

THE USE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT  
GREEK TEXT: A CRITIQUE  
OF THE ECLECTIC TEXTUAL CRITICAL METHOD

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THE USE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT GREEK TEXT: A CRITIQUE  
OF THE ECLECTIC TEXTUAL CRITICAL METHOD

BY  
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A Thesis submitted to the Department  
of Biblical Studies in Partial  
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THE USE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT GREEK TEXT : A CRITIQUE  
OF THE ECLECTIC TEXTUAL CRITICAL METHOD

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The Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School  
of Theology, 1987

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This thesis seeks to discuss the issue of "the use of the New Testament Greek Text" as it is evident at present in the field of Textual Criticism by critiquing the Eclectic Textual Critical Theory. The motive for understanding such an endeavour is clearly set out in the main hypothesis on page ten of chapter one: "A closer examination of the eclectic critical Methodology of Textual Criticism in the light of available research will find it faulty and in need of careful revision for the enhancement of the kind of textual work that will foster unity and cooperation among textual critics for the edification of the Church of Christ".

In order to adequately penetrate the subject and at the same time give credibility to the entire investigation, the writer breaks down the discussion into four main chapters: chapter one - Preliminary Considerations: This section comprises the statement of the problem of uncertainty in arriving at the adequate New Testament Text, the seeming disagreement among textual critics on certain issues, the major hypothesis and the significance of the study. The second chapter - The History of the Debate Against the Textus Receptus and the Majority Text gives a historical survey of the early beginnings of textual work, the reasons which sparked off this interest and the critical texts that were produced as a result of these pursuits from the time of Erasmus up to the present time in the Twentieth century. The third chapter is entitled, Eclecticism - Its Nature and Origin. This chapter's thrust is centered around investigating what eclecticism is, its pros and cons,

and how it originated. Chapter four - Twentieth Century Defence of the Eclectic Text, takes into account the Praxis of Eclecticism and its confrontations against supporters of the Textus Receptus, the Majority Text and King James Version. This chapter also discusses textual theories promoted by such men as D.A. Carson, Michael Holmes and Gordon Fee, theories for which there is no adequate validation.

The overall conclusion draws the attention of the Christian public to the fact that the "Use of the Greek New Testament Texts, by the Eclectic Textual Critical Method in the face of the tangible results of present-day discovery and research stands in need of revision in order to bring glory to the Lord Jesus Christ."

Three appendices are included at the end of the thesis as a means of giving more insight into certain areas which were discussed but require further illustrations. Appendix A: Definition of terms. Appendix B: The ambivalent witness of the Pre-Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Appendix C: The Differences between the Textus Receptus and the Majority Text.

DEDICATED TO

The Cause of Christ  
My Father: Abubakar Foullah  
My Mother: Ramatu D. Foullah

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and contradictory witness to the Word of God. Is there a solution?

## Chapter 1

### PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

#### The Statement of the problem

The field of Textual Criticism is no longer a strange discipline in Africa and the rest of the Third World. Textual Criticism concerns itself with the original wording of the text of the New Testament from the time of its inception until this time but its repercussions have not had a global effect until the last thirty or forty years.

The various New Testament Greek Texts that we have today derive their origin from the large number of ancient manuscripts, and our various English versions today owe their origin to the New Testament Greek texts. Regrettably, the greatest problem affecting Textual scholars and Bible translators at the grass-root level in the Third World is the problem of uncertainty in arriving at a suitable text for the average Christian. In the second paragraph of the introduction to his book, The Identity of the New Testament Text, Wilbur N. Pickering reflects on the problem of uncertainty and its probable reason when he says:

That there is a problem concerning the identity of the Greek Text of the New Testament is made clear by the existence of a number of competing editions in print. By competing, I mean that they do not agree with one another as to the precise wording of the text. Such disagreement is possible because no two of the ancient Greek manuscripts known to us are identical in wording, and we are dependent upon those copies because the Apostles' autographs, or original documents, are no longer in existence.<sup>1</sup>

A mere identification of the problem in the entire corpus of MSS and giving suggestions as to why this exists, does not help the common Christian in the street who from year to year receives different New Testament versions with different wording

Moreover, the present writer perceives that there are now and then academic disputes among Textual Critics who belong to different camps or schools of thought. As is often the case, some camps tend to be more dogmatic and hostile than the others and would use derogatory language and even ridicule within their vocabulary to play down the convictions of those who disagree with them.

An instance of this language of conflict is the heading, The Overthrow of the Textus Receptus, in page 124 of Bruce Metzger's book, The Text of the New Testament. Under this heading, Bruce Metzger's bent was to put down the Textus Receptus because in his discussion he cited such scholars as Karl Lachmann and Samuel Tregelles among others as being instrumental in drawing the attention of scholar translators away from the Textus Receptus to a Greek text which belongs to another tradition. Dr. Metzger himself writes:

The first recognized scholar to break totally with the Textus Receptus was the celebrated classical and Germanic philologist of Berlin, Karl Lachmann (1793-1851), who published an edition of the Greek Testament which rests wholly upon the application of textual criticism in the evaluation of variant readings.

In England the scholar who, at the middle of the nineteenth century, was most successful in drawing British preference away from the Textus Receptus was Samuel Prideaux Tregelles (1813-75).<sup>2</sup>

Another example of the kind of sentiments which breed concept and disunity among textual scholars is the statement of J. Harold Greenlee, former Professor of New Testament Languages at Asbury Theological Seminary:

With the work of Westcott and Hort the T.R. was at last vanquished. In the future, whatever form an editor's text might take, he would be free to construct it with reference to the principles of textual criticism without

being under the domination of the Textus Receptus.<sup>3</sup>  
(italics are mine)

The initiative for this thesis came about after reading Dr. Eugene Nida's article "New Testament Greek Text in the Third World", published in the book, New Testament Criticism - Its Significance for Exegesis. The book in which this article appears comprises essays written in honour of Dr. Bruce Metzger, Professor of New Testament Language and Literature at Princeton Theological Seminary. Dr. Nida used to work with the American Bible Society from 1943 and was Executive Secretary for Translations. Besides this, he is also Translations Research Coordinator for the United Bible Societies. In my opinion, Dr. Nida is a reputable scholar, but by reading his article, the writer noticed that some of his thoughts and ideas require detailed discussion as generalizations can often be misleading. Unless these generalizations are carefully analysed, studied and replied to, their effect on Bible translation and Evangelical Missionary activity could be a rather one-sided approach. An objective summary of Dr. Nida's article is given in the following seventeen paragraphs:

Paragraph 1- The problems concerning Westcott and Hort's choice of the Greek New Testament are dead and forgotten. The world as a whole, including Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants accept translations based on critical texts without raising any questions. But in the Third World and even in the U.S.A., the Byzantine tradition as expressed in the Textus Receptus is being offered as "Biblical Truth."

Paragraph 2- David Otis Fuller's book, "Which Bible?", is typical of the works of those wanting to defend their tradition. Burgon is the hero-scholar or authority for the "Democratic Principle" of a Majority Text, arrived at by counting the number of manuscripts in favour of a reading in the traditional text.

Paragraph 3- Those who believe that God inspired the original

autographs so that they represent God's infallible word consider that God also providentially cared for the transmission of the Bible..

Paragraph 4- The Byzantine Text is accepted on the basis of external criteria, especially doctrinal purity, with reference to orthodox views of the person and work of Christ. Furthermore, supporters of the T.R. contend that reliable MSS. would not omit fuller texts which refer to important Christian doctrine, and they believe that the Holy Spirit inspired consistent texts. They also claim that the easier reading is more likely to be correct.

Paragraph 5- Such tests of textual validity have been extensively taught to local Christians in the Third World, making people suspicious of a critical text.

Paragraph 6- During discussion with United Bible Society (U.B.S.) particularly on internal and external evidence, the Russian Orthodox Church was not interested in a critical text or textual criticism since their ruling body, the Holy Synod, had laid down what the correct text of the New Testament is.

Paragraph 7- In the missionary world, the problems of understanding the need for critical texts by local people are far more difficult. Early missionary versions were based on the Textus Receptus (via English or German) or the Latin Vulgate. Such translations were widely used and venerated.

Paragraph 8- Some Bible revisions in the Third World in the first half of the twentieth century were influenced by the Revised Version (R.V.) and American Standard Version (A.S.V.), both of which represent a more scholarly Greek text. These versions were rejected by local people because (1) they were too literal and wooden, (2) local people were not prepared to understand textual criticism and books of that nature were not available. Missionary translators refused to give marginal notes because they would not be understood. Translators who did supply such notes were attacked by rival Christian groups as being liberal, antagonistic,

and tools of Satan.

Paragraph 9- The use of critical Greek texts was hindered by missionaries who had been to Bible Schools instead of Theological Seminaries, and believed that the Bible was inspired. They believed in the "words of God" rather than the "Word of God."

Paragraph 10- Despite the foregoing, textual problems persisted particularly where local people knew more than one language and could compare versions, and wanted textual answers. Some people declared that if one word was doubtful, then the whole New Testament was open to question. Missionaries and church leaders did not answer people's questions either through ignorance or unwillingness to be involved in arguments.

Paragraph 11- There are five extant types of textual problems or arguments - omission of large sections, loss of passages of doctrinal importance, narratives of miraculous happenings, non-parallel accounts - e.g., the Lord's Prayer and omissions of expressions connected with the use of the scriptures in worship, e.g. Luke 22 in the Lord's Supper.

Paragraph 12- Rev. 22:18-19 leads even more intellectual people to refuse to be connected with revisions based on critical texts.

Paragraph 13 - It is anomalous that theologically conservative persons will not accept a critical text, since critical scholars are trying to recover a text nearest to the original autographs.

Paragraph 14- Before World War II, most translations were done by missionaries with local help, but after the war, local translators asked for more critical texts with notes on variant readings.

Paragraph 15- The United Bible Societies was faced with numerous translation projects including those inter-confessional

groups wanting a fully satisfactory Greek text (unlike the mechanical Nestle texts) produced by a committee of textual specialists who would draw attention to variants affecting exegesis.

Paragraph 16- Therefore, the U.B.S. commissioned a new Greek New Testament put together by a highly qualified team of textual scholars. The three editions of this advance in text have been adopted world-wide. This Greek text is the same as Nestle Aland: Novum Testamentum Graece, 26th edition, 1980.

Paragraph 17- Bruce Metzger's Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament which provides reasons for and against the readings adopted by the editorial committee has proved useful to those needing more information.

Paragraph 18- The U.B.S. insists that all editions of the scriptures have adequate marginal notes on textual variants, and helpful indication as to reasons for differences. Hopefully, no one now believes that any Greek text will ever contain the actual words of the original autographs.<sup>3</sup>

In reality, a number of issues have been raised in the foregoing summary of Dr. Nida's article. In the estimation of the present writer, some of the points raised do not have any balanced support and therefore, cannot be accepted without question by any keen observer of what is going on in our days in textual criticism and Bible translation. Among the issues raised, the following are extant:

That "the issues which reverberated around the publication of the Westcott-Hort version of the New Testament text are a thing of the past"<sup>4</sup> is a statement to be challenged. In the first place the U.B.S. start with Westcott-Hort (similar to the Nestle tradition). There are two competing Greek texts - Textus Receptus (or Byzantine or Majority) and U.B.S. Text, not one.

In this second paragraph, a 'democratic principle' of the "Majority Text" is under attack. The name "Majority Text" seems

to have been coined by Kurt Aland, the German textual critic, and followed by Hodges, the co-editor of the Greek New Testament, called the Majority Text. In an attempt to elucidate the relationship between the T.R. and the M.T. (The Majority Text), the history of these closely related texts will be discussed.

In the same paragraph, the method of arriving at evidence by the Majority Principle is slightly mentioned. This makes it necessary to consider how conclusions on evidence are reached or determined by a critical committee; and the reliability of individual manuscripts will be investigated.

The point raised about the inspiration of the Bible is thought-provoking because Nida tends to take a negative view about the inspiration of biblical writ, and instead relegates such a belief to those who support the so-called Byzantine tradition. Some scholars seem to have no problem concerning the inspiration of the Old Testament but **they** do for the New Testament.

Is a text accepted on the basis of external criteria, such as doctrinal purity, with particular reference to orthodox views of the person and work of Jesus Christ less likely to be valid? Although Nida undervalues this test of MS validity, he forgets that many a time these doctrines of the deity of Jesus Christ, the Virgin birth, bodily resurrection and return of Jesus Christ are the ones most under attack since the early years of the nineteenth century. It will be necessary to compare manuscripts which appear to endanger these and those which uphold them in terms of their historical background.

Also, as far as the author of this article in question is concerned, it seems it is a disadvantage for early missionary translations of the Bible to be based on the Text underlying that of Luther, the King James and the Vulgate versions, even though he admits that these versions were widely used and venerated by the local people. His use of the term "venerated" is doubtful. Does he mean local people loved and respected the translations? Or does he mean local people worshipped the translations? The latter

view could only be equated with superstition. But if the former view is meant, a question to be asked is, doesn't Nida venerate the word of God? What is Nida's attitude toward the word of God? (see para. 9).

The reasons for the rejection of both the ERV and the ASV by the local people could be an interesting study but time will not permit the present writer to conduct any studies along this line. In regard to books for helping local people understand textual matters I ask, are there today such books available for acquainting local people with these problems? Or have they just had a text imposed on them without explanation?

What Nida says about missionaries with only Bible School education believing in 'the words of God' instead of 'the Word of God' seems to be an overstatement of the case. It is the wish of the present writer to ask what is the difference between 'the Word of God' and the 'words of God'. This is essential because it affects the whole doctrine of Biblical inspiration.

In regard to textual problems, five major types will be discussed in light of their occurrence in different Greek texts and modern English versions and translations. Nida's examples of textual problems are misleading with the exception of the first mentioned by him. There are hundreds of examples of important differences which cannot be included under these five types of problems. The present writer also would like to know what "for the most part" in Nida's phraseology mean.

