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### The Employment of Textual-Critical Methods and Principles by the Revision Committee

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THE EMPLOYMENT OF TEXTUAL-CRITICAL METHODS AND  
PRINCIPLES BY THE REVISION COMMITTEE IN THE RSV  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE PAULINE EPISTLES

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of New Testament Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

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by

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## CHAPTER I

### PHENOMENON OF VARIANT READINGS

*πᾶσα γραφή θεόπνευστος* (2 Tim. 3:16). By this is meant, of course, the autographs of the prophets, apostles and evangelists. But, as for the copies of these autographs, made by a great variety of scribal hands, in widely scattered areas of the ancient world, there is another story to be told, involved and intriguing. It is the story of scholarship's attempt to ascertain as closely as is humanly possible, the form of those "God-breathed" autographs. This Herculean task is just that, in addition to being painstaking and often tedious labor, since the scribes who copied the inspired autographs, or who copied copies or translations of the inspired originals, allowed various alternative, and sometimes widely divergent readings to enter the text. And, since we have many, though most probably not nearly all of these copies, and since we can be quite sure that the originals are irretrievably lost, we have a problem. This problem is referred to in scholarly circles as "Textual Criticism". Since this problem must, of necessity, confront every assiduous and devout reviser and translator of Holy Scriptures, not to mention every honest student of the Greek New Testament, and since this problem has accordingly confronted also the revision committee of the Revised Standard Version, a brief orientation with regard to the textual-critical problem is in order before we can attempt to

study the methods of the revisers and the conclusions arrived at by them.

In this thesis, then we shall first review the problem of textual criticism, with its implications for the translator. In such a situation the reviser or translator must have certain criteria to guide him. A brief glimpse at the criteria employed in the RSV is our next step. The questions then arise, "What readings were used?" "How were these criteria applied?" Perhaps this would be the best place to mention that because of the tremendous wealth of material and the necessarily huge expenditure of time incumbent upon the careful examination of all these variant readings in the entire Pauline corpus, we have limited the scope of this thesis to Galatians and to the Captivity Letters (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon). We are of the opinion that, after having investigated the procedure employed by the revisers in these five epistles, at least a pattern of sorts can be set down, demonstrating their employment of textual-critical criteria and the available manuscript evidence.

Having noted the readings favored by the revisers, we shall attempt, by some form of tabulation, to demonstrate a pattern or preference for a particular manuscript or family of manuscripts. It may be, too, that there is no demonstrable pattern. This, of course, would also be indicative of the revisers' viewpoints. Our conclusions, drawn from the evidence herein presented, whether a pattern is forthcoming or not,

bring the thesis to a close.

The vast complexity and seemingly inscrutable mass of manuscripts and their seemingly innumerable variant readings have been rendered much less chaotic by the spadework of such giants as Tischendorf, Westcott and Hort, Gregory and Streeter, to mention only a few. Prolonged and detailed study of available uncials and minuscules revealed that a number of them were similar in one particular respect which distinguished them from the others. Westcott and Hort, who published their edition of the Greek New Testament in 1881, contemporaneously with the Revised Version<sup>1</sup>, propounded a theory of genealogy of manuscripts which, although often criticized, has become the basis, with some revisions and alterations, for our present-day theories regarding manuscript relationships and origins. Hence, the terms "Neutral", "Alexandrian", "Caesarean", and "Western" are the stock-in-trade of every textual critic of the New Testament.

Dr. Frederick C. Grant states that the revisers agreed on a number of occasions with the readings of the text as

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1. Vol. I of Westcott & Hort's text was published May 12, 1881, the Revised Version, May 17, 1881, and Vol. II of Westcott & Hort's text, Sept. 4, 1881, according to a newly-discovered letter of A. F. Hort, dated Dec. 3, 1905, addressed to Dr. Kenyon, and now in the possession of Mr. Thomas T. Reuther.

proposed by Westcott and Hort.<sup>2</sup> In view of this, a brief resume of Westcott and Hort's theory of genealogy is in order.

As Kenyon concisely states,<sup>3</sup> the theory allowed for four main classes, or families, of texts, viz., the Western, the Alexandrian, the Syrian and the Neutral. The Western class was characterized by a very free handling of the text and a very early (second century) departure from the true tradition. Being best known from its appearance in the Latin authorities, it was given the name Western, and is represented by Codex Bezae, the Old Latin version, and the Curetonian Syriac. In his graph of Westcott and Hort's theory, Streeter includes family (H) "so far as known."<sup>4</sup> In a later portion of his book, however, he states that "The text of family (H) is slightly, but only slightly, nearer to the Western than to the Alexandrian type; also it has a large and clearly defined set of readings peculiar to itself."<sup>5</sup> The Alexandrian class resulted from a sense of literary smoothness and a desire to plane away the rough "unliterary" edges. According to the

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2. An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, by members of the Revision Committee, ICRE (n.p., 1946), p. 41.
  3. Frederick G. Kenyon, Recent Developments in the Textual Criticism of the Greek Bible (Oxford, 1933), pp. 6-7.
  4. B. H. Streeter, The Four Gospels (London: MacMillan & Co., Ltd., Rev. 1930, 7th Impression, 1951), p. 26.
  5. Ibid., p. 77.



graph in Streeter, the Alexandrian group was represented by Codices Ephraemi (C), and L, papyrus 33, and the Sahidic and Bohairic versions.<sup>6</sup> At about the middle of the fourth century an authoritative revision culminated in the Syrian type, which became the immediate forerunner and predecessor of the universally dominant Textus Receptus, as per the diagram in Streeter.<sup>7</sup>

Only a few manuscripts escaped the ancient revisers' hands, and to this minority group the term Neutral is given. These, according to Westcott and Hort, come the closest to the pure tradition, and are best represented by Codices B and  $\aleph$  (Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, respectively). Such, in brief, is the theory which lay behind Westcott and Hort's edition of the Greek New Testament, which edition, together with Tischendorf's eighth major edition and Nestle's eighteenth edition we have used in the preparation of this thesis.

