficulty in tracing the heredity of manuscripts, their "families," than the critics like to admit. And again, it is not true that the earliest manuscripts must be the best. Since Christianity was plagued with heretics and enemies right from the start, one of them could have deliberately altered his copy of the autograph. The result could be that *Aleph* and *B* are excellent copies of a deliberately altered ancestor. Indeed, deliberate alteration seems more likely to have occurred early, rather than later when the number of manuscripts increased. Why could not *Aleph* and *B* have come from an earlier proto-Arian text or a Marcionite deception?

Luke 13:27: "And he will say, saying to you." However queer this sounds in English, or even in Greek, it is a very common Hebrew construction. That Luke, though a Gentile, was widely cognizant of Hebrew customs, may be verified by the opening chapters of his Gospel. The whole atmosphere is genuinely Jewish. *Aleph* and four minuscules omit the *saying*. All others, including one papyrus, ten lettered uncials, families 1 and 13, plus ten numbered minuscules have the Old Testament construction. *Saying* deserves a better rating than "C".

Luke 16:14: "all these things." To disabuse the uninstructed Christian of the notion that the doctrines of the New Testament are widely distorted by a multitude of textual errors, this reference is included because of its triviality. "These all" has the favor of the critics' favored combination of *Aleph* and *B*, plus *papyrus 75*, plus (with the addition of *and*) a great number of others. "All these and," "all and," and "these" alone have some support. None of

this makes any difference to the sense of the passage, and there are many similar examples.

More serious is *Luke 16:21*: "desiring to be fed from the fallen [things] from the table." The *Textus Receptus* reads, "desiring to be fed from the crumbs which were fallen from the table." The shorter form, which the critics rate as "B", seems to have only four Greek manuscripts as evidence. The word *crumb* occurs in all the others, including twenty minuscules and the two families 1 and 13. Metzger pontifically disposes of the problem in one sentence: "The more picturesque expression 'of the crumbs' [in Greek] was introduced by copyists from *Matthew 15:27*." No evidence supports this conjecture.

Luke 19:25 is another instance of the critics' prejudice against the evidence. Because *D*, *W*, and three minuscules omit the verse, they give it a "D" rating in spite of the fact that it is found in *Aleph*, *A*, *B*, *K*, *L*, *Delta*, *Theta*, *Pi*, *Psi*, and a long list of others. It seems as if the critics doubt their own favorite combination of *Aleph* and *B* when even these support the Byzantine text.

Luke 21:36: The uninitiated should be warned that the Aland text and the Metzger Commentary do not indicate all their alterations of the *Textus Receptus*. This verse is an example. The *King James* reads, "Watch ... that ye maybe accounted worthy to escape...." The *New American Standard* and the *Revised Standard Version* have, "that you may have strength to escape...." The latter is the reading of *Aleph* and *B*; *A*, *C*, and the majority have *be accounted worthy*. In addition, the sense of the passage favors *count worthy*. The critical text makes the escape depend on an individual's physical strength. But the context has just condemned carousing and drunkenness. Without doubt these are physical effects, but they begin with an infraction of morality. Furthermore the text adds, "the cares of this life." This phrase does not indicate dissipation, but rather indifference to spiritual values. Hence *be accounted worthy*, which better fits the context, seems the preferable reading.

Luke 24:3: "[The women] entering [the tomb] did not find the body of the Lord Jesus." The critical

text brackets the *Lord*, though the article *the* is retained. The supposedly conflated Byzantine cursives, according to modern textual critics, use many "devotional phrases" or "liturgical additions." On this assumption, subjective modern preferences omit *kuriou*. *Iesou* alone seems to correct them. Yet *papyrus 76*, *Aleph*, *A*, *B*, plus other uncials and scads of cursives have *kuriou*. Very few, only one uncial and two twelfth-century cursives, omit it. One may therefore suspect that "liturgical additions" are not liturgical additions after all.