Again, a point of obscurantism is raised in paragraph 12 concerning Rev. 22:18-19 being the basis for rejection by highly gifted persons of revisions or new translations of the Bible. If persons are 'highly gifted' is it wrong if they use their proficiency to reject what seems contrary to the word of God? Or is there no evidence at all against the critical text? Such an objective examination has to be undertaken to decide whether the critical text is better than the one it is seemingly displacing.

There is a dichotomy between Divine Inspiration of the scripture and man's devised methodology of reconstructing the earliest form of the text. Inspiration is above man's methodology and methodology should never at any time be idolized. The present writer wishes to question the method of reconstruction of the Greek text through the eclectic committee method, seeing that there are big differences between the Egyptian text (which is really the basis for modern critical texts) and the Majority text.

In paragraph 14, Nida declares that better educated local translators were unwilling to use less satisfactory traditions from pre-second world war Bibles which contained few if any notes on alternative readings. It is true that earlier translations did not give textual variants in the margin, for example, the Union Swahili New Testament based on a modified Westcott-Hort text, contains no readings or comments, only brackets in the text. But is the position different in the newer translations?

The new Swahili New Testament first issued in 1977 and reprinted in 1983 contains no such marginal information: In the British and Foreign Bible Society Diglot Greek/English New Testament for the use of translators, there are only four variant readings for Luke and three for John. Is this all that Nida envisages as necessary?

That the "first edition of the Greek New Testament (published in 1966) marked an important advance in New Testament textual studies", is a statement which requires detailed examination and qualification. Although the names of the U.B.S. committee for N.T. texts are mentioned, the eclectic method employed by this committee is not adequately described. The present writer considers it an interesting and rewarding exercise to discuss the eclectic committee method of determining the text of the Greek New Testament.

Finally, one must ask - 1, Is the task of recovering the words of the original autographs actually so hopeless? 2, If we

cannot get close to the words of the original autographs in what sense is it possible for any Evangelical believer (for example in the Third World) to believe that the translation he holds is indeed the word of God with supreme authority?

#### Major Hypothesis and Minor Hypothesis

Major Hypothesis: A closer examination of the eclectic critical Methodology of Textual Criticism in the light of available research will find it faulty and in need of careful revision for the enhancement of the kind of Textual work that will foster unity and cooperation among Textual critics for the edification of the Church of Christ.

#### The significance of the study

As the writer thinks seriously on the significance of this study, The Use of the New Testament Greek Text in the Third World many interesting things come to his mind. In the first place, many who will come to read this work will know that the issues surrounding the use of the New Testament Greek Text are not new at all. They can be traced as far back as Origen and Jerome long before Erasmus, the first editor of the printed Greek N.T. (the Textus Receptus), up to Westcott-Hort, the editors of the most influential critical text in 1881.

Additionally, Sir Frederic Kenyon's discussion on "the Position Today" in regard to manuscript discoveries and textual criticism in his book, The Story of the Bible, reminds the present writer of another aspect of the significance of this study. That is, the Christian public would be brought to an awareness that a large percentage of all Bible translation has had its root in a tradition which claims to be self-sufficient in its endeavours and in so doing virtually ignores the valid textual arguments of others who hold different views regarding the best N.T. Text.

Kenyon's concern affirms the foregoing when he says:

The general conclusion to which we seem to be led is that there is no royal road to the recovery of the original text of the N.T. Fifty years ago it seemed as if Westcott and Hort had found such a road, and that we should depart from Codex Vaticanus (except in the case of obvious scribal blunders) at our peril. The course both of discoveries and of critical study has made it increasingly difficult to believe that the Vaticanus and its allies represent a stream of tradition that has come down particularly uncontaminated from the original sources.<sup>5</sup>

This opinion that Codex Vaticanus is very close to the original autographs is nevertheless almost universally accepted. Although textual critics no longer believe that a combination of Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus (or Codex Vaticanus standing alone) can be relied upon as finally authoritative, yet the so-called eclectic method still bases itself on Westcott and Hort, whose prime authority was Codex Vaticanus.

Also, this study will try to enlighten people as to the reasons for the wide differences of opinion between protagonists of the Majority Text and Westcott-Hort (W.H.) tradition, a battle which is still fierce today, as is evidenced in Eugene Nida's article. In his book, Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism, J. Harold Greenlee, Professor of N.T. Greek at Oral Roberts University, reflects on the longstanding struggle which existed among textual critics:

The work of W-H brought about the final dethronement of the T.R. and the establishment of the principle of a critical text. This period likewise saw the final substantial scholarly defence of the Textus Receptus. This defence rested largely in the hands of F.H.A. Scrivener and especially J. W. Burgon and Edward Miller. The latter two men exerted their joint influence in exceedingly strenuous opposition to W-H.

Actually, this struggle is still going on today. Harry A. Sturz further points out the reality of this struggle in his book, The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism, when

he says:

Two clear-cut attitudes toward the Byzantine text have persisted since the days of W-H and Burgon and are still current today. There are those who follow the theory of W-H, and there are some who adopt John Burgon's defence of the traditional text. These two theories espouse diametrically opposed methods when it comes to the use of the Byzantine text-type in the textual criticism of the New Testament. There seems to be no possibility of harmonizing or reconciling the two viewpoints.<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, this conflict is evidenced in the Third World by the circulation of different Greek texts and in the introductory pages of different versions of the Bible published in the Third World.

In addition to what has been said already, a study of this nature will sow seeds of enthusiasm in the minds of some keen Christians and theological students concerning the importance of the Biblical languages, such as Greek, for the proper comprehension of textual criticism. The days have gone when Africa and the rest of the Third World should just depend on what one group of New Testament experts in textual matters in New York or Stuttgart say, without really ascertaining for oneself by adequately using the available textual tools. The inability to study the documentary evidence and think for oneself often leads to the quiescent attitude of saying, "Let us cooperate, let us not offend them for the sake of our need for their financial support," an opinion which is often expressed to discourage research into the textual evidence for the transmission of the text of the Greek New Testament.

#### Limitations and Delimitations

As the thesis topic and hypothesis suggest, the writer will endeavour to study the problems of New Testament Textual Criticism arising from Nida's article and as expressed by D.A. Carson, Michael Holmes and Gordon Fee. In other words, the study will be

strictly based on textual theory rather than translation work.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Wilbur N. Pickering, The Identity of the New Testament Text. Revised Edition (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980), p.15.

<sup>2</sup>Bruce M. Metzger, The Text of the New Testament (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p.124, 127.

<sup>3</sup>Eugene A. Nida, "The New Testament Greek Text in the Third World," New Testament Textual Criticism, Its Significance for Exegesis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p.376-380.

<sup>4</sup>Nida, p.375.

<sup>5</sup>Frederick G. Kenyon, The Story of the Bible (London: Butler and Tanner Ltd., 1947), p.143.

<sup>6</sup>J. Harold Greenlee, Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), p.81.

<sup>7</sup>Harry A. Sturz, The Byzantine Text-type and New Testament Textual Criticism (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984), p.15.

## Chapter II

THE HISTORY OF THE DEBATE AGAINST THE TEXTUS  
RECEPTUS AND THE MAJORITY TEXT

Textual Criticism as it stands today will never be entirely understood without first taking a look at how it started and developed into something complex. From a broader perspective, the practice of Textual Criticism could be said to be as old as the 'synoptic gospel autographs. Apparently, when Matthew, Mark, Luke and John decided to write the story of Jesus Christ and the gospel He brought into the world, they must have sorted out first thing the material they had on hand so that they might give a balanced reporting. Since that time the discipline spread, and it even permeated the critical and theological interests of the post-apostolic fathers who defended the faith through exegetical preaching, translated the scriptures, and wrote versions of the N.T.

The concern of this chapter is limited to the discussion of how, why and when the debate against the Textus Receptus and the Majority Text originated. The debate started off in the year 1600. In his book, Encountering New Testament Manuscripts, Jack Finegan briefly gives us the genesis of the debate when he said that "as more, older, and better manuscripts became known than those that were known to Ximenes, Erasmus, Stephen and Beza, it became possible to recognize that the Textus Receptus was not the best text of the New Testament, and to endeavour, on the basis of the age and character of the then available manuscripts, to come closer to the original Text". The Textus Receptus indeed came under the attack of the new group of scholars but there is a beautiful story attached to it. This explains to us the reasons which precipitated its publication and some insight into the man who laboured so hard for its final production. As the narrative goes, the Textus Receptus was published in the first place through the persuasive efforts of a certain printer in Basle, Froben by name, who convinced "Erasmus to bring out a Greek Edition of the New Testament to anticipate the publication of Ximenes' Polyglott".<sup>2</sup>

In passing it should be quickly said that Cardinal Francisco Ximenes' Complutensian Polyglott finally came off the press in six volumes of which volume five comprises the whole New Testament. The Polyglott was given two columns - Greek on the left, and Latin on the right.<sup>3</sup> Froben's choosing of Erasmus for the purpose of producing a Greek New Testament was based on no other reason than that Erasmus was one of the best Textual scholars in Europe, one who had already had more years of experience in collating manuscripts of the New Testament than any contemporary of his had done at the time.<sup>4</sup>

Reasons for the Rejection of the Textus Receptus

Earlier, in this chapter in Finegan's statement on the offshoot of the anti-Textus Receptus debate, some reasons for the rejection were stated in a somewhat partial or unsystematic presentation. Under this section the writer will list the reasons for the rejection in more or less the same number and order in which they occur in many contemporary books on Textual Criticism. Many of the anti-T.R. opponents suggest that the T.R. should be rejected because: (i) Erasmus did not use any more than seven late unreliable manuscripts. (ii) the manuscript he used for the book of Revelation was mutilated and was one that went only as far back as the thirteenth or fourteenth century. (iii) When he could not make out the sense of some portions of the book of Revelation because of the deplorable nature of that manuscript, he translated those portions from Latin to Greek in an attempt to supply the missing links.<sup>5</sup>

More often than not one comes across in some books reasons for the rejection of Erasmus' Text but there is usually no time given for a description of the kind of manuscripts used. Besides repeating the story in regard to the handful of MSS used by Erasmus, F.G. Kenyon goes a little further to give a brief description of the supposedly used manuscripts:

Erasmus used only a handful of MSS which happened to be at Basle, but had previously examined MSS in England. For the Gospels, he made some use of minuscule 1, which is a good Mss, in correcting 2, a very late copy of the ordinary Byzantine Text, which was then sent to the printers as copy. For the acts and epistles he mainly used 2<sup>ap</sup>, and for Revelation 1<sup>r</sup> and since this Ms lacked the last six verses, he translated these as best as he could from the Latin.<sup>6</sup>

At this stage there seems to be a lack of sufficient evidence to validate the kind of MSS used and the authenticity of their text. The matter of validity and authenticity of text will be taken up a little later in chapter four of this thesis. All that needs to be said at this time is that apart from the first edition, Erasmus produced four additional editions of the New Testament by consulting more manuscripts,<sup>7</sup> an endeavour which makes it crystal clear that his efforts were not static but progressive.

After the death of Erasmus in 1536, the work which he had begun did not die out but was carried on by his disciples: Robert Stephanus, Theodore Beza and two brothers, Abraham Elzevir and Bonaventure Elzevir who reproduced the T.R. respectively with slight modification. Interestingly, it was on the preface of the 1633 N.T. edition of the Elzevir's that the historic name "Textus Receptus" first appeared - 'Therefore you have a text now received by all.' The Latin translation of the statement reads: Textum ergo habes nunc ab omnibus Receptum.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, there was one important post-Erasmus Textus Edition that deserves mention because of the contribution it made in the history of Textual work. This is the New Testament Text of Stephanus. Published in 1550, its text was used in all New Testaments until the 19th century; it was the first printed edition ever to have a critical apparatus. After a careful analysis of this text, Kenyon remarks:

It is Erasmus', somewhat revised from the Complutensian and

from fifteen MSS then at Paris. One of these was Codex Bezae, but of this little use was made, no doubt because of its marked divergencies from the common type. The Textus Receptus of Stephanus is the common Byzantine text in its latest form.<sup>9</sup>

Kenyon is not alone in his assessment of the 1550 remarkable work of Stephanus. Professor Bruce Metzger also gives an evaluation which is similar to that of Kenyon. He observes that:

The three Parisian editions are most sumptuously printed, with type cost at the expense of the French government. The handsome third edition, of folio size (8 by 13 inches), is the first Greek Testament that has a critical apparatus; Stephanus entered on the inner margins of the paper variant readings from fourteen Greek codices as well as many readings from the Complutensian Polyglott. One of the manuscripts that he cited is the famous codex Bezae, which had been collated for him, he says: by friends in Italy.<sup>10</sup>

It is worth taking note of the foregoing remarks of Kenyon and Metzger as this will help us determine whether the text of the T.R. is progressive or stagnant. The reader may want to make note of the following: A few years before his death, Erasmus produced his fifth edition of the New Testament which bore the marks of further use of more N.T. Manuscripts. Stephanus did not only make use of Count Ximenes Complutensian Polyglott for his Text, but also consulted as many as fourteen or fifteen MSS among which was the Western Codex Bezae (D). The Textus Receptus is the representative of the Byzantine Tradition, the textual group that comprises the vast majority of manuscripts. In the light of the aforementioned a two-fold postulation is evident: (a) That the Textus Receptus is constantly being improved upon by going beyond the use of the original seven manuscripts. (b) That the validity and authenticity of the Text of the T.R. is gradually coming into focus if such scholars as Hort and Metzger align it with the Byzantine Text since there is in our time an endless debate about the validity of the Byzantine text in the face of new discoveries such as Chester Beatty Papyri.