And, since Tischendorf's edition was used, it should be noted here that, according to Robertson<sup>8</sup> this edition is based primarily on  $\aleph$  (Sinaiticus) and B (Vaticanus), but contains the readings of the Neutral class generally which,

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6. Ibid., p. 26

7. Ibid.

8. A. T. Robertson, Introduction to Textual Criticism (New York: Geo. H. Doran Co., 1925), p. 84.

as Robertson says elsewhere,<sup>9</sup> included the Bohairic and the readings in Origen.

The seeming contradiction where, in identifying the Alexandrian group, we included the Bohairic version and again immediately above, included the Bohairic in the Neutral class, this contradiction is resolved by Robertson himself, who states that "Nearly always this class [that is, the Alexandrian] appears with the Neutral or with the Western."<sup>10</sup> Regardless of the class into which it is placed, however, the Bohairic is closely akin to  $\aleph$  and B, as Kenyon emphatically states.<sup>11</sup>

It should also be mentioned in passing that, in addition to the four families of manuscripts designated by Westcott and Hort, a fifth, the so-called Caesarean, is recognized by textual critics, which was necessitated by the discovery of the Koridethi Gospels (Ⓞ). Origen's Gospel commentaries are the basis of this new nomenclature, since it is evident that in his Johannine commentary he used an Alexandrian type manuscript, but in his Commentary on Matthew and in his Exhortation to Martyrdom he used a different type of text again. Since he moved to Caesarea A. D. 231, he obviously used, for the last two works, a text in use there,

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9. Op. cit., p. 195.

10. Ibid.,

11. Frederick G. Kenyon, The Text of the Greek Bible (New edition; London: Duckworth, 1949), p. 133.

represented by the (H) type, hence the term "Caesarean".<sup>12</sup> Nestle, in his "Explanations for the Greek New Testament" includes in the Caesarean group the Koridethian Manuscript, "family 1" (minuscules 1, 118, 131, 209), "family 13", (13, 69, 124, 346, etc.), together with minuscules 565 and 700.<sup>13</sup> Since this text-type deals largely with the Gospels, it is of no great concern in this present study, but was mentioned here to round out the brief picture of manuscript genealogy.

Alterations, modifications, interpolations, versions, revisions, all together pose the problem of deciding very carefully for a particular reading throughout the entire New Testament. The implications of all these variants for the translator, and the criteria to be employed in translating are the subject of the following chapter.

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12. Op. cit., p. 177.

13. Eberhard Nestle, Novum Testamentum Graece (18th edition; Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1948), p. 69\*.

## CHAPTER II

### EFFECTS OF VARIANT READINGS ON TRANSLATION

With all the often conflicting and frequently confusing witness of the various manuscript families and "sub-families" at hand, what procedure did the Revision Committee of the RSV follow?

Dr. Frederick C. Grant in the Revision Committee's An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament (hereinafter referred to simply as the Introduction) gives us a clue:

With the best will in the world, the New Testament translator or reviser of today is forced to adopt the eclectic principle: each variant reading must be studied on its merits, and cannot be adopted or rejected by some rule of thumb, or by adherence to such a theory as that of the 'Neutral' text. It is this eclectic principle that has guided us in the present Revision . . . 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.<sup>1</sup>

However, it must of necessity be borne in mind also that the role claimed for the RSV by its supporters is that of a revision, and not a new translation. The International Coun-

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1. An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, by members of the Revision Committee, ICRE (n.p., 1946), p. 41.

cil of Religious Education defined the task of the revisers as follows:

We, therefore, define the task of the American Bible Committee to be that of revision of the present American Standard 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.<sup>2</sup>

Since the American Standard Bible referred to in the above definition is an offshoot and a very close relative of the Revised Version of 1885, a brief look at the aims of the 1885 revisers might be in place here. Price says,

According to the Preface of the Revised Version, some of the general principles which were agreed to on May 25, 1870 by the Revision Committee of Convocation for their guidance were: '(1) To introduce as few alterations as possible into the Text of the Authorized Version consistently with faithfulness; (2) to limit as far as possible, the expression of such alterations to the language of the Authorized and earlier English versions . . . .'<sup>3</sup>

Although these were worthy aims, the end result was far from satisfying. Consensus today is that the American Standard Version (ASV) suffers from a too literal rendering of the Greek. To quote Price again,

But for whatever reason, the ASV already lags behind the scholarship of the present . . . . The consistency of the translators also became a vice; it is a mechanical procedure and not true translation to follow rigidly chosen word

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2. Ibid., p. 11.

3. Ira M. Price, The Ancestry of Our English Bible (13th Printing, 2nd Rev. ed.; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), p. 281.

equivalents. Words take on meaning from their context, so that an elasticity of rendering is demanded if the true sense is to be served.