Luke 24:9: "Returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven." The modern textual critics give only a "D" rating to the words "from the tomb." Yet *papyrus 75*, eleven uncials including *Aleph* and *B*, plus plenty of cursives have these words. Only *D* omits it. Surely this deserves an "A" rating, and it is hard to see why the critics did not give it at least a "B."

Luke 24:12: "Peter, rising, ran to the tomb" on to the end. The critics bracket the whole verse and give it a "D" rating. The evidence in favor of the verse is similar to that of *Luke 24:9*: *papyrus 75*, eleven uncials, including *Aleph*, *A*, and *B*, plus plenty of cursives. The only Greek manuscript that omits it is the inexplicable *D*.

The same is true for *Luke 24:40*. The critics rate it "D"; and the *New American Standard* omits it from its text, demoting it to a marginal note. It says, "Some mss. add verse 40." The *New American Standard* should have said, "Nearly all."

John

John 7:53-8:11: This is the passage concerning Jesus' judgment of the woman whom the Pharisees caught in the very act of adultery. It is the longest and probably the most peculiar textual problem in all the New Testament; and though the liberal critics would not say so, the conservative scholars must admit that it is the most difficult also. Therefore, though not strictly necessary, some general background should be permitted.

First, no one should hold that the *King James Version* is the infallible autograph. For example (even if it is in the Old Testament), *2 Samuel 6:23*

says, "Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death." But *2 Samuel* 21:8 refers to "the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul." For once the *Revised Standard Version* can be complimented for removing the contradiction. In my earlier years I had heard that some people believed the *King James* to be infallible, but I was 70 years old before I ever met one such. The liberals surely have exaggerated their number, but at least one minister was of that opinion.

More important is the question whether the *Textus Receptus* is the original text. But such a belief would be as foolish as the former. Since the present study is not addressed to professional scholars, but to students and ordinary church members, it is permissible to say something about the *Textus Receptus*, the Greek text which underlines the *King James* translation.

The *Textus Receptus* derives from the work of Erasmus, a Dutch scholar (1466-1536). His first edition of the Greek text appeared in 1516. It is full of mistakes, though most are merely typographical. The story is that Erasmus was anxious to have the honor of being the first to publish the Greek New Testament, and to do so he had to rush through his work before Cardinal Ximenes de Cisneras could publish his so-called *Complutensian Polyglot*. The Cardinal seems to have had no such eagerness, and though his edition was set up in type possibly as early as 1514, the actual publication date was 1522. Erasmus' sloppy work doesn't hold a candle to it.

Deficiencies other than typographical are not all Erasmus' fault, or only partly so. He had the use of less than twenty manuscripts and used mainly only two or three. His only manuscript of Revelation lacked its last page, so Erasmus himself translated the Latin *Vulgate* back into Greek for the last six verses. He did this in some other places where his manuscripts were defective. Presumably this was unavoidable. Then to his credit, he omitted *1 John* 5:7-8. This shocked the Roman Church. He replied that if they would produce even one Greek manuscript that had those two verses, he would include them. So the obliging papacy quickly got an Irish priest to make such a manuscript, and Erasmus inserted the verses.

Robert Etienne (Stephanus) of Paris printed a third edition of Erasmus' translation. In it he used the *Codex Bezae* (that maverick western text *D*), parts of the *Complutensian* edition, all typographically corrected. This is the *Textus Receptus*.

Now, the *Textus Receptus* and the *King James Version* have *John* 7:53-8:11. These verses are not found in *papyri* 86 and 75, seemingly omitted in *A* and *C*, omitted in *L, N, T, W, X, Y, Delta, Theta, Psi*, two numbered uncials, and about ten minuscules. Containing the passage are *D, G, H, K, U, Gamma*, and about as many minuscules. Some of those that include the passage indicate it is doubtful. One unimportant manuscript puts it after *Luke* 21:38.