A better way to conclude this section is to relate both the text of Tyndale and the Authorized Version to the previous discussion. Worthy of note is the fact that the text behind Tyndale's

1526 English translation of the N.T. and the Authorized Version of 1611 is that of Erasmus and Stephanus' reproduction of 1550.<sup>11</sup> In Metzger's words "it lies at the basis of the King James Version and of all the principal Protestant translations in the languages of Europe prior to 1881".<sup>12</sup>

#### Early Critical New Testament Greek Texts - 1657 to 1881

This next period in the history of the Greek New Testament Text has been variously described as the time for "the accumulation and examination of the best textual authorities then available",<sup>13</sup> the collection of variant readings,<sup>14</sup> and "the development of a critical approach".<sup>15</sup> From the time this period began in 1657 until 1881, there had been a lapse of time of about 200 years. In his opening remarks concerning this era, Bruce Metzger takes time to acquaint his readers with the essence of this period of critical endeavour, the efforts made, the methods utilized, sources exploited and the collating base chosen when he wrote:

The next stage in the history of New Testament Textual Criticism is characterized by assiduous efforts to assemble variant readings from Greek MSS, Versions and fathers. For almost two centuries scholars ransacked Libraries and Museums, in Europe as well as the Near East for witnesses to the text of the N.T. But almost all of the editors of the N.T. during this period were content to reprint the time-honoured but corrupt Textus Receptus, neglecting the evidence for the earlier readings to the apparatus. An occasional brave soul who ventured to print a different form of Greek Text was either condemned or ignored.<sup>16</sup>

As one would note, Metzger gives a somewhat accurate resume of what the critical period looked like. Among other things, he observed: (a) That the Textus Receptus was time-honoured. He did not say whether by the majority of the laity and the clergy or by a handful of scholars. (b) That the Textus Receptus was corrupt but was used as a collating base. Though Metzger sounds a bit sarcastic about the

corruptions of the T.R. (a mindset which is under investigation), the fact remains that the Textual critical scholars at the time must have seen the T.R. valuable for both their spiritual edification, and for the critical task at hand since the T.R. already served as a beginning point. (c) That those who attempted formulating a different Greek N.T. Text were ostracized or condemned. Again, it is not clear in this connection as to who did the condemning or the ostracizing. All that the statement suggests is that the T.R. had its accolade in its day and enjoyed the support of the majority of people who might have even gone out to resist any attempt at producing a rival N.T. Greek Text.

The following discussion will focus on those scholars who figure prominently during this era of Textual Critical evaluation, the kind of N.T. Greek texts they produced and the recommendations each of them gave for the purpose of doing Textual Critical work:

Brian Walton (1600-1661): Brian Walton was one of a few English scholars who made contributions to this period of critical investigation. Walton's Polyglott published in London in 1655 was in six folios. "The fifth volume (1657) contains the N.T. in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Ethiopic, Arabic and Persian".<sup>17</sup> The London Polyglott as it was called comprised a lot of variant readings along with a critical apparatus. "The Greek section shows some indication of having been patterned after Stephanus' 1550 text".<sup>18</sup>

By his designation of the capital letter A to an early manuscript which had been given to King Charles 1st in the year 1628 by the Patriarch of Constantinople, Brian Walton introduced the practice of assigning capital letters to the uncials as names. In the sixth edition of his Polyglott use was made of codex D (Bezae); Codex D<sup>P</sup> (Claramontanus) and Codex Monfortianus.<sup>19</sup>

John Mill (1645-1707): Mill, a scholar at Queen's College, published his work of thirty years at Oxford in 1707 two years before his death. Even though his text was also that of

Stephanus and used such manuscripts as were used by Walton - Codex A (Alexandrinus), D (Bezae) and D<sup>p</sup> (Claramontanus), he went a step further than his predecessor by making use of additional witnesses. For instance, his critical apparatus consisted of a large number of manuscripts, versional and patristic information. Of great importance also, is his valuable prolegomena to his Greek Testament of which George Milligan quotes professor C.H. Turner of England as saying that 'there is nothing like it in England'.<sup>20</sup> On the pertinence of this prolegomena, Bruce Metzger comments:

Besides collecting all the evidence from Greek Mss, early versions, and fathers that lay within his power to procure, Mill prefixed to his edition valuable prolegomena in which he dealt with the canon of the New Testament and the transmission of the New Testament Text, described thirty-two printed editions of the Greek Testament and nearly 100 manuscripts, and patristic citations from all the fathers, of any importance.<sup>21</sup>

In spite of this colossal work that he prepared at least 30,000 variants, his endeavours were subjected to the attack of the intransigent writer, Dr. Daniel Whitby, who was once rector of St. Edmonds, Salisbury. Whitby's concern was that Mill's voluminous collection of variants "was tantamount to tampering with the text".<sup>22</sup>

Richard Bentley (1662-1742): Bentley was Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and one of the most renowned of scholars during his day. He came on the scene of Textual Criticism at a time when the scriptures were under the attack of a certain deist, Anthony Collins by name, who lived in the years 1676-1729. Collins' bone of contention was that the large number of variants of over 30,000 arrived at then were a sure indication that the scriptures were not authoritative. Bentley did not waste time but immediately refuted the affront made against the scriptures because he believed "it was a great benefit that there were so many MSS of the N.T., some obtained from Egypt, some from Asia and others found in the west. The distances of the places and the numbers of the books show that they could not have been fabricated by

collusion".<sup>23</sup> After a few years of pondering over the issue before him, Richard Bentley finally promulgated a proposal for a unique Greek Text that bear the support of the earliest of uncials, such as Codex Alexandrinus and Jerome's Latin Vulgate.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, he thought this proposal could be made possible if 2000 errors were removed from the Latin Vulgate, and the same number of errors were removed from Stephanus' Greek Text which in his view had then become another Latin Vulgate. F.H. Scrivener recounts Bentley's theory in the following words:

His theory then, was built upon the notion that the oldest MSS of the Greek original and of Jerome's Latin Version resemble each other so marvellously, that by this agreement he could restore the text as it stood in the fourth century. By taking two thousand errors out of the Pope's Vulgate, and as many out of the Protestant Pope Stephen's (1550), I can set out an edition of each in columns, without using any book under nine hundred years old, that shall so exactly agree word for word.<sup>25</sup>

As the case stands, it is clear that Bentley's polemic was not only directed against Anthony Collins' anti-scripture discourse, but was also directed against the Latin Vulgate and the Textus Receptus. In the words of Finegan "it is evident that he thought the Textus Receptus should be replaced by a critically edited text, based directly upon the oldest manuscripts and the best readings".<sup>26</sup>

Unfortunately, in spite of the fact that Bentley had good intentions, and even though the efforts he had begun were epoch-making, he did not live to see his dreams come true because he died before publishing the unique Greek text he had envisaged. Pondering over the reasons for failing to produce his critical text, Alexander Souter postulates that "it was not the opposition which the obscurantist Gonyers Middleton, author of a respectable Life of Cicero, sought to arouse against him, but rather the feeling that he had been too optimistic about the settled state of the text in the fourth century, and about the possibility of arriving at it in his own time, that prevented the publication of the edition".<sup>27</sup> In later years, as will be seen shortly in the writer's discussion of

into two groups. One subdivision is represented by Codex A, and the other by the old Latin.<sup>33</sup>

Before undertaking the production of his Greek Text "Bengel published an elaborate essay as a 'forerunner' to his projected edition of the N.T."<sup>34</sup> and "in 1734 Bengel published at Tubingen an edition of the Greek New Testament in a handsome quarto volume. He did not venture to correct the traditional Textus Receptus in accordance with personal judgement but followed the self-imposed rule of not printing any reading which had not been previously published in an earlier printed edition".<sup>35</sup>

Though his work was met with approval and fascination .. by those who admired him, Bengel underwent a certain degree of opposition. "He was treated as though he were an enemy of the Holy Scriptures. So many persons impugned his motives and condemned his edition that he published in German, and then in Latin - a Defence of the New Testament".<sup>36</sup> The reason for this opposition is not very clear but could it have just been the fashionable craze of the day? - As long as you oppose the Greek Text I cherish and support, I will also oppose your efforts at whatever cost. If this was the case, then it was an unfortunate situation. But of significance is the fact that Bengel's text "is the earliest important specimen of international departure from the received type".<sup>37</sup>

J.J. Wettstein (1693-1754): Wettstein, a native of Basle, was another able Textual Critic but differs tremendously from Bengel whose textual theory of families he opposes.<sup>38</sup> As may be seen in his works, an unfortunate situation occurred in this man's life which jeopardized his whole view of Textual Criticism. That incident was his denial of the Divinity of Christ, a position which culminated in his expulsion from a church he was pastoring in the year 1730.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, in the midst of his spiritual struggles, Wettstein was known for the following achievements:-

(a) He printed the Elzevir text in two folio volumes along

the critical methodology of Westcott and Hort, the same mistake of averring the settled state of the Greek Text was blown out of proportion. In any case, Richard Bentley's scholastic acumen and the work initiated by him as a result of his love for the truth of scripture, cannot be relegated to the trash can any less than it has to be respected for its contribution to the discipline of Textual Criticism. In an attempt to encourage a fair attitude toward Bentley's work, Souter adds: "Bentley's work must not be overlooked. The impulse he gave to these studies was such, that but for him there would have been no Lachman and no Hort".<sup>28</sup>

J.A. Bengel (1687-1752): From the time of Bengel until the era of W-H "progress in Textual Criticism was principally due to German scholars".<sup>29</sup> "A devout and truly able man",<sup>30</sup> John Albrecht Bengel "was a student at Tubingen, a teacher at Denkendorf, and eventually superintendent of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Wurttemberg".<sup>31</sup>

As one may find out from reading his biography and works, Bengel came to his throne of fame partly because of having been disturbed "by Mill's 30,000 variants, he resolved to investigate the subject further for himself".<sup>32</sup> Out of such determination as exhibited by him for a rigorous kind of Textual investigation, he came up with principles that became the milestone for present-day textual criticism. For instance, in regard to variant readings he asseverates that preference should be given to the difficult reading because of the tendency of scribes to always simplify a passage that is seemingly difficult to them. With respect to the validation of MSS so as to come up with the best or better, Bengel maintains that MSS must be classified rather than counted. The result of this proposal was the introduction of two large groups or families of MSS: (a) The Asiatic manuscripts - This group is larger in number than any other known group and is considered inferior or bogus. The area of circulation of this group of manuscripts was believed to have been Constantinople. (b) The African MSS - These were further divided

with a well prepared commentary.

(b) He introduced the systems of identifying the uncial manuscripts by Roman letters, and the minuscules by Arabic numbers, a system that is still in use to our day.

(c) He opposed Bengel's "theory that all of the early Greek Manuscripts have been contaminated by the Latin Versions, and that consequently the later Greek MSS should be relied upon as preserving a more authentic text".<sup>40</sup>

J.J. Griesbach (1745-1812): Griesbach was the man during whose time it was said " a notable advance towards a trustworthy text of the N.T. was made".<sup>41</sup> He propounded the same theories of Bengel as were promoted by his former professor of theology at the University of Hall, Johann Salomo Semler (1725-1791) but with slight addition or modification. As pertains to his canons of interpretation, they were two: (a) The shorter reading has more possibility of being the original (b) The difficult reading has more likelihood of being the original since scribes had a tendency of simplifying an obscure or difficult passage.<sup>42</sup>

He also expanded Bengel's two-fold group or families from two to three (a) The first is the Alexandrian comprising such uncials as CLK. At this time B was not yet prominent and X had not yet been discovered. The minuscules under this category were 1, 13, 33, 69, the Boharic, the Harclean, the Syriac, the Armenian, Ethiopic Versions, quotations in Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, etc. (b) The second category is the Westen family. This includes D along with the Latin Versions including the old Latin, the Fathers and the Syriac Peshitta (c) The third is the Constantinopolitan or Byzantine family of which he said consists of Codex A, and a vast majority of manuscripts he labelled inferior.<sup>43</sup>

It is from this critical theory that "the first edition of Griesbach's New Testament appeared in parts between 1774 and 1777 and was followed by a revised edition in 1796-1806",<sup>44</sup> "in which

the text was at least at many places different from the textus Receptus".<sup>45</sup> It is important to note that Johann Semler and Johann J. Griesbach were the first among all Textual critics to use the word "Recensions", a word that was loosely used to denote groups or families of MSS. From this time on the debate against the Textus Receptus and the Byzantine text rose in crescendo as the theory of recensions and the canons of the shorter and more difficult text were advanced time and again.

Karl Lachmann(1793-1851): Karl Lachmann's era marks the beginning of a period commonly called the modern period of Textual criticism. The modern world of Textual Criticism owes a lot to this Classical Philologist during whose time a complete break-away from the Textus Receptus came about. Frederick Henry Scrivener of Trinity College, Cambridge, makes the following observation on Lachmann's philosophy:

It seems, then, to have been Lachmann's purpose, discarding the slightest regard for the Textus Receptus as such, to endeavour to bring the sacred text back to the condition in which it existed during the fourth century, and this in the first instance of documentary aid alone, careless for the moment whether the sense produced be probable or improbable, good or bad, but solely looking to his authorities, and following them implicitly wheresoever the numerical majority might carry him.<sup>46</sup>

In light of the picture before us, we can say that Lachmann without any doubts had high hopes for his new endeavours but he appears to be faction - oriented to seek to put down by a disparaging show the labours of fellow workers. He was too optimistic to enunciate so lofty a plan of arriving at the original N.T. Text of the fourth century, and too dogmatic to want to achieve his aim by the use of only a few witnesses such as A, B, C, H<sub>3</sub>, P, Q, T, Z and some quotations from Origen. Still further, he made use of Western witnesses such as D, D<sub>2</sub>, E<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>2</sub>, and the old Latin - a, b, c, d; A and F of the Latin Vulgate and some early Latin fathers<sup>47</sup> but the writer wonders whether these would have made him arrive at the original Text as was handed down by the apostles. During the time that he was doing his work,

Codex B (Vaticanus) was only partially known and codex (Sinaiticus) was still undiscovered.<sup>48</sup>

However, in 1831 Lachmann put out his first N.T. Greek Text, followed later by a second edition in 1842-50 with notes explaining the methodology he employed in arriving at the decisions he reached. Kenyon is of the opinion that "Lachmann's methods were by no means wholly satisfactory, and his materials were not as adequate as could be wished".<sup>49</sup> In another book of his, The Story of the Bible, Kenyon once again evaluates Lachmann's method and results but this time with a note on the limitation of his work in modern Textual Criticism when he said,

His work was by no means perfect, and the materials, at his disposal were much less than we have today; but his outspoken rejection of the "Received" Text of 1550, and his bold application of Textual science to the problems of the Bible, he did invaluable service, and lighted a fire which is still burning.<sup>50</sup>