Then, strange as it may sound, the American Standard Version was far too conservative; or more strictly, it was uneven in its attitude to the King James, changing when often the old was better and yet conforming its rendering as a whole to the form of seventeenth-century scholarship.<sup>4</sup>

Sherman E. Johnson, writing in the Anglican Theological Review has this to say of the Greek text used in the preparation of the Revised Version: "The Greek text underlying the Revised Standard Version is better than that of the Revised Version, which was an uneasy compromise between the 'received text' (translated by the King James Version) and the readings of Westcott and Hort."<sup>5</sup>

While the Westcott-Hort text played a major role in the formation of the RSV, this is not the whole story. The preference given to any particular reading in any given instance is, barring the inevitable and intangible human element, to be justified by the principles followed by the Revision Committee and enunciated by Dr. Grant in the Introduction:

1. No one type of text is infallible, or to be preferred by virtue of its generally superior authority.
2. Each reading must be examined on its merits, and preference must be given to those readings which are demonstrably in the style of the author under consideration.

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4. Ibid., p. 290.

5. Sherman E. Johnson, "The Revised Standard Version", Anglican Theological Review, XXX (April, 1948), 83.

3. Readings which explain other variants, but are not contrariwise themselves to be explained by the others, merit our preference; but this is a very subtle process, involving intangible elements, and liable to the subjective judgment on the part of the critic.<sup>6</sup>

An interesting note is added to the stated criteria of the Revision Committee in the words of Dr. Goodspeed who in his contributing article to the Introduction states, (and his words are especially relevant for the subject-matter of this thesis,

But beyond all these aids we have had constant access to a score out of the great host of private translations which the past two centuries have produced from the time of William Whiston (The Primitive New Testament, 1745) and John Wesley (The New Testament, With Notes, 1755) down. These have shown the necessity of abandoning the old tendency to translate Paul word for word, in favor of a more vigorous and not less literal presentation of his thought.<sup>7</sup>

There are those, however, who feel that the RSV is not a revision at all, but a new translation instead, the claims of the Committee to the contrary notwithstanding. Undoubtedly the above reference of Dr. Goodspeed to the employment of other translations as well as the second and third points of the above-mentioned criteria listed by Dr. Grant might serve to create this impression.

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6. Grant, op. cit., p. 41.

7. Ibid., p. 35.

The words of Oswald T. Allis bear this out:

The comparison of two of these versions is especially important because their respective authors, Doctor Moffatt and Doctor Goodspeed were influential members of the committee which prepared the Revised Standard Version, Doctor Moffatt serving as its secretary until his death in 1944. This comparison will serve we believe to convince the reader that it is a misnomer to call the Revised Standard Version a "revision" of the Authorized Version and the Revised Version in any such sense, certainly, as the Revised Version is a "revision" of the Authorized Version. It is a modern speech version. It belongs in the same general class with Weymouth, Moffatt, Goodspeed, 'Berkeley' and the many similar versions which make no claim to be revisions of the old historic Authorized Version, but call themselves what they are, New Translations. The 'Revised Standard Version' should follow their example: call itself what it is and not claim to be what it is not."<sup>8</sup>

However, we feel that merely to compare (or contrast, as the case may be) the readings of the RSV with the readings given by Weymouth, Moffatt, Goodspeed and Verkuyl, without reference at all to the Greek text is handling the whole matter rather cavalierly and arbitrarily. After all, the King James Version was (we may assume) uppermost in the minds of the Committee, and even before, when their charter was formed (cf. quotation therefrom at the beginning of this chapter). The remark of Sherman Johnson is very much to the point: "Every good translation, it has been well said, is a commentary. One

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8. Oswald T. Allis, Revision or New Translation? (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1948), Preface, p. viii.



cannot translate without interpreting, and the makers of the RSV have faced up to their responsibility."<sup>9</sup> Cadbury's remarks in the Introduction are to the point:

. . . mere alternatives in English expression do not reflect any substantial difference of opinion or uncertainty as to what the original means . . . . Several changes will be found in the English tenses used in this translation, due not so much to new knowledge of the Greek, or to new rules of translation, as to the freedom that the translators have exercised in trying to find the appropriate English idiom for sentences taken as a whole.<sup>10</sup>

It will be noted in the articles just cited that both the authors speak of a "translation" when referring to the RSV. This is significant, because, in a sense, the RSV is both. If we wish to revise the King James Version, and at the same time do a scholarly job of it, we naturally want to use the best available Greek text as a guide, which, as was mentioned before, was, for this Revision Committee, for the most part, the text of Westcott and Hort (B  $\text{N}^s$ , and frequently the Beatty papyri). The King James translators, however, had instead the "Textus Receptus". There is bound to be a difference in the end results, and in this sense the RSV is also a translation. But since their ultimate aim was to make the RSV a legitimate bearer of the Tyndale-King James tradition, it is thus a revision. The outcome of this ad-

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9. Sherman E. Johnson, op. cit., p. 86.

