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ARCHIVES

Textual-Critical Methods of R. S. V. Revision Committee

(With Special Reference to the Pauline Epistles)

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EDITORIAL NOTE: The writer of this article was graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in June, 1952, receiving the B. A. degree. As a Graduate Fellow he pursued advanced studies from 1952 to 1953, earning his S. T. M. He is now pastor at Loves Park, Ill. Because of the current interest in the R. S. V. this careful study in one area of critical appraisal of the new version is deemed particularly timely by the editors.

CHAPTER I

PHENOMENON OF VARIANT READINGS

It is a well-known fact that the autographs of the writings constituting Scripture have been lost. The study of the *copies* of these autographs, made by a great variety of scribal hands in widely scattered areas of the ancient world, is involved and intriguing. Biblical scholarship has attempted to ascertain as closely as is humanly possible the form of those "God-breathed" autographs. This is a Herculean task, in addition to a painstaking and often tedious one, since the scribes who copied the inspired autographs 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 study, 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 R. S. V. 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 required by the careful examination of all these variant readings in the entire Pauline corpus, we have limited the scope of this study 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.

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 had a characteristic in common which distinguished them from the others. Westcott and Hort, who published an edition of the Greek New Testament in 1881, contemporaneously with the Revised Version,¹ 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 proposed by Westcott and Hort.² In view of this statement, a brief résumé of Westcott and Hort's theory of genealogy is in order.

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, graduate student at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

² *An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament*, by members of the Revision Committee, International Council of Religious Education (n. p., 1946), p. 41.

As Kenyon concisely states,³ 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 Θ "so far as known."⁴ In a later portion of his book, however, he states that "The text of family Θ 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."⁵ The *Alexandrian* class resulted from a sense of literary smoothness and a desire to plane away the rough "unliterary" edges. According to the graph in Streeter, the *Alexandrian* group was represented by Codices Ephraemi (C), and L, papyrus 33, and the Sahidic and Bohairic Versions.⁶ 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.⁷

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 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 paper.

And, since Tischendorf's edition was used, it should be noted here that according to Robertson⁸ this edition is based pri-

³ Frederick G. Kenyon, *Recent Developments in the Textual Criticism of the Greek Bible* (Oxford, 1933), pp. 6, 7.

⁴ H. B. Streeter, *The Four Gospels* (Rev. 1930, 7th impression; London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1951), p. 26.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁷ *Ibid.*

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

marily on \aleph (Sinaiticus) and B (Vaticanus), but contains the readings of the Neutral class generally, which, as Robertson says elsewhere,⁹ included the Bohairic and the readings in Origen.

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

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 (Θ). 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 of 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, represented by the Θ type, hence the term "Caesarean."¹² 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 700.¹³ 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

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

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

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 177.

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

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.

CHAPTER II

EFFECTS OF VARIANT READINGS ON TRANSLATION

With all the often conflicting and frequently confusing witness of the various manuscript families and "subfamilies" at hand, what procedure did the Revision Committee of the R. S. V. follow?

Dr. Frederick C. Grant of the Revision Committee gives us a clue in the work hereinafter referred to simply as the *Introduction*:

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.¹⁴

However, it must of necessity be borne in mind also that the role claimed for the R. S. V. by its supporters is that of a revision, and not a new translation. The International Council 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.¹⁵

Since the *American Standard Bible* here referred to 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

¹⁴ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

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. . . ." ¹⁶

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

But for whatever reason, the A.S.V. 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 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. ¹⁷

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." ¹⁸

While the Westcott-Hort text played a major role in the formation of the R.S.V., 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*:

¹⁶ Ira M. Price, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible* (13th printing, 2d rev. ed.; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), p. 281.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

¹⁸ Sherman E. Johnson, "The Revised Standard Version," *Anglican Theological Review*, XXX (April, 1948), p. 83.

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.
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.¹⁹

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

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.²⁰

There are those, however, who feel that the R.S.V. 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.