Constantine Tischendorf (1815-1874): A distinguished Professor at Leipzig University, Tischendorf is remembered by his fellow Textual critics as "discoverer, collator, editor, and writer".<sup>51</sup> Nobody has ever refuted the fact that Tischendorf "edited more New Testament documents and more editions of the New Testament than any other scholar who ever lived".<sup>52</sup> The greatest of his achievements which are recorded in the history of Textual Criticism are as follows: (a) He discovered 18 uncials and 6 minuscules. (b) He edited 25 uncials for the first time. (c) He edited Codex X which he discovered, Codex B, A and F. (d) He edited eight editions of the Greek New Testament. Of the eight editions he produced, the last was furnished with so full an apparatus that it proved itself a classic text among Textual critics.<sup>53</sup> Like Lachmann, Tischendorf did not make any use of the Textus Receptus. Rather, he "depended mainly on the more ancient manuscripts"<sup>54</sup> so that "in his eight editions it is generally held that he gave too much weight to the readings of X (Sinaiticus)".<sup>55</sup>

S.P. Tregelles (1813-1875): After a long list of German scholars in the new craze of Textual Criticism, Tregelles, an

Englishman came on the scene with the same bent as Tischendorf to discover and collate as many early documents as possible.<sup>57</sup> He travelled in Europe as Tischendorf did and was able to collate 13 uncials and 4 minuscules along with the Vulgate codex A. But he met an unfortunate situation at the Vatican in Rome when he was refused access to the much idolized codex B and other manuscripts at their disposal. Finally, Tregelles published his text in six parts between the years 1857 - 1872. Notwithstanding the contribution of this text to textual work, it was considered a protracted effort by some Textual critics since "the Gospels were published before Tischendorf's discovery of X and his edition of B".<sup>58</sup>

As a matter of fact, Tregelles, like Lachmann and others loathed the Textus Receptus and the Byzantine tradition that constitutes its background. In the words of Kenyon, Tregelles' bias against the Textus Receptus is set forth:

He, reacting against Scholz's rejection of the earlier evidence in favour of the numerically preponderant later witnesses, sets himself about 1838 to prepare an edition 'on the authority of ancient copies, without allowing the "Received Text" any prescriptive rights'.<sup>59</sup>

Paradoxically, even though Tregelles was convinced that "the New Testament is not given us merely for the exercise of our intellectual faculties, but as the Revelation of God, inspired by the Holy Ghost, to teach the way of salvation through faith in Christ crucified",<sup>60</sup> "Tregelles' great service was to draw English speaking scholars away from the Textus Receptus".<sup>61</sup>

B.F. Westcott (1825-1901) and J.A. Hort (1828-1892): The two English professors of Divinity at Cambridge are best known in history for their publication "of the most noteworthy critical edition of the Greek Testament ever produced by British scholarship"<sup>62</sup> on which they laboured for a period of almost thirty years<sup>63</sup> and finally produced in 1881. This Greek text was a two volume work: The first volume contains the text whereas the second contains some explanations as to the method used in

arriving at the Text. Westcott and Hort did not discover and collate new manuscripts as did Constantine, Tischendorf and Tregelles but made use of material that was already available, such as the work of Tischendorf. As to textual theory, we cannot ascribe to them originality for the complex ideas they propounded. "Rather, utilizing previous collections of variant readings, they refined the critical methodology developed by Griesbach, Lachmann and others, and applied it rigorously, but with discrimination, to the witnesses to the text of the New Testament".<sup>63</sup>

W-H's final Textual theory can be summarized in the following manner: (a) Comparison of variant readings through Internal Evidence. Concerning this kind of evidence Hort says, "whereas there are more readings than one, two classes of evidence are available for making the decision between them".<sup>64</sup> Internal Evidence is two-fold: Intrinsic probability - having to do with what must have been written by the author; Transcriptional probability - having to do with what the scribe must have thought the passage connotes. By such comparison of the idiosyncrasies of both author and scribe, a decision can be reached as to whether a given reading is genuine or corrupt. But W-H warned that "all decisions made solely or chiefly on the ground of internal evidence are subject to the chances of mistake inseparable from single and isolated judgments".<sup>65</sup> This is easier said than done because in a later development in chapter three the reader will see that W-H evaded this principle by their preference of codices B and X over against the Western text (D, etc) on the basis of internal criteria. This is lamented by present-day Textual scholars.

(b) External Evidence of documents or documentary evidence: The evidence ascertained by studying individual documents lends credibility to particular individual documents such as codices X and B in the decision of W-H. Documentary evidence is succinctly idiomized as "knowledge of documents should precede final judgment upon readings".<sup>66</sup> This kind of documentary investigation centres around three factors - Priority of date, character of

Text and geographical location. As to the factor of date, W-H come back and add that it is "still no more than a presumption, because the exemplar (original) from which a manuscript was copied may have been either only a little older than itself or of any earlier date, and because corruption may be rapid in one line of transmission, slow in another".<sup>67</sup> The question that comes to mind is: Should W-H be taken seriously? It is good on their part that they used the word presumption. What is presumed is often taken for granted. But with the kind of stress and rodomontade with which W-H refer to their beloved X and B codices, it appears that their advice on date in regards to documentary study is contradictory. In their New Testament Greek Text they press for the authenticity of codices X and B when they say:

There is however no tangible evidence for this supposition while various considerations drawn from careful comparison of the accessory attestation of readings, supported by X and B together, by B against X and by X against B respectively, render it morally certain that the ancestries of B and of X diverged from a point near the autographs, and never came into contact subsequently; so that the coincidence of X B marks those portions of Text in which two primitive and entirely separate lines of transmission had not come to differ from each other through independent corruption in the one or the other...where B is supported by a single version only, the character varies with the version associated. Even when B stands alone, its readings must never be lightly rejected.<sup>68</sup>

(c) The Genealogical method - On genealogy W-H write: "The importance of genealogy in Textual Criticism is at once shown by the consideration that no multiplication of copies, or of copies of copies, can give their joint testimony any higher authority than that of the single document from which they sprang, and that one early document may have left a single descendant, another a hundred or a thousand".<sup>69</sup> So, the genealogical method seeks to recover the texts of certain ancestral documents by comparing and analysing the differing texts of their descendants. Each ancestral text thus discovered is grouped with its supporting witnesses and afterwards used for the reconstruction of the original N.T. Text. Obviously, the result arrived at through the genealogical method is the theory of recensions. Bruce Metzger

sees the genealogical method leading to this trend when he points out that "the clearest evidence in tracing the genealogy of witnesses is the presence of conflate readings, that is, readings which have arisen from the combination of elements which had existed previously in separate manuscripts".<sup>70</sup>

(d) The Recensions - The theory of the shorter and more difficult text, and the theory of the recensions owe their promotion to John Albrecht Bengel, John Salomo Semler, and John Griesbach. W.H. in their textual critical theory talk of three recensions: The Alexandrian (Alexandrian Text), the Western (Western Text), and the Syrian (the Syrian Text).

Conclusion: The debate against the T.R. and the Majority Text since the time of Griesbach is really quite a fascinating and troubling phenomenon. The aim of those scholars who precipitated the attack against Erasmus' Greek text and their subsequent determination to replace that text with a better one was based wholly and solely on the impulse of academic exercise than on seeking to meet the need of a spiritually destitute world. However, in the midst of the turmoil and search for a better text based on better and more manuscripts, the text of Erasmus continued to be used as the comparative base for some time until much later when a complete breakaway was feasible.

The Textus Receptus - Majority Text-type debate which reached its high degree of complexity during the time of W-H is even more complex in our present era involving supporters of the T.R. and Majority Text, and proponents of the Eclectic Text. The latter group is an outgrowth of the W-H textual critical theory. The following chapter seeks to describe for us vividly, the origin and philosophy of the Eclectic textual critical theory as it is practised during our time in the twentieth century.

<sup>1</sup>Jack Finegan, Encountering New Testament Manuscripts (Grand Rapids : William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), p.59.

<sup>2</sup>George Milligan, The New Testament And Its Transmission (London : Hodder and Stoughton, 1932), p.99

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.98

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p.99

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p.100-101

<sup>6</sup>F.G. Kenyon and A.W. Adams, The Text of the Greek Bible (London : Gerald Duckworth & Company Ltd., 1975), p.173

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p.173

<sup>8</sup>Milligan, The New Testament and Its Transmission, p.104-6

<sup>9</sup>Kenyon-Adams, The Text of the Greek Bible, p.174.

<sup>10</sup>Bruce M. Metzger, The Text of the New Testament - Its Transmission, Corruption and Restoration (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p.104.

<sup>11</sup>Kenyon-Adams, The Text of the Greek Bible, p.174.

<sup>12</sup>Metzger, The Text of the New Testament, p.106.

<sup>13</sup>Milligan, The New Testament And Its Transmission, p.106.

<sup>14</sup>Metzger, The Text of the New Testament, p.106.

<sup>15</sup>Finegan, Encountering New Testament Manuscripts, p.59.

<sup>16</sup>Metzger, The Text of the New Testament, p.106.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p.107

<sup>18</sup>Alexander Souter, The Text And Canon of The New Testament, (Edinburgh : T and A. Constable Ltd., 1925), p.97.

<sup>19</sup>Finegan, Encountering New Testament Manuscripts, p.59.

<sup>20</sup>Milligan, The New Testament And Its Transmission, p.108.

<sup>21</sup>Metzger, The Text of the New Testament, p.108.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p.108.

<sup>23</sup>Finegan, Encountering New Testament Manuscripts, p.60.

<sup>24</sup>Milligan, The New Testament And Its Transmission, p.109.

- <sup>25</sup>Frederick Henry Scrivener, Plain Introduction To The Criticism of the New Testament (Cambridge : Deighton, Bell, and Co., 1861), p.320.
- <sup>26</sup>Finegan, Encountering New Testament Manuscripts, p.61.
- <sup>27</sup>Souter, The Text and Canon of the New Testament, p.99.
- <sup>28</sup>Ibid., p.99.
- <sup>29</sup>Milligan, The New Testament And Its Transmission, p.109.
- <sup>30</sup>Scrivener, Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament, p.109.
- <sup>31</sup>Finegan, Encountering New Testament Manuscripts, p.61.
- <sup>32</sup>Milligan, The New Testament And Its Transmission, p.109.
- <sup>33</sup>Finegan, Encountering New Testament Manuscripts, p.61.
- <sup>34</sup>Metzger, The Text of the New Testament, p.112.
- <sup>35</sup>Ibid., p.112-113.
- <sup>36</sup>Ibid., p.113.
- <sup>37</sup>Scrivener, Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament, p.322.
- <sup>38</sup>Finegan, Encountering New Testament Manuscripts, p.61.
- <sup>39</sup>Metzger, The Text of the New Testament, p.114.
- <sup>40</sup>Ibid., p.114.
- <sup>41</sup>Milligan, The New Testament and Its Transmission, p.110.
- <sup>42</sup>Ibid., p.110.
- <sup>43</sup>Kenyon-Adams, The Text of the Greek Bible, p.177.
- <sup>44</sup>Milligan, The New Testament and Its Transmission, p.111.
- <sup>45</sup>Finegan, Encountering New Testament Manuscripts, p.62.
- <sup>46</sup>Scrivener, Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament, p.341.
- <sup>47</sup>Kenyon-Adams, The Text of the Greek Bible, p.178.
- <sup>48</sup>Milligan, The New Testament and Its Transmission, p.110.
- <sup>49</sup>Kenyon-Adams, The Text of the Greek Bible, p.178.

- <sup>50</sup>Frederick Kenyon, The Story of the Bible (London : Butler And Tanner Ltd., 1947), p.71.
- <sup>51</sup>Finegan, Encountering New Testament Manuscripts, p.63.
- <sup>52</sup>Souter, The Text and Canon of the New Testament, p.102.
- <sup>53</sup>Kenyon, The Story of the Bible, p.73.
- <sup>54</sup>Ibid., p.73.
- <sup>55</sup>Souter, The Text and Canon of the New Testament, p.102.
- <sup>56</sup>Ibid., p.102.
- <sup>57</sup>Kenyon-Adams, The Text of the Greek Bible, p.180.
- <sup>58</sup>Ibid., p.179.
- <sup>59</sup>Milligan, The New Testament and Its Transmission, p.114.
- <sup>60</sup>Souter, The Text and Canon of the New Testament, p.102.
- <sup>61</sup>Metzger, The Text of the New Testament, p.129.
- <sup>62</sup>Milligan, The New Testament and Its Transmission, p.115.
- <sup>63</sup>Metzger, The Text of the New Testament, p.129.
- <sup>64</sup>B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort, The New Testament in the Original Greek (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1903), p.541.
- <sup>65</sup>Westcott and Hort, p.542.
- <sup>66</sup>Ibid., p.543.
- <sup>67</sup>Ibid., p.543.
- <sup>68</sup>Ibid., pp.559-60.
- <sup>69</sup>Ibid., p.554.
- <sup>70</sup>Metzger, The Text of the New Testament, p.130.

## Chapter III

## TWENTIETH CENTURY ECLECTICISM: ITS NATURE AND ORIGIN

This chapter focusses on a slightly new trend in Textual Criticism in the 20th century being almost one hundred years more recent than Westcott and Hort's (hereafter W-H) textual theory propounded in 1881. The new movement in Textual Criticism is Eclecticism; the method employed is the eclectic method; and the N.T. arrived at is the eclectic text.

Eclecticism has a large number of adherents and proponents. The most prominent among this group are: Bruce Metzger - former Professor of Theology and Biblical languages at Princeton Theological Seminary, and a member of the United Bible Societies New Testament editorial committee; Kurt and Barbara Aland of the Institute for New Testament Textual Research, Munster, Westphalia (both husband and wife are now members of the United Bible Societies New Testament Committee); Allan Wikgren; Carlo M. Martini of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome; G.D. Kilpatrick, Emeritus Professor of Holy Scriptures at Queen's College Oxford; Gordon D. Fee, Professor of New Testament, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary; Eldon Jay Epp, Harkness Professor of Biblical literature, Case Western Reserve University; J.K. Elliott, University of Leeds; and Eugene A. Nida, more of a linguist than a textual critic.