10. Grant, op. cit., pp. 47.50.

mittedly delicate problem (that is, using a Greek text superior to that used by the 1611 translators, and yet following their pattern) is outlined in statistical form by Dean Weigle in the Committee's Introduction.<sup>11</sup>

This is not to say, of course, that the Committee has, in every case met this problem in a manner most desired by all. There are any number of points where improvement could be made. Wikgren, in his contributing article to The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow echoes this sentiment specifically:

That there is, however, much increased precision in the revision is undeniable, and is illustrated by Cadbury himself.<sup>12</sup> It is only regrettable that the revisers have not consistently followed the excellent standards proclaimed by the Introduction. An indiscriminate rendering, for example, of Greek imper-fects, aorists, and perfects is common; and a disregard for tense-action also results here and there in a loss of exactness and vividness.<sup>13</sup>

We used above a quotation from Cadbury's article (p. 4) to justify renderings differing from the King James rendering. But the words of this same reviser, closing his article, may also be quoted to indicate a viewpoint which may have been

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11. Ibid., p. 57.

12. Introduction, p. 44 ff.

13. A. P. Wikgren, "A Critique of the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament", The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow, edited by Harold R. Willoughby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), p. 388.

responsible, in a number of cases at least, for the "indiscriminate renderings" referred to by Wikgren. Cadbury says, in closing, "As they [the first Christian authors] wrote with neither grammatical precision nor absolute verbal consistency he (that is, the translator) is willing to deal somewhat less meticulously with the date of a simple style that was naturally not too particular about modes of expression or conscious of some of the subtleties which some later interpreters read into it. To this he adds whatever he may modestly claim to have achieved of real insight into the meaning of the original."<sup>14</sup>  
 (Italics our own)

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14. Introduction, p. 52.

## CHAPTER III

### WHAT READINGS WERE USED?

As was mentioned in Chapter I, the findings of this chapter and the following are based on a study of textual variations in Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Of course, only those variants were considered which would affect the English translation in any way.

The procedure in the preparation of this chapter was as follows: the three Greek texts of Nestle, Tischendorf, and Westcott-Hort were first studied and noteworthy variants were recorded by chapter and verse. These were then listed in columns together with the readings of the RSV, the ASV (American Standard Version, 1901), and the King James Version. In the last column the critical apparatus of Nestle was recorded for the particular passage in question. This arrangement brought some interesting statistics to light.

Of the thirty-nine passages recorded from the above-mentioned five Pauline letters, the RSV agrees with the ASV in twenty-three of these; the RSV agrees with the Westcott-Hort readings in nineteen cases out of the thirty-nine, agrees with the King James in twenty-one cases out of the thirty-nine, and agrees with the readings of Tischendorf (eighth major ed.) in only eleven cases out of the thirty-nine. In nine instances the RSV agreed with only one other authority. Otherwise there is agreement with two or three

(never more) of the others. We break down these nine cases of agreement between the RSV and only one other authority for a particular passage as follows: there are five such instances, surprisingly enough, where the RSV and the King James only have the same readings, viz, Eph. 4:4; 5:2; 5:22; 6:12; and Col. 3:16. In three other cases the RSV readings concur with the Westcott-Hort text only, viz, Col. 2:16; 4:15; and Philimon 6. In only one case, Gal. 2:16, does the RSV agree only with the ASV.

In two other cases the RSV readings stand alone, agreeing with none of the other four authorities, viz, Col. 1:20 (where the phrase under consideration, "by Him" is in brackets in Westcott-Hort), and Col. 1:22.

One interesting reading turned up in this investigation. In Col. 2:7 the ASV has "in your faith." All the others read "in the faith." This is noteworthy especially because there is no manuscript evidence whatever cited in Nestle to justify the reading "in your faith".

While the Textus Receptus (also called "Koine", "Constantinopolitan", "Imperial" text) readings are admittedly inferior, the RSV does favor its readings nineteen times in the thirty-nine passages studied. Of these nineteen cases, seventeen occur where one or more members of the Hesychian (Egyptian) group of manuscripts (B,  $\Delta^5$ , C) concur in that particular reading. However, the two remaining cases are extremely interesting. In Eph. 6:12 and Col. 3:16, the RSV

reading agrees with the Koine reading against all the rest. In Eph. 1:15 the RSV reading agrees with the Koine, supported only by D and G. In the case of the Col. 3:16 citation, it should be noted that Codex Alexandrinus also agrees with the Koine, with only slight and insignificant variations, designated A in Nestle.

As might be expected, the RSV, as indicated in the Revision Committee's Introduction<sup>1</sup> followed the Hesychian readings in the majority of cases (thirty-five out of thirty-nine). Of these thirty-five cases, eleven are readings given exclusively by B (Codex Vaticanus), four are readings given exclusively by  $\lambda^5$  (Codex Sinaiticus) and four others are given exclusively by C (Codex Ephraemi). In the remaining cases, two of the three manuscripts agree together on an RSV reading. In the four remaining instances out of the above-mentioned thirty-nine, the RSV adopts a reading found in none of the manuscripts of the Hesychian group. This unusual situation obtains in Eph. 1:15; 5:2; 6:12; and Col. 3:16. In only one of these four cases, Eph. 5:2, is the RSV reading supported by p<sup>46</sup>. Perhaps the additional support of p<sup>33</sup> in this same instance gave the necessary weight to the reading in question.

Strangely enough, while there are nineteen cases of agreement between the RSV and the Koine, and also nineteen

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1. An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, by members of the Revision Committee, ICRE (n.p., 1946), p. 42.

cases of agreement between the RSV and the Westcott-Hort text, the two groups are not at all identical. This, however, is to be expected. In this tally, there are only seven instances where the RSV reading agrees both with the Westcott-Hort and the Koine text.