The words of Oswald T. Allis bear out this claim:

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 Re-

¹⁹ *Loc. cit.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

vised 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.²¹

However, we feel that merely to compare (or contrast, as the case may be) the readings of the R. S. V. 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 that even before their charter was formed (cf. quotation with footnote 16). The remark of Sherman Johnson is very much to the point: "Every good translation, it has been well said, is a commentary. One cannot translate without interpreting, and the makers of the R. S. V. have faced up to their responsibility."²² 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.²³

It will be noted in the articles just cited that both the authors speak of a "translation" when referring to the R. S. V. This is significant, because, in a sense, the R. S. V. 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, \aleph , and frequently the Beatty papyri). The King James

²¹ *Revision or New Translation?* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1948), p. viii.

²² *Op. cit.*, p. 86.

²³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 47, 50.

translators, however, had instead the *Textus Receptus*. There is bound to be a difference in the end results, and in this sense the R. S. V. is also a translation. But since their ultimate aim was to make the R. S. V. a legitimate bearer of the Tyndale-King James tradition, it is a revision. The outcome of this admittedly 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*.²⁴

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 echoes this sentiment specifically:

That there is, however, much increased precision in the revision is undeniable, and is illustrated by Cadbury himself.²⁵ 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 imperfects, aorists, and perfects is common; and disregard for tense-action also results here and there in a loss of exactness and vividness.²⁶

We used a quotation from Cadbury (with footnote 23) to justify renderings differing from the King James Version. But this same reviser also indicates a viewpoint which may have been responsible, in a number of cases at least, for the "indiscriminate renderings" referred to by Wikgren. He says: "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 data 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.*"²⁷ (Italics our own.)

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 44 ff.

²⁶ A. P. Wikgren, "A Critique of the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament," *The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow*, ed. Harold R. Wiloughby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), p. 388.

²⁷ *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 R. S. V., the A. S. V. (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 R. S. V. agrees with the A. S. V. in twenty-three of these; the R. S. V. 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 R. S. V. 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 R. S. V. and only one other authority for a particular passage as follows: There are five such instances, surprisingly enough, where the R. S. V. 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 R. S. V. readings concur with the Westcott-Hort text only; viz., Col. 2:16; 4:15; and Philemon 6. In only one case, Gal. 2:16, does the R. S. V. agree only with the A. S. V.

In two other cases the R. S. V. 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 1:22.

While the Textus Receptus (also called Koine, Constantinopolitan, Imperial text) readings are admittedly inferior, the R. S. V. 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, \aleph , C) concur in that particular reading. However, the two remaining cases are extremely interesting. In Eph. 6:12 and Col. 3:16 the R. S. V. reading agrees with the Koine reading *against* all the rest. In Eph. 1:15 the R. S. V. 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 R. S. V. as indicated in the Revision Committee's *Introduction*,²⁸ 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 \aleph (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 R. S. V. reading. In the four remaining instances out of the above-mentioned thirty-nine, the R. S. V. 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 R. S. V. reading supported by p⁴⁶. Perhaps the additional support of p³³ in this same instance gave the necessary weight to the reading in question.

Strangely enough, while there are nineteen cases of agreement between the R. S. V. and the Koine, and also nineteen cases of agreement between the R. S. V. 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 R. S. V. reading agrees both with the Westcott-Hort and the Koine text.

The decisive combination for the revisers, as also indicated in the *Introduction*,²⁹ seems to be a reading of Vaticanus (or one other

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

of the Hesychian group), together with p⁴⁶. Where the R. S. V. used the Hesychian readings (thirty-five instances out of the total thirty-nine), sixteen of these cases are supported by p⁴⁶. Of these sixteen cases, thirteen occur as substantiating either B alone or B and either \aleph or C; one instance occurs (Gal. 2:16), where the R. S. V. reading is supported by p⁴⁶ and \aleph (Eph. 4:8), and one other case, where p⁴⁶ joins with C (Gal. 3:14) to support the R. S. V. 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 favored the Hesychian group (termed by them the "Alexandrian" group).

It should be remembered, however, that the area of investigation with which this study 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"³⁰ is never 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, addition, or 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, attempting 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 for Galatians is to be found.