It is worth noting that proponents of the eclectic method differ among themselves in many respects. Some consider themselves "rigorous", others "impartial", and still yet another group, "thorough-going" eclecticists.

The Nature of Eclecticism

The eclectic method is a modern way or alternative of solving the problem of the vast number of existing variant readings so as to come up with the best text that will contribute

significantly to the reconstruction of the original text of the Greek New Testament. But the ascertaining of evidence for the best reading is often done on the basis of two canons. Namely: (a) The reading that best explains the context, and (b) the reading that best explains the origin of the other readings. These two principles are the same as W-H's Intrinsic Probability (what the writer or the author may have written or conceived) which involves a thorough knowledge of the documents under investigation; and transcriptional probability (what the scribe may have conceived the passage to be), presupposing that the textual critic should actually know the history of the N.T. text.

In his book, The Future of the Bible, Jacob Van Bruggen explains what eclecticism entails:

One must therefore choose one reading from the many divergent readings in the manuscripts that deviate from the majority Text. This is called the eclectic method. Those who use this method attempt to limit the danger of being arbitrary by following a text that was prepared at the request of the United Bible Societies (UBS) by five prominent contemporary textual critics. Naturally these scholars did not always agree on a reading. In such cases the majority of the scholars decided what was to be used. The U.B.S. text is thus a product of the majority of the scholars - not a majority of the manuscripts.<sup>1</sup>

In another development of the definition of eclecticism or rational criticism, Bruce Metzger adds certain things which Van Bruggen leaves out in his definition:

This process has been given various names. It has been called eclecticism, because in its application the textual critic pays less attention to questions of date and families of manuscripts than to internal or contextual considerations. Consequently the editor of a text follows now one and now another set of witnesses in accord with what is deemed to be the author's style or the exigencies of transcriptional hazards.<sup>2</sup>

From the two definitions just investigated, the writer would like to recall certain things to the reader's mind:

observation is that:

One of the difficulties with the eclectic approach that specializes in internal criticism may be only a terminological inconsistency, but it should be obvious that those who insist most strongly on an "eclectic" approach actually are the least eclectic, for their partiality toward internal criteria virtually excludes the external. Moreover, since the critical principles of these eclectics are focussed for the most part rather narrowly on the style of the author (including language and grammar, and how scribes are likely to have treated what the author wrote), the term "Eclectic" loses much of its appropriateness. It is not clear either what the adjective "rigorous", "impartial", or "thoroughgoing" signify when they modify "Eclecticism", for the method's self-imposed limitation to internal criteria surely makes it less "impartial" and less "thorough"...5

The writer considers it appropriate to underline certain words in Professor Epp's presentation for easy reflection and immediate focus on the burning issues which seemingly make the eclectic method unpopular in one way or the other. As may be seen: there are the elements of terminological inconsistency and partiality as a result of Eclecticism's misplaced emphasis on internal criteria. Besides what has just been said, much of Eclecticism's insistence on intrinsic probabilities is narrowly promoted and as a result robs the discipline of its appropriate place and terminology. Epp is not speaking as an outsider to the Eclectic group. Rather, he seems to belong to a kind of eclectic group which makes him see things from a perspective a bit different from his counterparts.

#### The Source of Eclecticism

The emergence of the eclectic method is often attributed to the failure of the Textual critical results of W-H formulated in the year 1881. Professor Epp narrates the story which led to the introduction of Eclecticism in the following words:

What is clear, however, is that the failure of Westcott and Hort's synergism of external-internal evidence

(i) That a group of five scholars selected by the U.B.S. make their conclusions on a given reading by voting after a careful investigation of the documents in question has been done. This is indeed the method of action that underlies the U.B.S. Greek Text and those who care to dig into the complexities of this voting method may read Bruce Metzger's edited Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament. The question that may be triggered in the mind of any enquiring person is this: Is the majority decision of three of four scholars more valid than the testimony of the majority manuscripts? (ii) On the part of Bruce Metzger, he maintains that date and families occupy less attention in the eclectic critic's mind. This is only a matter of theory since in practice proponents of eclecticism emphasize the superiority of age and text of the Alexandrian text in total disregard of the Byzantine text.

The eclectic method has been put to the test, evaluated and found wanting in many ways. By dwelling much on internal evidence, it overlooks the majority of manuscripts of over 5,000. Besides this oversight, it does not take into account external evidence and the weight of support given by individual manuscripts. In view of these defects, it becomes difficult to believe that the supporters of eclecticism take into account the history of the transmission of the text seriously.<sup>3</sup> In pressing home his point about the uncertainty of the eclectic method, Wilbur N. Pickering quotes Clark and Epp as "calling eclecticism a secondary, tentative and temporary method" and A.F.J. Klijn as saying that "this method arrives at such varying results that we wonder whether editors of Greek Texts and translations can safely follow this road".<sup>4</sup>

In his critical evaluation of The Eclectic Method in New Testament Textual Criticism: Solution or symptom?, Eldon Jay Epp, Professor of Biblical literature and Dean of Humanities and social sciences at Case Western Reserve University, underscores the difficulty that he sees with an eclectic method that lays much emphasis on internal evidence while rejecting the other aspects such as external evidence of manuscripts. His

precisely at the crucial point of the earliest demonstrable fork in the N.T. Textual stream (the separation of the Western and Neutral traditions) has evoked, in large measure, the uncertainty, the bewilderment, and the virtual anarchy of recent and current N.T. Textual Criticism, and to be more specific - has occasioned the entire eclectic movement as presently practiced in the Textual Criticism of the N.T.<sup>6</sup>

The point that Professor Epp is unfolding to the reader is simply what the writer regards as the incompatibility of theoretical enunciation with actual textual practice. Take for instance, the theory of the "Neutral" or inerrant text and the Western Text which W-H at the early stage of their theoretical formulation considered early, and "regarded as competing texts from about the middle of the 2nd century".<sup>7</sup> What textual scholars consider a methodological contradiction on the part of W-H is their preference for the so-called Neutral texts in a later development over against the Western text as they tried to resolve the question of which of the two texts is nearer to the original. As a result, "various facts of the theory came under attack soon after it appeared in 1881, and with the conflicting voices came confusion. It is this confusion that has given rise to Eclecticism".<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps it would be necessary for the reader to reflect or ponder over the previous statement once more as this will give further insight in regards to the origin of the Eclectic method. The Eclectic method came about as a result of W-H's confused theory and through those whom they had confused. At present, more reasons have come to birth out of the main reason: (a) That external evidence is inadequate (b) That there is no particular history and theory of the original text (c) That there is confusion in the evaluation of textual variants. (d) That the state of textual criticism today is fluid.<sup>9</sup>

Ironically, even though Eclecticism came about as a result of dissatisfaction with some of W-H's theories, a greater part of their formulations, especially those that seek to discourage the Textus Receptus and the Majority text are still

endorsed and promoted. Furthermore, some within the Eclectic group adopt the adage that some of W-H's theories may be wrong but their Greek N.T. Text is good. This ambivalent attitude is ironical in that the universal belief is that the method a person uses should be as good as the results he arrives at.

Interestingly, one renowned scholar made an attempt to escape from the common ruck. This scholar is J.K. Elliott of the University of Leeds. Elliott's work on the "reconstruction of the Text of the pastoral epistles differs from the Textus Receptus 160 times; differs from W-H 80 times; and contains 65 readings that have not appeared in any other printed edition. A review of his reasoning suggests he did not altogether escape the psychological grip of W-H, but the result is still significantly different from anything else that has been done".<sup>10</sup>

In agreement with Clark and Colwell, Wilbur Pickering pressed home the continual adherence to the Text of W-H when he wrote: "In spite of the prevailing uncertainty and dissatisfaction, when it comes right down to it most textual critics fall back on W-H, when in doubt the safe thing to do is 'stay with the party line'".<sup>11</sup>

The writer will now proceed to illustrate this fluctuating tendency which is so much a part of Eclecticism in contemporary Textual Criticism that it has influenced the text of many modern day versions of the N.T. The problem will be illustrated by placing W-H's N.T. Text beside the Majority Text so that we may see the movement of modern day versions in relationship to these two texts. The reader will observe that the Gospel of Matthew will form our comparative base. Note the key to an understanding of the symbols used: W-H - Westcott and Hort; N/A - Nestle and Aland; N/K - Nestle and Kilpatrick; UBS<sup>2</sup> - United Bible Societies Greek Text, second edition; UBS<sup>3</sup> - United Bible Societies Greek text, third edition; NEB<sup>gr</sup> - New English Bible Greek text; T.R. - Textus Receptus; NASV - New American Standard Version; JB - Jerusalem Bible Version, RSV - Revised

MATTHEWS GOSPEL, V.H. AND MODERN GREEK TEXTS VS. MAJORITY TEXT

Key to Abbreviation

UBS<sup>3</sup> = United Bible Society Greek NT 3rd edition = Nestle-Aland 26th edition.  
 (UBS<sup>2</sup> = second edition of UBSGNT.). N/A = Nestle-Aland 25th edition. N/K = Nestle - Kilpatrick GNT, 1985. NEB<sup>ST</sup> = Greek N.T. behind New English Bible, ed. Tasker, 1964. GNB (Good News Bible) includes the earlier TEV (Today's English Version) unless the two versions differ - GNB is the later version.

REF MATTHEW	V-H TEXT	MAJORITY TEXT	COMMENTS
4:23	He went about all Galilee  (1) <u>Greek Texts</u> : UBS <sup>3</sup> , N/K, N/A, NEB <sup>ST</sup>  (2) <u>Modern Versions</u> : NEB, RSV, JB, NASV	Jesus went about all Galilee  (1) <u>Greek Texts</u> : T.R.  (2) <u>Modern Versions</u> : KJV, NKJV, GNB, BV, NIV	The critical texts and some modern versions support V-H. The T.R., K.J.V., N.K.J.V. and a few modern versions that usually support the critical texts follow the Majority text.
6:33	Seek first the kingdom and his righteousness  (1) <u>Greek Texts</u> : UBS <sup>2</sup> , N/A N/K.  (2) <u>Modern Versions</u> : TEV, NIV, JB, BV, RSV, NASV.  Note: All these versions and "His" before kingdom except NASV <sup>MS</sup>	Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteous- ness  (1) <u>Greek Texts</u> : NEB <sup>ST</sup> , TR (UBS <sup>3</sup> ).  (2) <u>Modern Versions</u> : KJV, NKJV, GNB, NEB.	This time the Greek Texts and the modern versions are divided in their testimony. UBS <sup>2</sup> , N/A, N/K part company with NEB <sup>ST</sup> and UBS <sup>3</sup> Two modern versions of the critical texts join with the K.J.V. and N.K.J.V. in supporting the Majority Text.

Standard Version; KJV - King James Version; GNB - Good News  
 Bible; NKJV - New King James Version; NIV - New International  
 Version.

REF	W-H TEXT	MAJORITY TEXT	COMMENTS
8:10	In no one in Israel I have found much faith. (1) <u>Greek Texts:</u> UBS <sup>3</sup> , N/K, N/A (2) <u>Modern Versions:</u> GNB, NIV, BV, NASV.	Not even in Israel have I found such faith. (1) <u>Greek Texts:</u> TR, NEB <sup>GT</sup> (2) <u>Modern Versions:</u> KJV, NKJV, JB, RSV, NEB.	The critical texts mostly register their support for W-H. All the modern versions, with the exception of the RSV which has the reading on the margin, are also in support of W-H. But the TR, KJV and NKJV follow the <u>Majority Text with NEB<sup>GT</sup></u>  There is a phenomenal disagreement between the critical texts, and the modern versions. The critical texts agree with some modern versions whereas (W-HMG), the KJV, NKJV, RSV, JB, BV (a great crowd) support the Majority Text.
8:18	Jesus seeing the Crowd. (1) <u>Greek Texts:</u> UBS <sup>3</sup> , N/K, N/A, NEB <sup>GT</sup> (2) <u>Modern Versions:</u> GNB, NIV, NASV.	Jesus seeing great crowds. (1) <u>Greek Texts:</u> TR, (W-H <sup>MG</sup> ) (2) <u>Modern Versions:</u> KJV, NKJV, RSV, JB, BV (a great crowd).	
11:15	He who has ears, let him hear. (1) <u>Greek Texts:</u> TR, UBS <sup>3</sup> , N/K, N/A, NEB <sup>GT</sup> (2) <u>Modern Versions:</u> GNB, NEB, NIV, BV.	He who has ears to hear, let him hear. (1) <u>Greek Texts:</u> TR. (2) <u>Modern Versions:</u> KJV, NKJV, RSV, NASV, JB.	The critical texts have once again mobilized their support for W-H but the versions are still divided. The TR, KJV, NKJV, RSV, NASV testify to the Majority as well as JB.

REF	W-H TEXT	MAJORITY TEXT	COMMENTS
MATTHEW			
11:23	Capernaum, you will go down to Hades. (1) <u>Greek Texts:</u> N/K, N/A, UBS <sup>3</sup> (2) <u>Modern Versions:</u> NIV, NASV	Capernaum you will be brought down to hades. (1) <u>Greek Texts:</u> TR, NEB <sup>GT</sup> . (2) <u>Modern Versions:</u> (KJV), NKJV, BV, JB, GNB, RSV, NEB	Three Greek texts and a few modern versions support W-H. The TR, KJV, NKJV and five modern versions support the Majority Text.
13:35	That it might be fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet. (1) <u>Greek Texts:</u> UBS <sup>3</sup> , N/K, N/A. (2) <u>Modern Versions:</u> RSV, GNB, NIV, NASV, JB, BV.	That it might be fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah. (1) <u>Greek Texts:</u> TR, NEB <sup>GT</sup> . (2) <u>Modern Versions:</u> (KJV), NKJV, NEB.	All the critical texts except NEB <sup>GT</sup> and all the modern versions give testimony to W-H, except, of course, for NEB.
15:31	The multitude wondered when they saw the dumb speaking, and lame walking and the blind seeing. (1) <u>Greek Texts:</u> NIL (2) <u>Modern Versions:</u> NIL	The multitudes wondered when they saw the dumb speaking the crippled made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. (1) <u>Greek Texts:</u> TR, NEB <sup>GT</sup> , UBS <sup>3</sup> , N/K, N/A. (2) <u>Modern Versions:</u> KJV, NKJV, and all modern versions with some reading 'multitude'.	All the Greek critical texts and modern versions desert W-H in support of the Majority Text with some reading 'multitude'. W-H follow Codex Sinaiticus which disagrees with Codex Vaticanus.