The decisive combination for the revisers, as also indicated in the Introduction<sup>2</sup> seems to be a reading of Vaticanus (or one other of the Hesychian group) together with p<sup>46</sup>. Where the RSV used the Hesychian readings (thirty-five instances out of the total thirty-nine), sixteen of these cases are supported by p<sup>46</sup>. Of these sixteen cases, thirteen occur as substantiating either B alone or B and either  $\aleph^s$  or C; one instance occurs (Gal. 2:16) where the RSV reading is supported by p<sup>46</sup> and  $\aleph^s$  (Eph. 4:8) and one other case where p<sup>46</sup> joins with C (Gal. 3:14) to support the RSV reading.

The findings of this chapter do indeed bear out the contention that the revisers followed the eclectic principle in the determination of the text to be used, although it is evident from the foregoing statistics that they

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2. Ibid.

avored the Hesychian group (termed by them the "Alexandrian" group).

It should be remembered, however, that the area of investigation with which this thesis deals is not by any means a major portion of the New Testament, and we must, accordingly, be extremely cautious in drawing general inferences from these figures and applying these inferences to their treatment of the New Testament as a whole.



## CHAPTER IV

### IS THERE A PATTERN?

The revisers' use of the "eclectic principle"<sup>1</sup> is nowhere more clearly demonstrated than when we attempt to find a pattern in their choice of readings. For the sake of clarity and expediency we have again subdivided the variant readings under consideration into four groups, according to the nature of the variant, whether it is a case of transposition, substitution, an addition, or an omission. In this chapter we shall discuss the types of variants in that order, attempting first to find a pattern in the subdivisions themselves, and then, on the basis of these conclusions, attempt to describe a possible pattern for this entire area of survey.

The variants classed under "Transposition" are restricted to Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians. In this class, Galatians has the largest representation; in fact it is here that the greatest number of variants listed altogether for Galatians are to be found.

The first citation is Gal. 1:3, where the RSV, agreeing with the ASV, Westcott-Hort, the King James and Tischendorf (a rare case, in fact the only case where all five agree)

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1. An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, by members of the Revision Committee, ICRE (n.p., 1946), p. 41.

reads, ". . . peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ." This reading is strongly supported by p<sup>46-51</sup>, B, the Koine, D, G, and others, against the remainder of the Hesychian group (always consisting of  $\xi^S$ , A, B, C, H, I, M, p<sup>10.13.15.16.32</sup>, minuscules 6, 33, 81, 104, 326, 424, 1175, 1739, and others), minuscule 1912, and a number of others (designated al by Nestle), which read ". . . peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Dr. Oscar Paret in his extremely handy and picturesque volume Die Bibel, Ihre Ueberlieferung in Druck und Schrift, offers an interesting conjecture to explain the transposition in this passage, which he considers a "Schreibfehler". In speaking of the Chester Beatty papyri he offers the information that the closing verses of Ephesians, and the opening verses of Galatians were contained on the same page. Since the scribe had just finished copying τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν in the final line of Ephesians, and then came across the same, or somewhat the same combination in Gal. 1:3, πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ he would, therefore, transpose the ἡμῶν to modify κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. While this interesting conjecture has its possibilities, the same argument could be used for the other reading, "the Lord Jesus Christ", since this form also occurs at the end of Ephesians, in the verse immediately preceding the above reference (6:24).

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2. Oscar Paret, Die Bibel, Ihre Ueberlieferung in Druck und Schrift (2 Durchgesehene Auflage, Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1950), p. 54.

The second case of transposition occurs in Gal. 2:16. Actually a double transposition is involved, both dealing with the problem of whether to read "Jesus Christ" or "Christ Jesus". In this instance the revisers are consistent; they settle for "Jesus Christ . . . . Christ Jesus", thereby adopting in both cases the reading of  $\text{X}^s$  and C. Here, it seems to be a case of "the majority rules" which, in some instances, is a rule of dubious value. In both these transpositions in Gal. 2:16, the readings of the RSV oppose those of B and minuscule 33. The two forms adopted by the RSV are, of course, much more wide-spread, almost to the point of being universally used. The revisers, however, seem to deprecate by their choice the age of the manuscript, although age also is no guarantee of superiority. But p<sup>46</sup> seems not to bear too much weight with them, and this can also be inferred from Dr. Grant's remarks in the Introduction concerning it:

". . . . in fact we have consulted them (the Chester Beatty fragments) constantly, and have occasionally adopted readings from that source, when supported by others."<sup>3</sup> (italics our own). The word "occasionally" seems to be substantiated by this Gal. 2 passage. In the first phrase it supports the RSV; in the second, it is opposed to it. However, this phenomenon indicates, to their advantage, no a priori acceptance by the revisers of any one particular manuscript. It will be noted

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3. Introduction, p. 42

also that, as far as these transpositions are concerned, there is only one other case where p<sup>46</sup> is opposed to the RSV reading, that being in the case of Phil. 1:6. This passage, however, presents an interesting situation and will be reviewed in more detail after the consideration of the Gal. 3:14 passage and the two Ephesians passages.

The reading of Gal. 3:14, again involving a transposition of Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, is, as far as textual support of the RSV is concerned, almost an exact duplicate of the textual support for the first phrase considered in Gal. 2:16, except for the fact that in this case, λ' is ranged along with B opposing the RSV reading. Taking λ's place, so to speak, on the side of the RSV reading is Alexandrinus (A). It will be noted as we discuss the other three sub-heads that on three or four other occasions the readings of B and λ are rejected by the RSV in favor of the Koine tradition, usually, as here, supported by C (Codex Ephraemi), A, and occasionally also p<sup>46</sup>.