The first citation is Gal. 1:3, where the R. S. V., agreeing with the A. S. V., Westcott-Hort, the King James, and Tischendorf

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

(a rare case; in fact, the *only* case where all five agree) reads: "... peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ." This reading is strongly supported by p⁴⁶⁻⁵¹, B, the Koine, D, G, and others, against the remainder of the Hesychian group (always consisting of \aleph , A, B, C, H, I, M, p^{10.13.15.16.32}, 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,³¹ 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, πατὴρ 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).

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 readings of \aleph 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 R. S. V. oppose those of B and minuscule 33. The two forms adopted by the R. S. V. are, of course, much more widespread, 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 p⁴⁶ seems not to bear too much weight with them, and this can also be inferred from Dr. Grant's remarks in the

³¹ *Die Bibel, Ihre Ueberlieferung in Druck und Schrift* (2. durchgesehene Auflage; Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1950), p. 54

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.³² (Italics our own.) The word "occasionally" seems to be substantiated by this Galatians 2 passage. In the first phrase it supports the R. S. V.; 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 also that, as far as these transpositions are concerned, there is only one other case where p⁴⁶ is opposed to the R. S. V. reading — 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 R. S. V. 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, \aleph is ranged along with B against the R. S. V. reading. Taking \aleph 's place, so to speak, on the side of the R. S. V. reading is Alexandrinus (A). As we discuss the other three subheads, it will be noted that on three or four other occasions the readings of B and \aleph are rejected by the R. S. V. in favor of the Koine tradition, usually, as here, supported by C (Codex Ephraemi), A, and occasionally also p⁴⁶.

For the sake of pointing out a very obvious and striking contrast, we jump ahead momentarily into the last subhead, concerned with omissions. There, with the exception of p⁴⁶, which again supports the R. S. V. reading, *the order is exactly the opposite* from what obtained here in Gal. 3:14, that is, the MSS which favor the R. S. V. reading in 3:14 are opposed to the reading in 5:21, and the manuscripts *rejecting* the R. S. V. reading in 3:14 are the same ones (with the exception noted) which favor the 5:21 reading! Going back again to the subdivision of transposition, we come to Ephesians 1:1, again concerning the phrase Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, where the evidence in support of the text of the R. S. V. represents a phenomenon similar to the one in Gal. 5:21, alluded to in the preceding paragraph. There is this difference, however: p⁴⁶ and B, favoring the

³² P. 42.

R. S. V. 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 R. S. V., whereas in Ephesians 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 R. S. V. 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 R. S. V. reading in *this* case certainly is not open to question. It is very ably supported by p⁴⁶, 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 , 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 Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. While it is true that the Hesychian group (B excepted), G, K, and many others favor this reading, Westcott-Hort lists the other form Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ 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. p⁴⁶ 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 R. S. V. rejects the evidence of p⁴⁶.

It should also be noted that in the case of *every* passage cited under this subhead, the R. S. V. reading agrees with the readings of the A. S. V. This statement is not made in a condemnatory vein, but is offered as the writer's answer to the problem of why the R. S. V. 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 instructions³³ were to revise the A.S.V., and since the details involved were minute and unimportant, it can readily be understood why the Committee might want to revise the A.S.V. 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 R.S.V. uses *τεκνία*, "little children," instead of *τέκνα*, "children," and in Gal. 4:28, where the R.S.V. uses "we, brethren," instead of "you," in both cases the R.S.V. renderings are supported by the same group of witnesses, A, C, the Koine, and *pl* (*plerique* — most witnesses) and *pm* (*per-multi* — the majority of remaining witnesses) respectively, with the one exception that the Gal. 4:28 passage, according to the R.S.V., has the additional support of *κ*. 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 R.S.V. reading, unlike all the preceding citations, does not agree with the A.S.V. reading. Furthermore, and here is where the striking divergence referred to comes in, the manuscripts *opposed* to this reading of the R.S.V. are *κ*, B, C, and A! Support for this reading is given by p⁴⁶, 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, espe-

³³ *Supra*, chapter II.

cially in view of Streeter's remark regarding the authenticity of B and κ : "The text of B κ , 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."³⁴

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 R. S. V., is opposed only by Westcott-Hort, and by κ , A, P, and other less important manuscripts. This is noteworthy because here is one case where Tischendorf does not follow the reading of κ . We can have no argument here with the revisers' choice, since the reading is substantiated by all the other manuscripts.