On the basis of this evidence, it is doubtful that the original contained the verses because it is unlikely that so many scribes would have deleted it. On the other hand, if it was not in the original, how can one explain so many manuscripts that include it? Now, if the liberal critics dogmatically assert that this copyist did this and that copyist did that, perhaps someone else can modestly suggest a different possible explanation. No doubt the liberal critics will hoot at the suggestion, but surely it will be at least a possibility. Just perchance the Apostle John himself wrote a second edition of his Gospel, adding the paragraph. I can point to a book on *Ethics*, whose second edition differs from the first by only the addition of an extra chapter halfway through. Could not John have done similarly?

However, Hodges and Farstad propose a more scholarly and much less speculative solution. In their Introduction (xxiii-xxxii) to *The Greek New Testament according to the Majority Text*, Hodges' and Farstad's first argument in favor of the authenticity of the passage is the linguistic style. "Among the marks of Johannine style which it exhibits, none is clearer than the phrase in 8:6, *touto de elegonpeirazontes* (they said this, tempting him). The same introductory phrase occurs also in 6:6, 7:39, 11:5, 12:6, 33, and 21:19." Let us grant that John frequently uses this phrase. We all know people who have favorite phrases. They sometimes annoy us. But usually the phrase itself is innocuous. Other people also use it, but not so frequently.

Therefore the fact that this is one of John's favorite introductory phrases is far from proving that someone else could not have used it occasionally—or even often, for it is very Hebraic. The most that can be concluded here is that the phrase does not destroy authenticity.

The authors also add three other, less striking items. At least the second is less striking. It is the argument that the passage fits nicely in its place. This can hardly be contested, though their evidences for fitting are slightly too many. But if the authors have not demonstrated authenticity, their argument is quite satisfactory in undermining any counterclaim. There is also a third argument, a very complex genealogical argument, too difficult to reproduce here. The data are important, but the whole requires further investigation.

Acts

Acts 5:37: "Judas of Galilee rose up ... and drew people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were scattered." The Aland-Metzger text gives the word *all* a "C" rating in spite of its being supported by *papyrus* 74, *Aleph*, *A*, *B*, *C*, *E*, *P*, *Psi*, and plenty of cursives. Note that the famous combination of *Aleph-B* has it too. Only *papyrus* 45 and *D* omit it. *Papyrus* 45 of the third century carries some weight, but *D* is often obviously incorrect. Metzger in his *Commentary on Acts* 13:27-29 properly states, "Here and there the text of the *codex Bezae* is obviously corrupt and ungrammatical." These ratings therefore must have been decided by tossing a coin rather than by manuscript evidence. Metzger's explanation, in his *Textual Commentary on the New Testament*, is, "Although it is possible that *pantes* [all, masculine plural] was added to a growing text [note that he believes the text grew by continual additions to nobody knows what], a majority of the Committee was inclined to regard the absence of the word from *papyrus* 45, *D*, ... as due to accidental oversight." Well, the Committee was right about *D*, but quite stingy in its rating.

Acts 8:37: This is the supposed confession of faith by the Ethiopian eunuch to Philip. The *Textus Receptus* has it, and therefore the *King James*. In

reacting to the inconsistencies of the modern critics, one should not assume that the *Textus Receptus* is without mistakes. While Stephanus did better than Erasmus, neither of them had very many manuscripts. Indeed Erasmus seems to have seen this verse only in the margin of one late manuscript. Apparently only one uncial has the verse, plus a very few minuscules. Erasmus should not have trusted a mere marginal note. One should also note that Hodges and Farstad omit the verse, showing their attention to the evidence, thus correcting the *Textus Receptus* where it needs correction.