For the sake of pointing out a very obvious and striking contrast, we jump ahead momentarily into the last sub-head concerned with omissions. There, with the exception of p<sup>46</sup> which again supports the RSV reading, the order is exactly the opposite from what obtained here in Gal. 3:14, that is, the MSS which favor the RSV reading in 3:14 are opposed to the reading in 5:21, and the manuscripts rejecting the RSV reading in 3:14 are the same manuscripts (with

the exception noted) which favor the 5:21 reading! Back again to the subdivision of transposition, we come to Ephesians 1:1, again concerned with the phrase  $\chi\epsilon\iota\beta\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \iota\eta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\beta$ , where the evidence in support of the text of the RSV represents a phenomenon similar to the one in Gal. 5:21, alluded to in the preceding paragraph. There is this difference, however;  $p^{46}$  and B, favoring the RSV reading are also backed by D and minuscule 33. If we substitute Codex H (Cyprus) for Codex D, we have almost the same group of manuscripts which, in the case of Gal. 2:16 opposed the RSV, whereas in Eph. 1 they support it. To whatever shortcomings the revisers were prone, rigid consistency was not one of them.

The next passage to be considered in this group is Eph. 3:18, where the RSV has the reading ". . . to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth", over against the variant reading "depth and height". The manuscript evidence supporting the RSV reading in this case certainly is not open to question. It is very ably supported by  $p^{46}$ , B, C, D, B and the Vulgate and some Old Latin manuscripts, although superiority of numbers seems to be opposed to the reading. Nestle here cites  $\aleph^s$ , A, the Koine and pm (permulti--the majority of the remaining witnesses). It is understood, of course, that actual superiority in numbers of manuscripts in favor of one or the other reading cannot be determined merely by the designations alii (others) and permulti. We can only estimate.

The last passage dealing with transposition of words is Phil. 1:6, to which reference was made above as presenting an interesting situation. The passage again involves  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon \text{ Ἰ}\eta\sigma\omicron\upsilon$ . While it is true that the Hesychian group (B excepted), G, K, and many others favor this reading, Westcott-Hort list the other form  $\text{Ἰ}\eta\sigma\omicron\upsilon \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$  as being of equal validity. It would seem, then, that if Westcott and Hort considered the evidence equally weighty for both readings, the discovery and use of another ancient and authoritative manuscript would tip the scales one way or another. p<sup>46</sup> goes along with B, the Koine, D, and others, yet the revisers chose the opposite reading. As was mentioned before, this is the second case where, as far as transpositions are concerned, the RSV rejects the evidence of p<sup>46</sup>.

It should also be noted that in the case of every passage cited under this sub-head, the RSV reading agrees with the readings of the ASV. This statement is not made in a condemnatory vein, but is offered as the writer's answer to the problem of why the RSV on one occasion uses a reading attested by certain manuscripts, and elsewhere adopts another reading which almost all of these same manuscripts reject. The readings given here do not involve a point of doctrine; on the other hand, the Committee's instructions<sup>4</sup> were to revise the ASV, and since the details

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4. Supra; Chapter II.

involved were minute and unimportant, it can readily be understood why the Committee might want to revise the ASV no more than necessary. This, of course, is only a supposition, another being offered later in this chapter.

The next subdivision, that concerned with substitutions, like the subsequent one dealing with additions has a much larger representation among the passages studied. In fact, these two subdivisions together comprise two-thirds of the passages studied, which means, significantly enough, that the majority of the passages in question deal either with a change in the phrase itself, or an addition of some kind.

In the first three passages to be considered under this particular subdivision, Gal. 4:19; 4:28; and Eph. 5:2 (the first part of the verse--there being two variants to be taken up in this verse), another striking divergence in choice of readings on the part of the revisers is in evidence, a discrepancy which we are at a loss to explain. In Gal. 4:19, where the RSV uses *τέκνια*, "little children", instead of *τέκνα*, "children", and in Gal. 4:28, where the RSV uses "we, brethren", instead of "you", in both cases the RSV renderings are supported by the same group of witnesses, A, C, the Koine, and pl (plerique--most witnesses) and pm (permulti--the majority of remaining witnesses) respectively, with one exception. The Gal. 4:28 passage, according to the RSV, has the additional support of  $\xi$ . This situation is very similar to the one obtaining in the previous subdivision, where the

Galatians passages cited were similarly supported (see above). But, in the case of Eph. 5:2, ". . . as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us", this RSV reading, unlike all the preceding citations does not agree with the ASV reading. Furthermore, and here is where the striking divergence referred to comes in, the manuscripts opposed to this reading of the RSV are  $\mathfrak{S}^5$ , B, C, and A1. Support for this reading is given by  $p^{46}$ , the Koine, D, G, the majority of remaining witnesses, the Latin and the Syriac. There seems to be absolutely no reason for this choice of reading, especially in view of Streeter's remark regarding the authenticity of B and  $\mathfrak{S}^5$  : "The text of B  $\mathfrak{S}^5$  being held innocent of this free treatment of the original acquired the credit which always attaches to a respectable witness as against one known to be in some respects disreputable."<sup>5</sup>

The second substitution in Eph. 5:2 presents no problem. The reading ". . . and given Himself for us" is supported by all manuscripts except B, 69, and a few others of no special importance.