18:14	<p>Before my Father who is in heaven.</p> <p>(1) <u>Greek Texts:</u> NIL</p> <p>(2) <u>Modern Versions:</u> RSV.</p>	<p>Before your Father who is in heaven.</p> <p>(1) <u>Greek Texts:</u> TR, WH<sup>mg</sup>, N/K, N/A, UBS<sup>3</sup>, NEB<sup>gr</sup>.</p> <p>(2) <u>Modern Versions:</u> GNB, NEB, NIV, NASV, JB, BV, KJV, NKJV.</p>	<p>W-H is deserted by all the critical texts and a good number of the versions in favour of the Majority Text. It must be noted that this support of the Majority Text is overwhelming.</p>
18:26	<p>Fell at His feet, saying</p> <p>(1) <u>Greek Texts:</u> N/K, N/A, UBS<sup>3</sup>,</p> <p>(2) <u>Modern Versions:</u> All modern versions read the reading except RSV.</p>	<p>Fell at His feet, saying Lord.</p> <p>(1) <u>Greek Texts:</u> TR.</p> <p>(2) <u>Modern Versions:</u> KJV, NKJV, RSV.</p>	<p>The critical texts and all the modern versions side with W-H. The Majority text is supported by the TR, KJV, NKJV, and the RSV.</p>
19:9	<p>Whoever divorces his wife except for fornication, and marries another woman commits adultery.</p> <p>(1) <u>Greek Texts:</u> UBS<sup>3</sup>, N/K, N/A, NEB<sup>gr</sup>.</p> <p>(2) <u>Modern Versions:</u> RSV, GNB, NASV, NIV, NEB, JB, BV.</p>	<p>However divorces his wife except for fornication and marries another, commits adultery and the one marrying the divorced woman commits adultery.</p> <p>(1) <u>Greek Texts:</u> TR, NEB<sup>gr</sup>, mg.</p> <p>(2) <u>Modern Versions:</u> KJV, NKJV, RSV<sup>mg</sup>, NEB<sup>mg</sup>, NASV<sup>mg</sup>.</p>	<p>All the critical texts, and all the modern versions apart from the KJV, and NKJV follow W-H. The modern versions are not entirely sure whether it is worth discarding the reading or not. So the NEB, NASV, RSV place the variant reading in their margins.</p>

Progress or Regress?

The brief survey of the aforementioned passages from the gospel of Matthew clearly explains how modern Greek texts and their resultant English Versions still rely heavily on the W-H N.T. Text. It may be observed that on occasion these Greek texts and versions witness to the Majority Text but about 85% of their witness go in favour of W-H. Therefore, after the discussion on the Nature and Origin of Eclecticism, one important question ought to be asked: Is there progress or regress in present day Eclecticism? Professor Eldon J. Epp of Case Western Reserve University, Ohio, attempted an answer in his "Twentieth Century Interlude in New Testament Textual Criticism". His opening remarks were:

To characterize 20th century Textual Criticism as an interlude is, on the one hand, to suggest something negative: it affirms that the critical work of the period is not a main feature, but a subsidiary or a secondary and minor performance following a portion of the main event. On the other hand, there is a positive aspect, for interlude implies - if not demands - that another major act is to follow, and it is this to which the interlude leads and for which it prepares.<sup>12</sup>

Epp's point of emphasis in his introduction asseverates the fact that twentieth century Textual Criticism has been characterized by inactivity within the framework of seeming activity. He observes that the present situation provides no room for creativity in the face of the vast number of papyri discoveries, but instead encourages the reproduction of ancient works of such scholars as Tischendorf, Tregelles, Lachman and Westcott-Hort.<sup>13</sup> Lest he be challenged to give evidence for his enunciations or else he should be asked to keep quiet, Epp hastens to give five distinct evidences of the interlude: He believes -

(i) That there is lack of progress in popular Greek editions. He arrived at his conclusion by carefully comparing ten of the most widely known hand critical editions side by side with W-H's N.T. Text. In the order of their time of publication, these texts are listed as follows: (a) R.F. Weymouth, 1886 (b) B. Weiss - 1894 to 1900 (c) Eberhard Nestle - 1898; 25th edition by Erwin Nestle and K. Aland, 1973 (d) British and Foreign Bible Society, 1904 (Nestle, 4th. Ed.); 2nd edition by G.D. Kilpatrick, 1958 (e) A. Souter, 1910, revised ed., 1947 (f) Herman Von Soden - 1913 (not a hand edition as such) (g) H.J. Vogels, 1920; 4th. ed; 1950 (h) A. Merk, 1933; 9th. ed; revised 1965 (i) J.M. Bover, 1943; 5th. ed; 1968 (j) United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament, 1966; 2nd. ed; 1968; 3rd. edition. (This was still not off the press at the time Epp went to press).<sup>14</sup>

After carefully studying these texts, he made his conclusion in no uncertain terms: "The conclusion is clear: These three most widely used Greek New Testaments of the mid-twentieth century (Nestle-Aland, Merk and Bover) 'show little change from Westcott-Hort and only rarely present a significant variant'.<sup>15</sup> In regard to the position of the U.B.S. Text, Epp gives a special note:

If one considers the recent and increasingly widely used United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament, it will be observed at once that its editors began this work on the basis of Westcott-Hort and that the text of the United Bible Societies' edition is close to the text of Codex Vaticanus (B) - Westcott-Hort's primary manuscript - and close therefore, to Westcott-Hort's text.<sup>16</sup>

(ii) That there is lack of progress toward a theory and History of the Earliest N.T. Text. The misconception that the similarity of the critical texts and their close affinity to the W-H N.T. Text suggests that such texts are the best so far, no longer stands unchallenged. "This similarity of text indicates, rather that we have made little progress in Textual theory since Westcott-Hort; that we simply do not know how to make a definite determination as to what the best text is;

that we do not have a clear picture of the transmission and alteration of the text in the first few centuries; and accordingly, that the Westcott-Hort kind of text has maintained its dominant position by default".<sup>17</sup> Advancing that point further, G. Zuntz is quoted as saying that 'the agreement between our modern editions does not mean that we have recovered the original text. It is due to the simple fact that their editors... follow one narrow section of the evidence, namely, the non-Western old uncials'.<sup>18</sup>

From the look of things it seems many an Eclectic Textual critic seems to be complacent and satisfied with the results of W-H's construction of the Textual history of the N.T. Text. This attitude sometimes leads to pessimistic postulations such as whether it is worth advancing beyond the point that W-H have reached already. Alexander Souter appears to be pessimistic about the future of the N.T. Text in his reflection when he wrote:

It appears to the present writer that a great advance upon the Text of Westcott and Hort in the direction of the original autographs is highly improbable, at least in our generation. If they have not said the last word, they have at least laid foundations which make it comparatively simple to fit later discoveries into their scheme.<sup>19</sup>

Souter does not have a positive look for any advance on the N.T. Text. In any case, "the methodology and early history of the text, still leave us largely in the position of Westcott-Hort and within a 20th century interlude in N.T. textual criticism, and what is more, they leave us with the major and decisive tasks still ahead."<sup>20</sup>

(iii) That there is lack of progress in major critical editions/apparatuses. This failure on the part of Textual Critics to arrive at one method or procedure for the construction of acceptable critical editions goes as far back as the time immediately following World War I. This difficulty is in no way dissociated with the problem of the uniformity of the various N.T. Texts and the resultant lack of a clear conception

of the N.T. Text.<sup>21</sup> That is to say, in a given situation where a group of Textual scholars become satisfied with one ancient method of doing textual work at the expense of scholastic creativity, they will eventually have one uniform text, and once they have these texts they become less concerned about pursuing the historicity of the N.T. Text. When this becomes the case, the question of a unanimous procedure for the formulation of a critical apparatus for ascertaining textual evidence becomes a difficult thing to do.

(iv) That there is lack of progress in the evaluation of readings. The inability to account for the weight and reliability of MSS readings led to the use of the eclectic method which K.W. Clark considers secondary, tentative, experimental; a method that cannot create a new text but one that only diagnoses a faulty theory of the N.T. Text.<sup>22</sup>

In Epp's estimation the eclectic method should be used with caution and not with full confidence lest one is beguiled into believing that its results yield maximum certainty. He elaborates when he said that "the eclectic method is in fact, the 20th century method of N.T. textual criticism, and anyone who criticizes it immediately becomes a self-critic, for we all use it, some with a certain measure of reluctance and restraint, others with complete abandon. Those in the latter category seem to assume that the eclectic method is, for all practical purposes, fully legitimated, and acceptable and represents a final method, a permanent procedure...<sup>23</sup>

(v) Because of the return of the Textus Receptus. Even though he is not a supporter of the Textus Receptus, Professor Epp refuses to sidetrack a notion which he thinks is symptomatic of the retarded nature of eclecticism. After much pondering over the situation he postulated that "perhaps the most curious and certainly the most ironic evidence that we stand in the situation of Westcott and Hort is the revival in our generation of the view that the Textus Receptus represents the best N.T.

Text".<sup>24</sup>

Looking intently at the statement just made, Epp couldn't have used a better word than the word ironic. The reason is that many assertions have already been made against the Textus Receptus and the Majority Text. For instance, it has been on more than one occasion proclaimed by some members of the eclectic method that the Textus Receptus had been overthrown,<sup>25</sup> a statement which supporters of the Majority Text and the Textus Receptus find hard to subscribe to. They believe that the latter (Textus Receptus) has never at any time ceased to exist; it is the text behind the King James Version of 1611 and the New King James Version that is at present in circulation.

However, in spite of the many voices that are calling for a revised estimation of the eclectic method, it does appear some eclecticists have still not heeded the call. One such scholar is the well known Textual critic, Bruce Metzger, who has this to say:

This somewhat lengthy account of the work of Westcott and Hort may be concluded with the observation that the overwhelming consensus of scholarly opinion recognizes that their critical edition was truly epoch-making. They present what is doubtless the oldest and purest text that could be attained with the means of information available in their day. Though the discovery of additional manuscripts has required the realignment of certain groups of witnesses, the general validity of their critical principles and procedures is widely acknowledged by textual scholars today.<sup>26</sup>

The reader should note that the italics are the writer's. The reason is to point out Metzger still believes W-H's text is the oldest and purest text and that it has wide validity and use. In any case, the conclusion on eclecticism by one of its proponents still stands:

Clearly, it is not any intension to minimize or to denigrate these numerous and worthwhile accomplishments; yet the 20th century, as far as we have lived and worked in it has been an interlude between the grand achievement of

Westcott-Hort and whatever significant act is to follow.<sup>27</sup>

After all these discussions on eclecticism - its nature and its origin, once again the searching question needs to be asked: Is there progress or regress? The answer is four-fold - (1) Eclecticism was born out of reaction against W-H yet it became little different from their theories. (2) It is inadequate because the majority of its supporters place more emphasis on internal evidence rather than external evidence. (3) It is divisive in that its proponents are divided on the issue of which particular procedures are suitable for doing eclectic Textual criticism. (4) It is stagnant and retroactive in spite of the vast number of discoveries simply because the element of creativity is lacking.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Jacob Van Bruggen, The Future of The Bible (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers, 1978), p.22-23.

<sup>2</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, The Text of the New Testament - Its Transmission, Corruption and Restoration (New York : Oxford University Press, 1968), p.175.

<sup>3</sup> Wilbur N. Pickering, The Identity of the New Testament Text (Nashville : Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980), p.25.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.26

<sup>5</sup> Eldon J. Epp, "The Eclectic Method in New Testament Textual Criticism: solution or symptom?" Harvard Theological Review, 69, Nos. 3-4 (July-Oct. 1976), p.254.

<sup>6</sup> Epp, p.242.

<sup>7</sup> Pickering, The Identity of the New Testament Text, p.26-27.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p.27.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.27-28.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p.29.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p.29.

<sup>12</sup> Eldon, Jay Epp, "The Twentieth Century Interlude in New Testament Textual Criticism", Journal of Biblical Literature, (xciii, 1974), p.387.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p.387-388.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.389.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p.389.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p.390.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p.391.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.391.

<sup>19</sup> Alexander Souter, The Text And Canon of The New Testament (Edinburgh : T and A. Constable Ltd., 1925), p.135.

<sup>20</sup> Epp, p.401.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.401.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p.404.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p.404.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p.405.

<sup>25</sup>Metzger, The Text of the New Testament - Its Transmission Corruption and Restoration, p.124.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p.137.

<sup>27</sup>Epp, p.387.

Chapter IV  
TWENTIETH CENTURY DEFENCE OF  
THE ECLECTIC TEXT

In the last two chapters, we looked at (1) The Debate against the Textus Receptus and the Majority Text; (2) Twentieth Century Eclecticism- Its Nature and Origin. The concern of this chapter focusses on Twentieth century defence of the eclectic text. The importance of such a chapter cannot be over-emphasized in that this present day eclecticism discussed in the previous chapter, rejected by its opponents, and called into question by a few persons within the same group, is here promoted by D.A.Carson in his King James Version Debate; by Michael Holmes in his "Majority Text Debate- New Form of an old one"; and by Gordon Fee in his "The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text."