It should be noted, for the benefit of students who wish to do more in textual criticism than read a few easy examples, that *Acts* contains several extremely complex and difficult problems. Those in which *D* is used as important evidence can be alleviated by ignoring *D*. Others, such as 15:20, 29, plus 21:25, are not so easily explained. Some of these difficulties are exegetical rather than textual. For such, consult J. Gresham Machen, *The Origin of Paul's Religion* (Macmillan, 1921, 87-98). Whereas Metzger's *Textual Commentary* usually gives six to twelve lines, roughly, to an item, here are five full pages. About as puzzling, but not nearly so important, is the three-page discussion of 16:12. Again, the troubles with 16:35-40 would vanish if *D* were ignored. In fact, *D* is almost as bad as some American translations. *Acts* would do much better without it, and them.

Romans

Romans 1:5: "to those in Rome." This deserves an "A" rating rather than a "B" because only one Greek manuscript, the ninth-century *G*, omits it. No doubt some who have patiently read this far and survived the boredom may wonder why so much attention should be paid to ratings. The answer is that these low ratings give the impression that the text is throughout much more in doubt than it really is. Another reason is that the consideration of this material will go far to enhancing the reputation of *The New King James Version* in comparison with the *Revised Standard Version* and others that accept the results of Aland, Metzger, and their associates.

Romans 5:1 is of some theological importance. The choice is between an omicron and an omega—an indicative and a subjunctive verb. The Aland text and footnote agree with the indicative of the *Textus Receptus*, but Metzger claims "far better external support" for the subjunctive. Since the short *o* in speech is hardly distinguishable from the long *o*, a scribe receiving dictation could use either vowel without thinking. If he were copying a text, he would likely get it right. But clearly the sense requires the indicative. As even Metzger acknowledges, "Paul is not exhorting, but stating facts.... only the indicative is consonant with the apostle's argument." The evidence does not justify Metzger's claim that the subjunctive has far better support. The evidence is rather evenly balanced.

Romans 6:16: "whether of sin unto death." This is another example of the critics' curious grading system. The words "unto death" are found in thirty manuscripts listed in the Aland footnotes. Only two omit the words. Therefore "a majority of the Committee was disposed to regard the omission as an unintentional oversight." But they gave "unto death" only a "C" rating. If the omission was unintentional, and if, as is the case, the sense requires that "unto righteousness" be balanced by "unto death," the rating should be a "B" or even an "A". Just above they gave a "B" rating to the words "in Christ Jesus" (verse 11), even though there are twenty-four—not just two—variant manuscripts. The critics' defense of their violations of their own criteria is that textual criticism is not a science but an art. If you enjoy Rembrandt, it is Byzantine and bad: If you enjoy cubism, you are a great scholar. Aesthetics is decisive.

In *Romans* 8:23 adoption rates only a "C", even though only one papyrus and three Greek manuscripts omit it. The Aland footnote lists twenty-eight with it. Its inclusion may seem to contradict 8:15, as Metzger notes; but this is a theological, not a textual, problem. The evidence overwhelmingly supports its inclusion. In contrast, "and he who believes" in *Romans* 9:33 has a "B" rating with seven manuscripts, while "and everyone who believes" is supported by about two dozen. Of course the argument is that *papyrus* 46, *Aleph*, *A*, and *B* overpower all other combinations.

But consider *I Corinthians* 1:13. The choice is between "Is Christ divided," and, "Christ is not divided." Taking the phrase as a question, without the "not," we have a long list of supporting manuscripts. If the phrase is a statement with the "not," there are one papyrus and two numbered manuscripts, yet they give the question only a "C" rating. There may be rhyme to all this, but there is no reason.

Revelation

The book of *Hebrews* was briefly considered near the beginning of this essay where the subject was English translations rather than Greek variants. Overcome with fatigue, the patient reader will be overjoyed to learn that *Revelation* now ends this study.

Revelation 13:1 "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having" (*KJV*). The *Revised Standard Version* has, "And he stood on the sand of the sea [12:17]. And I saw a beast rising." The *New English Bible* is similar. Then the *New International Version* makes it, "And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming."