The next passage under consideration, Phil. 2:30, concerning the phrase "the work of Christ" as in the RSV is opposed only by Westcott-Hort, and by  $\mathfrak{S}^f$ , A, P, and other less important manuscripts. This is noteworthy, because here

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5. B. H. Streeter, The Four Gospels (London: MacMillan & Co., Ltd., Rev. 1930, 7th Impression, 1951), p. 132.



is one case where Tischendorf does not follow the reading of  $\delta^5$ . We can have no argument here with the revisers' choice, since the reading is substantiated by all the other manuscripts outside of the ones just mentioned.

Of the remaining seven passages under this subdivision the RSV's treatment of four of them, Col. 1:7; 1:12; 3:13; and Philemon 6 offer no special problems of the kind we have considered in the foregoing pages. In each case the manuscript evidence is sufficiently strong for the reading chosen by the revisers. With the exception of Philemon 6, there is agreement in every case with the ASV.

But the remaining three passages again show some surprising choices on the part of the revisers. In the case of Col. 2:16, the manuscript witness for the RSV readings are about the same ( $p^{46}$ , B, 1739, Syriac) as those rejecting the reading chosen by the revisers in Gal. 6:12. There, the manuscript evidence opposed to the RSV reading shows up as follows:  $p^{46}$ , B, 69, 1175. While the RSV reading in Gal. 6:12 is still in agreement with the ASV, this is not the case with Col. 2:16. A purely arbitrary choice on the part of the revisers, at least in this case, seems to be the only solution to the enigma.

A similar situation confronts us in the case of Col. 3:4. The phrase in question "Christ . . . our life", favored by the revisers over the alternative "Christ . . . your life" is rejected by  $p^{46}$ , the Hesychian group with the exception of

B, then rejected also by D, G, most of the others, and the Latin. Now this is almost the same manuscript evidence which supports the RSV reading of Col. 1:7, with the sole exception of substituting C in the place of B as above. Since in the case both of Col. 3:4 and 1:7, the RSV readings agree with those of the ASV, this seems to be the only reason for this contradictory choice of readings.

The next subdivision, involving additional words in the text contains twelve examples of this form of variant. The large majority of these are well supported by reliable manuscript evidence. The readings of the RSV for three passages in this group, however, merit closer attention. In the case of Eph. 1:15 the phrase "and your love" is omitted by p<sup>46</sup>, B,  $\delta$ <sup>s</sup>\*, A, and a few others. Since the RSV reading again agrees with the ASV reading and since the RSV reading is also supported by the Koine tradition, D, G, and many others, besides the Latin and Syriac versions, sheer weight of numbers seems to have been the deciding factor in this case.

The choice of the revisers with regard to Eph. 6:12 is even more puzzling. The phrase in question "this present darkness" is supported only by the Koine (and the King James, of course), and many other less significant witnesses. All the other major witnesses, when not listed in Nestle's footnotes are presumed to follow the reading of Nestle's text,

which omits the  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \delta\iota\omega\tau\omicron\varsigma$  according to the "Explanations for the Greek New Testament", preceding the text.<sup>6</sup> It would seem that the relative importance and authority attached to the various manuscripts carried no weight at all in this case. In passing it should also be mentioned that a similar situation obtains in the case of Col. 3:16, except that the RSV rendering there is supported, in addition to the witnesses cited for the Eph. 6:12 rendering, also by A. Again the RSV's rendering agrees only with that of the King James.

Col. 1:22 again presents a striking case of contradictory choices. The RSV reading here, "by His death" is not found in the ASV, Westcott-Hort, the King James or in Tischendorf. In fact, the only manuscript support of this reading is listed by Nestle as being  $\Lambda^c$ , A, 1912, and pm (permulti--many others), and the Peshitta Syriac. If we substitute minuscule 1739 for 1912, we have again the same combination of manuscript witnesses which opposed the RSV reading in the case of Eph. 3:9!

The fourth and last subdivision of variants, those dealing with omissions consists of nine passages containing a variant of this nature.

The very first passage under this heading, Gal. 5:21,

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6. Eberhard Nestle, Novum Testamentum Graece (18th edition; Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1948), p. 78\*.

where the RSV omits "murder" in the list of the works of the flesh is well substantiated. Although the word is included <sup>2</sup> only by the RSV and the King James, it is, nevertheless, well supported by p<sup>46</sup>, B,  $\delta^s$ , 33, a few others, and also by Marcion. However, the chief manuscripts opposing this reading, that is, those which eliminate from the text, A, C, the Koine, D\*, G are the same witnesses which support the RSV rendering of Col. 1:12 under the second subdivision.

The RSV reading of Gal. 6:12, "the cross of Christ", where some manuscripts have "the cross of Christ Jesus" again demonstrates an interesting phenomenon. It is opposed only by p<sup>46</sup>, B, and minuscules 69 and 1175. Returning again to Col. 2:16 under the second subdivision, we note that the RSV reading there is supported only by p<sup>46</sup>, B, minuscule 1739, and the Peshitta Syriac.

The revisers' choice in the case of Eph. 4:4 is even more difficult to defend. The reading there involves the use or rejection of the word "also" in the phrase "just as (also) you were called . . . ." The RSV eliminates the "also" and so does the King James. Westcott-Hort put the reading in brackets, and Tischendorf and the ASV both include it in the text. There is, however, extremely little support among the manuscripts. Only B, a few others, the Vulgate, some of the Old Latin versions and the Peshitta Syriac favoring the RSV rendering. A preference for the King James at this point on the part of the revisers, for

whatever reason, seems to be the only explanation for this particular choice.