Of the remaining seven passages under this subdivision the R. S. V.'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 A. S. V.

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 witnesses *for* the R. S. V. readings are about the same (p⁴⁶, B, 1739, Syriac) as those *rejecting* the reading chosen by the revisers in Gal. 6:12. There the manuscript evidence *opposed* to the R. S. V. reading shows up as follows: p⁴⁶, B, 69, 1175. While the R. S. V. reading in Gal. 6:12 is still in agreement with the A. S. V., 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 p⁴⁶, 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

³⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 132.

same manuscript evidence which *supports* the R. S. V. reading of Col. 1:7, with the sole exception of substituting C for B as above. Since in the case both of Col. 3:4 and 1:7, the R. S. V. readings agree with those of the A. S. V., 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 R. S. V. 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 p⁴⁶, B, \aleph , A, and a few others. Since the R. S. V. reading again agrees with the A. S. V. reading, and since the R. S. V. 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 τοῦ αἰῶνος according to the "Explanations for the Greek New Testament," preceding the text.³⁵ 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 R. S. V. rendering there is supported, in addition to the witnesses cited for the Eph. 6:12 rendering, also by A. Again the R. S. V.'s rendering agrees only with that of the King James.

Col. 1:22 again presents a striking case of contradictory choices. The R. S. V. reading here, "by His death," is not found in the A. S. V., Westcott-Hort, the King James, or in Tischendorf. In fact, the only manuscript support of this reading is listed by Nestle as being \aleph , 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 R. S. V. reading in the case of Eph. 3:9!

³⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 78*.

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

The very first passage under this heading, Gal. 5:21, where the R. S. V. omits "murder" in the list of the works of the flesh, is well supported by p⁴⁶, B, \aleph , 33, a few others, and also by Marcion. However, the chief manuscripts opposing this reading, that is, those which include "murder," A, C, the Koine, D*, G, are the same witnesses which *support* the R. S. V. rendering of Col. 1:12 under the second subdivision.

The R. S. V. 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 p⁴⁶, B, and minuscules 69 and 1175. Returning again to Col. 2:16 under the second subdivision, we note that the R. S. V. reading there is *supported* only by p⁴⁶, 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 R. S. V. eliminates the "also" and so does the King James. Westcott-Hort put the reading in brackets, and Tischendorf and the A. S. V. 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 R. S. V. 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 R. S. V. has "God the Father," which agrees with the A. S. V. 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 R. S. V. reading are B, C*, and the Syriac versions, whereas the King James and Tischendorf rendering is supported by \aleph , the Koine tradition, many other (*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. 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."³⁶ Since, however, in the passages cited in this chapter the revisers' choice favored once the A. S. V. and then the King James where manuscript evidence would have called for a different reading, we submit the suggestion that the revisers attempted 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 instructions³⁷ to consider both the A. S. V. 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."³⁸ 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 also note in passing that of the fourteen passages listed under Ephesians, ten show agreement between the R. S. V. and King James. A bird's-eye view of the territory covered in this chapter also shows a preference on the part of the revisers for the reading "Christ Jesus" over "Jesus Christ" and 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 R. S. V. 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;

³⁶ Ernest Cadman Colwell, *What Is the Best New Testament?* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1952), pp. 91, 92.

³⁷ *Supra*, chapter II.

³⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 115.

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 A. S. V. nor the King James.

We have pointed out (Chapter II) that the R. S. V. 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."³⁹

In the third chapter we noted the interesting phenomena that while the R. S. V. agreed most frequently with the A. S. V., it agreed only slightly less frequently with the King James and the Westcott-Hort versions, and it 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 p⁴⁶, 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 A. S. V. 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 finding 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,⁴⁰ we had likewise formed no judgment or opinion

³⁹ *An Introduction*, p. 52.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

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

The concluding remark in Wikgren's survey aptly and concisely summarizes the findings of this survey also: "Thus, while the R. S. V. of the New Testament faces, Januslike, 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."⁴¹

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⁴¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 388.