The Aland text has *estathe* (*he stood*). This makes very little sense. It is a very awkward conclusion for chapter 12, and does not fit chapter 13 at all, as the critics admit by adding it to 12:17 or making it 12:18 and then beginning chapter 13 in the middle of what used to be 13:1.

The manuscript evidence is as follows. "He stood" receives the support of *papyrus* 47, *Aleph*, *A*, *C*, and about 25 minuscules. "I stood" (*estathen*) has in its favor some numbered uncials and a great many cursives. Metzger dismisses them by arbitrarily asserting that these latter "have arisen when copyists accommodated *estathe* to the first person of the following *eidon*." This is simply unsupported speculation.

Revelation 13:18: "Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred three score and six."

The various difficulties in *Revelation* are so numerous and so enormous that an elementary study such as this could be immediately excused from considering any one of them. However, with unbecoming boldness and the help of others, I venture upon one such. First, notice that the apostle John expects that some of his addressees can figure out the meaning. Indeed, it would be easier for them to do so than for us because their knowledge of such numbers was greater and more usual than our own. At any rate 666 designates a man, and the verse virtually implies that John's first century readers know that man.

One difficulty that we moderns face, and which the early Christians did not, is the date of the book. If John wrote the *Apocalypse* about A.D. 90, as many believe, he could not have been referring to someone who had lived about A.D. 60. There is one piece of evidence that seems to date John's writing in the nineties. Though this remains as a possible refutation of what is about to be concluded, it can hardly be regarded as an unquestionable factor. The exegesis of the verse may prove enough to discount it.

An important bit of evidence is the fact that one manuscript gives the number as 616. Obviously this is an incorrect reading, but it raises the question as to why one copyist changed 666 to 616. The most plausible answer is that the copyist knew John's meaning and knew also, in his manner of counting, that the person's number was 616. He then "corrected" his "incorrect" source.

Who then can fit the two numbers 666 and 616? The answer is easy. The evil emperor's name was spelled in two ways: Nero or Neron. The letter *n* meant 50. If the copyist was familiar with only the form Nero, he could by dropping the *n* obtain 616. It is most difficult to think of any other reason for 616. Aland gives 666 a "B" rating, which is par for their course.

Revelation 17:9 provides some corroboration in that the city in which the evil king dwells is a city built on seven hills. No one can miss the point.

This explanation bears on the general interpretation of the book of *Revelation* as a whole. We cannot

suppose that the letters to the seven churches describe conditions that were to arise between A.D. 100 and A.D. 2000 or so. We must vigorously object to Scofield's view that chapters two and three describe "the spiritual history of the church from, say, A.D. 96 to the end" (*Scofield Bible*, footnote 3 on Revelation 1:20). He believed that "it is incredible that ... there should be no such foreview." He further asserts that "these messages do present an exact foreview of the *spiritual* history of the church, and in this precise order." Then, note carefully, a few lines below, "Sardis is the Protestant Reformation." Now, the revealing angel directed John to write to Sardis, "I know that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." A verse below exhorts repentance and threatens disaster. Only a few names have not been defiled. Is Scofield right in condemning the Protestant Reformation and asserting that only a few names of those Reformers have not been defiled?

On the contrary, the chapter refers only to the actual churches of the first century. It is not "incredible" that Revelation omits a description of 2000 years of church history. From chapter four to eleven, John describes the Jewish persecution of the Christians; from twelve to eighteen he predicts the Roman persecution; and nineteen to twenty-two describe history's final scenes.

Awaiting them we conclude that the type of criticism underlying the *Revised Standard Version*, the *New American Standard*, and other versions is inconsistent with its own stated criteria, inconsistent in its results, and inconsistent with the objective evidence. Its method is that of unsupported aesthetic speculation. If we want to get closer to the very words of God, we must pay attention to Hodges, Farstad, Pickering, and The *New King James Version*.