J Harold Greenlee in his book, Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism, devotes a section on what he calls "The final defence of the Textus Receptus."<sup>1</sup> The opening remarks of that section read:

The work of W-H brought about the final dethronement of the T.R. and the establishment of the principle of a critical text. This period likewise saw the final substantial scholarly defence of the Textus Receptus. This defence rested largely in the hands of F.H.A.Scrivener, and especially J.W.Burgon and Edward Miller. The latter two men exerted their joint influence in exceedingly strenuous opposition to W-H.<sup>2</sup>

Of course the attack against the T.R. and the Majority text from the time of Bentley and the defence of the same before the time of W-H is more than a century old. Interestingly, apart from F.H.A. Scrivener, J.W. Burgon, and Edward Miller, there are in our day, men like Wilbur N.Pickering, Zane C. Hodges, Arthur L. Farstad, David Otis Fuller, Edward F. Hills, and Jacob Van Bruggen, who champion the cause of the T.R. The defence of these men is so penetrating that it has

become a point of concern to eclectic's mainline supporters. At present, there is a shift of role within eclectic's set-up - they are gradually turning away from attacking to defending their textual critical theory against the attacks of T.R. and Majority Text supporters. Carson, in the introduction of his King James Version Debate - A Plea for Realism, sets forth the situation as it is in no uncertain terms when he wrote:

There has arisen a sizeable and vocal body of opinion that defends the King James Version (K.J.V.) as the best English Version now extant. Some of the defenders merely argue strongly; but others have gone so far as to make the adoption of this view a criterion of orthodoxy. They dismiss those who dissent from them as modernists, compromisers, or dupes.<sup>3</sup>

From what Carson is saying, defenders of the K.J.V. not only set forth their claims concerning the K.J.V. and the T.R., they also question the biblical orthodoxy of their opponents. So Carson's purpose for writing is not only to alert people of the new trend in the defence of the King James Version, but also to put in the hands of the non-technical supporters of the eclectic text, such as students, pastors and laymen, a simple formula in the form of a book by which to answer those who disparage the eclectic method.<sup>4</sup>

There are many prolific writers within the eclectic group during our time. But for this chapter, the writer will discuss the defensive works of three well known textual critics- D.A. Carson, Michael Holmes, and Gordon Fee.

#### PART ONE: AN EXAMINATION OF CARSON'S 14 THESES IN THE KING JAMES VERSION DEBATE

1. The delineation of his concern - Apart from his mention of the emergence of a new group of T.R. and Majority Text defenders and his attempt to give his readers a guide book of the present trends in Textual criticism in a simple manner, his concern for writing is further delineated at the top of page 44

in his book. His opinion is that there are "the beginnings of major strife and divisions are brewing quietly in several conservative denominations scattered throughout countries of the English-speaking world"<sup>5</sup> because supporters of the T.R. fail to accept the eclectic Textual critical theory; instead they "cite the few seminal works of Terence Brown, Zane C. Hodges, Edward F. Hills, and their nineteenth century fellow protagonist J.W. Burgon, as if every line they have written is true; and not lacking in zeal but in first hand knowledge of the data and of the first class textual work done by men like Benjamin B. Warfield, J. Gresham Machen, and in our own day Gordon Fee..., they repeat the errors of their mentors with multiplying fervour".<sup>6</sup>

In fact, such a statement as the one made by Carson is one of the major causes of alarm to conservative evangelical leaders who have committed themselves to modern English Versions based on critical Texts like U.B.S. and N/A which claim they are based on the assured results of modern scholarship. If such a text is utilized and translated by evangelicals only, then such Christian leaders champion that translation as the best for everyone. For instance, because of its rather free and easily understandable renderings, the N.I.V. is being zealously promoted as the standard text for all Evangelicals to use in order to maintain Evangelical unity.

At present, a good number of conservative Evangelical leaders are questioning the Eclectic Theory and are mobilizing support for the K.J.V. which has appeared in its new form. Unfortunately, when Carson wrote in 1977, he did not appear to have known the New King James Version (N.K.J.V.), a modern K.J.V. type translation made by conservative Evangelicals. The Baptist Theological Seminary in Arusha has adopted the N.K.J.V. as its standard English Translation.

2. The 14 Theses discussed: After presenting what he thinks is the concern in present day Textual criticism, Carson goes on

to propose and discuss fourteen theses:

In what follows I shall not argue that the vociferous defenders of the T.R. are knaves or fools. I shall seek to demonstrate, rather, that their interpretation of the evidence is mistaken. Moreover, I shall point out logical fallacies in this exposition and the alarming way in which they cite argument in their own favour without examining those arguments.<sup>7</sup>

A careful examination of Carson's proposition brings up a few questions which are worth raising from the onset: Is Carson not claiming too much for the theory he seeks to defend? Is he not guilty of using the same derogative language as he thinks T.R. supporters are using and for that matter is he not weak where he thinks he is strong? Answers to these and other questions will emerge as his fourteen theses go through investigation.

(1) Thesis one: "There is no unambiguous evidence that the Byzantine Text-type was known before the fourth century".<sup>8</sup>

To begin with, Carson anticipates defending this thesis by proving the following: (a) The Byzantine Text is not found in any Greek MSS prior to 350 AD (b) It is not found in any Versions prior to 350 AD (c) It is not found in N.T. quotations by the Church fathers prior to 350 AD.

The conception of a post 350 AD Byzantine text is not at all new. Carson borrows the arguments which he seeks to promote either directly from W-H or his twentieth century contemporaries. In the preface of their 1903 edition of the Greek New Testament in the original Greek, W-H remarked that:

The Syrian text has all the appearance of being a careful attempt to supersede the chaos of rival texts by a judicious selection from them all... They could only be guided by 'intrinsic' probabilities of a vague kind and were not in a position to distinguish between the purity of a text and its present acceptability or usefulness. They evidently wished their text to be, as far as possible, easy, smooth, and complete; and for this purpose borrowed freely from all quarters...<sup>9</sup>

The date for W-H's Syrian or Byzantine Recension is 350 AD, a theory that is still not proved. It is extraordinary that critical text scholars reject Hort's theory but continue to insist that the Byzantine text is secondary and is nowhere in existence prior to 350 AD.

Carson's understanding that Hort's "theory is a reasonable way of accounting for the appearance in history of this text-type about AD 350"<sup>10</sup> is shared by another scholar, F.G. Kenyon, who wrote:

The essence of the case is that this is a text which has suffered progressive revision, not (or only to a slight extent) on doctrinal grounds, but mainly in the interests of intelligibility and by means of verbal and stylistic alterations and by assimilation (deliberate or unintentional) of parallel narratives. The proof of its secondary character rests partly on internal evidence...<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, in the presence of recent discoveries, the argument for the non-existence of pre 350 AD manuscript witness to the Byzantine Text is constantly being challenged and some scholars are gradually discarding their stereotype in this regard. It is no longer hard "for the advocates of the primacy of the Byzantine Text-type" to "account for the historical data".<sup>12</sup>

Dr. Harry Sturz in a book published in 1984, The Byzantine Text-type and New Testament Textual Criticism, declares soundly on the basis of ancient papyrus evidence from Egypt, mostly second and third century, that the Byzantine Text-type, not just Byzantine readings, can be found in abundance in some of the earliest papyri. After investigating in fair terms the arguments "that the Byzantine Text is secondary" which the supporters of the eclectic text promote, and the arguments "that the Byzantine Text is primary" which some T.R. protagonists declare, Harry Sturz goes on to discuss in his fourth chapter that "distinctively Byzantine readings are found in Early papyri".<sup>13</sup> Sturz states that:

Beginning with the second edition of Hort's introductory

volume in 1896, various writers have called attention to Byzantine readings which have found support in early witnesses discovered since the time of W-H. Francis Crawford Burkitt, an enthusiastic supporter of W-H who wrote the 'additional notes' in the second edition of the introduction (to the New Testament in Greek by W-H), has noted that the (then) recently discovered Sinaitic Syriac, though often supporting the Alexandrian text, occasionally agrees with the Syrian Text in 'distinctive' readings. Later, in an article on the newly discovered Chester Beatty papyri, Burkitt comments on Byzantine agreements in these manuscripts, as do C.C. Tarelli and others in Journal of Theological Studies, Gunther Zuntz in 1946 in the Schweich lectures on the Text of the Epistles, and E.C. Colwell in 1961 in his article on 'the Origin of Text-types of New Testament manuscripts'.<sup>14</sup>

The foregoing statement of Sturz is of paramount importance. It points us to a few things that are worth taking note of: Firstly, it has been 89 years since scholars within and outside W-H's camp have been pointing out to the latter that their theory of the non-existence of pre-350 AD MSS support for the Byzantine Text is wrong. Secondly, five and more scholars who are well known for their scholarly textual work, respected to this day, and who lived in both the 19th and 20th centuries had called the attention of fellow Textual critics to this fact. Besides his mention of Colwell, Zuntz, Tarelli and Burkitt, Sturz goes on to say that "Bruce Metzger, in 'the Lucianic Recension of the Greek Bible', gives a list of seven examples of papyrus - supported Byzantine readings. In a footnote, he lists some sixteen other references of 'distinctively' Byzantine readings which are also found in P.<sup>66</sup>"<sup>15</sup> In the course of the present writer's perusal of Bruce Metzger's Chapters in the History of New Testament Textual Criticism, he sees some advice for those who are too quick in condemning the Byzantine Text and labelling it late. Metzger's view is,

During the past decades several papyri have come to light which tend to increase one's uneasiness over Hort's reluctance to acknowledge the possibility that an ancient reading may have been preserved in the Antiochean text even though it be absent from all the great uncial manuscripts. Since the discovery of the Chester Beatty papyri (particularly P<sup>45</sup> and P<sup>46</sup>) and the Bodmer Papyrus II (P<sup>66</sup>)

proof is available that occasionally the later Byzantine Text preserves a reading that dates from the second or third century and for which there had been no other early witness.<sup>16</sup>

After giving this piece of advice, Metzger proceeds to validate his stance by a careful investigation of readings such as the following: Lk. 11:33; Jn. 10:29; Jn. 11:32; Jn. 13:26; Acts. 17:13; ICor. 9:7; and Eph. 5:9. The conclusion arrived at is that:

Though this list could be expanded, enough examples have been cited to suggest that some of the roots of the Antiochian text go back to a very early date, antedating Lucian by several generations. It does not follow, of course, that the Textus Receptus should be rehabilitated en bloc, or even that in the examples cited above the Antiochian text is necessarily the original text. The lesson to be drawn from such evidence, however, is that the general neglect of the Antiochian readings which has been so common among many textual critics is quite unjustified. The possibility should even be left open that a reading which happens to be preserved in only the Lucianic recension may commend itself as the original.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to what Harry Sturz has said already, Metzger too has given his view of the early existence of the Byzantine text from a balanced perspective, an attitude which will help promote fairness, cooperation and unity in textual work. Looking at the unambiguous evidence before him in the light of the works of various scholars, Sturz wonders how one could brush aside the truth simply for the sake of argument when he remarks:

How are such agreements between early witnesses and the late Byzantine texts to be explained? Does not such evidence tend to upset the theory of lateness of the K-Text? At first this possibility was not faced and the logical explanation (in the framework of the W-H Theory) was that the Byzantine editors had somehow used other sources in addition to the Western, Neutral, and Alexandrian types set forth by Hort. This was considered plausible in the case of the Sinaitic when the concept was first advanced by Burkitt, and later picked up by Streeter.<sup>18</sup>

Evidence for the early nature of the Byzantine Text is not hard to find. Apart from Zuntz's list of 13 readings among

which five are distinctively Byzantine, Harry A. Sturz conducted a study of all the available early papyri in order to ascertain whether the papyri supported Byzantine readings exist. In this survey he identified a variety of papyri alignments with the Byzantine text from which he made several lists. "List 1 displays some 150 distinctively Byzantine readings now found to have early Egyptian papyri supporting them".<sup>19</sup> As a matter of fact, before the appearance and investigation of the Egyptian papyri, these distinctive readings "are opposed (not supported) by the principal manuscripts and witnesses to the Alexandrian and Western texts. It may be recalled that W-H considered such 'distinctive readings' a special proof of the editing and consequent lateness of the Syrian text".<sup>20</sup> So, the support of readings of this nature by MSS which go as far back to the 2nd century and ante-date the "Lucianic Recension", is a blow to W-H's theory. Furthermore, from his list of 150 readings, Harry Sturz makes the following conclusions:

(a) That the 150 readings are early (b) That the readings were not edited in the fourth century (c) That the Old uncials have not preserved an adequate presentation of the second century (d) That it is actually the Byzantine text that is the repository of second century tradition (e) That any theory of the lateness of the Byzantine Text is to be questioned.<sup>21</sup>

Coming now to Carson's sub-point on the absence of pre 350 AD versional support for the Byzantine text, the writer would like to say the Peshitta Syriac gives wide support for the Byzantine text. Nevertheless, it has a number of independent readings which disagree with the Byzantine text. The truth is that no one knows its exact date or origin. By the time of the split in the Syriac Church in 451 AD, it was universally accepted by the main-stream Syriac Churches. "The older Syriac scholars considered the Peshitta to be a second century production, and, as its close relationship to the bulk of Greek MSS was evident, the defenders of the Constantinopolitan ecclesiastical text could point to this second century version as evidence that

the type of text they defended was as old as any known".<sup>22</sup>

In his book, The Bible in the Church, B.F. Westcott adds to the foregoing testimony concerning the Peshitta and the Eastern churches' association with it:

As a supplement to this meagre evidence the testimony of the Eastern Churches is fully given in their great version of the Bible, the Syriac Peshitto (i.e. simple literal version). This was made as far as can be determined in the same manner as the old Latin, but at an earlier date. The Old Testament, no less than the new, was certainly translated by a Christian, and the whole work was probably revised and completed early in the second century at Edessa, which was at that time the centre of an important Christian school.<sup>23</sup>

This is the second time Westcott has affirmed his belief in the early existence of the Syriac Peshitta. His first affirmation was made in 1855 in his book on the Canon of the New Testament. The second affirmation was made in 1864 in his book, The Bible In The Church. Westcott is said to have contradicted himself when in 1882 he put the date of the Peshitta forward as far as the 3rd and 4th centuries.<sup>24</sup>

Quite the contrary, the case for the early existence of the Peshitta is presented by F.H. Scrivener in his book, A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament, 4th edition. He says, "at all events we are sure that Christianity flourished in these regions at a very early period; it is even possible that the Syriac scriptures were seen by Hegesippus in the second century; they were familiarly used and claimed as his national version by Ephraem of Edessa in the fourth",<sup>25</sup>

As has already been made evident by his appeal to literary history, Scrivener places the date of the Peshitta as far back as the second century. So, the general belief of later ages in Scrivener's judgement is that "the Syrian Church was possessed of a translation, both of the Old and New Testament, which it used habitually, and for public worship exclusively, from the

second century... as early as AD 170".<sup>26</sup>

In the light of all that has been discussed the conclusion is that "literary history can hardly afford a more powerful case than has been established for the identity of the version of the Syriac now called the Peshitto with that used by the Eastern Church, long before the great schism had its beginning in the native land of the blessed Gospel".<sup>27</sup>

Having looked into the issue of pre-350 AD manuscript and versional support for the Byzantine text, we should now look into the issue of early Church Father witness to the 350 AD Byzantine readings. Carson's case concerning the "silence of the Fathers which he uses as another reason for affirming that the Byzantine text existed only after 350 AD is here set forth by Harry Sturz:

The second line of evidence advanced by W-H to argue that the Byzantine text is late and therefore dependent on the Alexandrian and the Western is patristic in nature: The silence of the Fathers. While there are quotations in the writings of the Fathers which are found supporting the Alexandrian text (especially Origen) and many of the early Fathers are found witnessing to the Western text, W-H maintained that no Church Father is to be found attesting the Byzantine text in quotations of scripture before the time of Chrysostom, i.e. till the latter part of the fourth century. Therefore, because the text was not used or quoted by the early Fathers, the conclusion drawn is that it must not have been in existence.<sup>28</sup>

In chapter VII of his book, The Byzantine Text-type and New Testament Textual Criticism, Harry Sturz remarked, "the silence of the Fathers is explainable and therefore is not a proof of lateness" when he wrote:

The papyri have now demonstrated 'that the readings which Hort calls 'Syrian' existed before the end of the fourth century'. Byzantine readings have now been proved to be in existence by the end of the second century. Since early papyri now support many 'Syrian' readings and thus demonstrate their early existence, the question naturally arises as to whether there may be a flaw in W-H's argument from Patristic evidence. If Byzantine readings are early, wherein lies the flaw or weakness in Hort's argument?