Again, in the case of Col. 1:3, where the RSV has "God the Father", which agrees with the ASV and Westcott-Hort, numerical superiority of manuscripts seems to be on the side of the reading "God and the Father". The only manuscript witnesses for the RSV reading are B, C\*, and the Syriac versions, whereas the King James and Tischendorf rendering is supported by  $\aleph'$ , the Koine tradition, many others, (plerique) and the Vulgate.

It would seem from a study of the passages cited in this chapter and the readings in these passages adopted by the revisers, that there was not always a regard for the weight of manuscript evidence, in the choice of a particular reading. E. C. Colwell's remark is very much to the point: "One of the faults of the Revised Standard Version is an unnecessary inconsistency. In general, it does not show the result of careful attention to the problem of accuracy in the source which is to be expected in a recent work."<sup>7</sup> Since, however, in the passages cited in this chapter the revisers' choice favored once the ASV and then the King James where manuscript evidence would have called for a different reading, we submit the suggestion that the revisers attempted

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7. Ernest Cadman Colwell, What is the Best New Testament? (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1952), pp. 91-92.

a compromise between these two versions where no question of literary style or important variations, such as the longer or shorter ending of Mark, were involved. In view of the Revision Committee's instructions<sup>8</sup> to consider both the ASV and the King James when preparing this new translation, the inconsistency of the revisers, is, to a certain extent excusable. Yet, we think of the fourth rule in Wikgren's canons of criticism as quoted by Colwell: "The quality rather than the quantity of witnesses is more important in determining a reading."<sup>9</sup> And, in none of the other canons of criticism, whether put forth by Tischendorf, Porter, Wettstein, Hammond, Wikgren, Colwell, or any others, is there anything to the effect that an earlier English version can be the deciding factor in choosing a particular reading.

We recall Streeter's remark concerning the value of Vaticanus (B), and Sinaiticus (A): "The text of B, A, being held innocent of this free treatment of the original, acquired the credit which always attaches to a respectable witness as against one known to be in some respects disreputable."<sup>10</sup>

We also note in passing that of the fourteen passages listed under Ephesians, ten of them show agreement between the RSV and King James. A bird's-eye view of the territory

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8. Supra: Chapter II

9. Ibid., p. 115.

10. Streeter, op. cit., p. 132.

covered in this chapter also shows a preference on the part of the revisers for the reading "Christ Jesus" over "Jesus Christ", and also a preference for "we", "our", "us", over "you" and "yours".

This chapter, it seems, shows the revisers' "eclectic principle" frequently, and often arbitrarily used.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Such is the picture of the RSV derived from a tabulation of readings by several of the leading versions; a tabulation of manuscript evidence in support of, or in opposition to, these readings, and an attempt to ascertain how closely the revisers followed the best principles of textual criticism, at the same time carrying out their commission to neglect neither the ASV nor the King James.

We have pointed out (chapter II) that the RSV is not strictly a revision, and the revisers themselves, as was pointed out, indicated that this latest effort to clothe the New Testament in modern English dress sometimes took on aspects of a new (and sometimes free) translation. In that chapter was also a forecast of what was to become very evident in subsequent chapters, viz, that the Revision Committee felt free to add, in the words of Dr. Cadbury, "whatever he (the translator) may modestly claim to have achieved of real insight into the meaning of the original."<sup>1</sup>

In the third chapter we noted the interesting phenomena that while the RSV agreed most frequently with the ASV, it agreed only slightly less frequently with the King James and

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1. An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, by members of the Revision Committee, ICRE (n.p., 1946), p. 52.



and the Westcott-Hort versions, and agreed about equally with the last two versions.

In line with good textual-critical procedure the revisers, in the large majority of cases accepted readings of the Hesychian group, and gave some attention (though not as much as might be desired) to p<sup>46</sup>, generally following a combination of these.

The fourth chapter revealed, by examination of the witnesses for a particular reading that the revisers' choice was frequently of a dubious nature, from the standpoint of manuscript support, and could be justified only by their intention to strike a sort of aurea mediocritas between the ASV and the King James.

This survey was intended as a sort of supplement to other surveys of a similar nature by Wikgren, Allis, Cadbury, Johnson and others, which dealt with the Gospels especially and the larger Pauline epistles. It was also the findings of these other surveys, as was pointed out in the several quotations, that the revisers' "eclectic principle" was too freely used, or at least, used more often than was desirable.

As the revisers had no preconceived partiality toward the Westcott-Hort text, but found afterwards that they did favor it in the majority of cases<sup>2</sup>, we had likewise formed no judgment or opinion beforehand regarding their over-use

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2. Ibid., p. 41

of the "eclectic principle", although other surveys which we consulted had already indicated this.

The concluding remark in Wikgren's survey aptly and concisely summarizes the findings of this survey also: "Thus, while the RSV of the New Testament faces, Janus-like, in two directions at once, it nevertheless represents a significant step in the achievement of the most accurate English text, and in the emancipation of the English Bible from the fetters of archaism."<sup>3</sup>

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3. A. P. Wikgren, "A Critique of the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament", The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow, edited by Harold R. Willoughby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), p. 388.

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