In regard to the argument based on the silence of the Fathers, it should be observed first that, contrary to the statements of W.H. and their followers, quotations from early Fathers have been found in support of Byzantine readings.<sup>29</sup>

In the light of so clear an evidence for Ante-Nicene Patristic attestation in favour of the Byzantine text, one would think the fact should be accepted by those who differ in their opinions. But instead, "when such citations from early Fathers have previously been submitted, they are generally disallowed as evidence for the early existence either of the Syrian text or the reading in question... In the light of this it was further argued that the only place that the quotation of an early Father may be considered dependable is where it disagrees with the Koine".<sup>30</sup>

Some of Harry Sturz's findings on authentic, non-assimilated, Ante-Nicene Patristic support for the Byzantine text are worth quoting here: "1) Luke 10:21, Clement. 2) Luke 12:5, Tertullian. 3) Luke 12:22, Clement. 4) Luke 12:31, Clement and Marcion. 5) John 2:24, Origen. In the Epistles, example of Patristic support may be found as follows: 8) Romans 10:14, Clement. 9) ICor 4:11, Clement and Origen. 10) ICor 5:10, Origen. 11) ICor 7:5, Origen".<sup>31</sup>

Furthermore, on close examination of Origen - a pre-Nicene Father, and Chrysostom - a post-Nicene Father in comparison with the Majority, Nestle-Aland and the UBS texts, the present writer observes that the best texts of pre-Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers often show quite remarkable variations. For instance, Origen, a pre-Nicene Father, sometimes agrees with an Alexandrian form and sometimes disagrees with it. Examples of these agreements and disagreements from the Gospel of Matthew can be found at appendix B.

On the other hand, one must be mindful of the idiosyncrasies of the Fathers, such as their loose quotations, their quotation of the same verse in many different forms and in many

different places; and their habit of sometimes quoting only a part of a verse for preaching and teaching. In any case, their support of the early existence of the Byzantine text still stands in the words of Harry Sturz who maintains that:

Obviously one should not argue for the early existence of the Antiochean text from the lack of scripture quotations in the Fathers. However, it is equally plain that its non-existence should not be argued from such silence either. Finally, it should be pointed out that the papyri - supported Byzantine readings together with Geographically - Western and Byzantine alignments actually amount to a more reliable testimony concerning the early existence of these readings than could possibly be rendered by quotations contained in late copies of works by early fathers. Such data point up the invalidity of W-H's argument from Patristic silence, and would appear to remove the main support for their theory.<sup>32</sup>

With this conclusion and previous discussion Carson's first thesis stands on shaky ground since all three points he raised have been examined and confuted by facts.

(2) Thesis two: "The argument that defends the Byzantine tradition by appealing to the fact that most extant manuscripts of the Greek New Testament attest to this Byzantine Text-type, is logically fallacious and historically naive".<sup>33</sup>

A brief resume of Carson's discussion under his second thesis lends itself to the following points: (a) In the first place, he believes the best of New Testament manuscripts were possibly removed or transferred to a certain secluded corner of the Mediterranean so as to keep them away from publishing centres while the worst of manuscripts maintained their influence in the publishing centres. (b) Secondly, in spite of the preservation of the Alexandrian text-type MSS by the Egyptian climate, one must not count MSS for ascertaining textual validity, but text-types, since a particular text-type may have thousands of genealogical MSS members but one or a few ancestors. Carson thinks this judgement may apply to a text-type with a small number of genealogical MSS support but looking back to only one or a few ancestors. (c) Thirdly, Carson states that it is "naive" to think of the Alexandrian Text-type from Egypt as the only kind of its own in

that such a text-type is found in MSS written well away from Egypt. Moreover, it is in the early Church Fathers, not all of whom lived in Egypt. (d) In his fourth point, he pointed out that in the same manner as supporters of the Byzantine text consider the preservation of Alexandrian MSS under the hot climate of Egypt an historical accident, the Byzantine text-type was also by historical accident confined to the Greek empire where by the Middle Ages, the Greek language was surviving and nowhere else; Greek Bishops legislated the text to be read as did the Latin Pope, Damasus, with the Vulgate. Therefore, Carson said the only MSS available to Erasmus for printing his Greek New Testament were Byzantine Greek manuscripts (e) Carson's fifth and final point carries a quotation from Gordon Fee stating that the Byzantine Text spread not only due to the influence of Chrysostom, a preacher and teacher, but also because copies of Byzantine MSS were kept in monasteries, schools and churches.

Generally speaking, the writer would like to point out that the issue concerning the attestation of "most extant manuscripts of the Greek New Testament"<sup>33</sup> to the Byzantine text was taken up, discussed and proved by Harry Sturz, whose book, The Byzantine Text-type and New Testament Textual Criticism was published in 1984, about five years after Carson had already published his book. Sturz's book, the epitome of present day unbiased textual research, makes a good case for the issue of extant manuscript support for the Byzantine text.

D.A. Carson raised five sub-points in his second thesis as we have already observed. These will be discussed in the order in which they occur:

(a) To begin with, his view that the best text of the New Testament was removed to a secluded area of the Mediterranean world is not subscribed to by most textual scholars owing to the fact that Alexandria, Caesarea, and Antioch were all publishing centres. As a matter of fact, Streeter's work in 1924 on local texts and ancient editions seems to knock out of balance Carson's view of his restricted best text, which takes Alexandria out of

consideration as being a publishing centre. Bruce Metzger presents the case of Streeter's local texts and their centres as follows:

Adopting an idea which Hug had first developed, Streeter emphasized the importance of isolating the forms of text which were current at the great centres of ancient Christianity. By means of evidence derived from quotations in the writings of the Church Fathers, he isolated and identified the characteristic forms of New Testament text which had developed at the principal sees of the ancient church. By about AD 200 these local texts had reached their maximum divergence, a divergence which is reflected in the earliest Syriac, Latin, and Coptic versions. It is probable that the oldest forms of these three versions were derived respectively from the Greek texts current in Antioch, Rome and Alexandria.<sup>34</sup>

It is worth re-examining the passage and noting the various points raised in this connection. He talks about the following: (1) Centres of Christianity and sees of the Church, (2) Local texts derived by help from quotations of Church Fathers, (3) By AD 200 the texts were already circulating in different places - Antioch, Rome, and Alexandria in Syriac, Latin and Coptic respectively. The evidence on hand does not talk of any seclusion of the Alexandrian text by any means, and Carson did not indicate when or how this seclusion of the Egyptian text took place.

(b) Carson's second and third points rest on his preference for counting text-types rather than individual MSS and his firm belief that the Alexandrian Text-type has MS support outside Egypt. The counting of Text-types is simply another reiteration of a certain part of W-H's theory on genealogy. On their part, W-H believe,

The importance of genealogy in Textual Criticism is at once shown by the considerations that no multiplication of copies, or of copies of copies, can give their joint testimony any higher authority than that of the single document from which they sprang, and that one early document may have left a single document, another a hundred or a thousand... no available presumptions whatever as to text can be obtained from number alone, that is, from number not as yet interpreted by descent.<sup>35</sup>

However convinced W-H were in regard to their theory, they still saw some uncertainty in it because "on the other hand the inequalities and occasional ambiguities in the evidence for the genealogical relations frequently leave room for more than one interpretation".<sup>36</sup>

Still further, taking into account Streeter's allusion to the movement of local text-types, used and recopied on the basis of their reliability, the attitude of Carson in favour of counting text-types will be just as valid as that of Majority manuscript attestation.

Apart from the foregoing, there is also the question of whether there is manuscript attestation for the Alexandrian text outside of Egypt. It seems it is an overstatement on the part of Carson to claim there is overwhelming support for the Alexandrian text outside Egypt. There are no major uncials in the Gospels (except for L, 8th century) which exhibit an Alexandrian text-type, and there are a mere handful of manuscripts, such as 33, 892, 1241 (but even L, 33, 892 and 1241 are not consistent supporters of X and B).

In the previous thesis the present writer dealt with the Fathers and the versions. To claim overwhelming support from the Fathers as Carson pointed out, because they reflect particular Greek Text-types, is a totally mistaken notion. The texts of the early Fathers reflect a mixed character, much like P<sup>45</sup> and P<sup>66</sup>.

(d) On his fourth point, Carson gives reasons for the proliferation of the Byzantine text. These arguments are open to question. For instance, his citation of Damasus as an example of a bishop who imposed the Vulgate, a Latin text<sup>37</sup> on the Church cannot explain the existence and growth of the Byzantine and other texts. History witnesses to the fact that Jerome's Vulgate was not welcomed by the Latin Church; the Old Latin texts survived well into the Middle Ages, not only on their own, but in perpetual corruptions of Jerome's Latin Vulgate. Therefore

Pope Damasus failed to impose a text. Concerning the peculiarity of the Old Latin, Kenyon - Adams say, "these textual and linguistic differences, as is to be expected, have divided scholars on the question of whether the Old Latin is to be regarded as a single version in a plurality of local and temporal forms, or as a plurality of versions which have come into existence on both sides of the Mediterranean".<sup>38</sup> So no bishop was likely to succeed in imposing a text.

On the freezing of texts, it is only logical to say that if they were ever frozen, they were frozen by the consensus of congregations, rather than by Bishops. To cite an example from the Church history of England, Anglican Bishops who tried to induce their congregations to change over from the K.J.V. to the R.V. after 1881 seem to have failed lamentably.

(e) Carson's fifth point under thesis two comprises three reasons which he said Gordon Fee gives for the dominant position of the Byzantine text:

The influence of Chrysostom - The influence of Chrysostom as a renowned preacher and teacher cannot be definitely denied. His works were translated into such languages as Syriac and Armenian. However, it is a mistaken notion to suppose that this remarkable influence made him the propagator of the Byzantine text per se because "more recent investigation has shown that Chrysostom's text is not identical with the latter" (Byzantine).<sup>39</sup> Although he often supported the Byzantine text, he on a number of occasions supported Alexandrian readings. For example, 'his text of Mark, or rather the text which can faintly be perceived through his quotations, is a mixed text, combining some of the elements of each of the types which had flourished before the end of the fourth century'.<sup>40</sup> In such a case, Chrysostom cannot have been the propagator of the Byzantine text.

Copies kept in monasteries, schools and churches - Taking for instance, one phenomenon in the history of the text, it cannot be denied that "MSS were copied and kept in monasteries,

schools, and churches".<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, Carson has overstated his argument against the Byzantine text in that MSS of the Alexandrian type may also have been kept in monasteries, churches and schools. A perfect example is the Codex Sinaiticus which was discovered by Tischendorf in the St. Catherine Monastery at Mt. Sinai.

While concluding thesis two, Carson remarks: "Moreover it would then be extremely difficult to argue at any point for a shorter text, because for the uninformed it would sound too much like removing words from God's revelation even if in fact the text-type had added words to God's revelation".<sup>42</sup> These remarks, undoubtedly, are geared towards making a case for the shorter text, a common practice among some eclectic textual critics. Carson's case for the emergence of the shorter or the longer text is lop-sided. He does not seem to take into account the fact that changes on the part of scribes whether intentional or unintentional, can bring about a shorter or longer reading. J. Harold Greenlee gives the following explanation on the shorter and longer reading:

If a scribe makes an intentional change in the N.T. text he is more likely to add than to omit. He may add a note of explanation, add a phrase from a parallel account (harmonization), or he may combine two or more readings (conflation). On the other hand, an unintentional change may either add, by conflation, harmonization, or repetition (dittography); or may omit, by failing to repeat letters which occur twice (haplography), or by accidentally passing from a word or syllable to the same or similar - appearing letters farther on (homoiteuton).<sup>43</sup>

So, from Greenlee's explanation one could conclude that Carson has not only given a distorted presentation of the shorter text over against the longer text by not taking into account the possibility of omissions such as haplography and homoiteuton, but also because he has failed to mention that on many occasions as may be seen in the UBS<sup>3</sup> Greek Text, the textual committee of the UBS follows the witness of the longer readings. Moreover, C. Clark in the Descent of Manuscripts, an investigation of the manuscript tradition of the Greek and

Latin classics, proves convincingly that the error most commonly known among scribes is accidental omission, not interpolation and Colwell has amply proved that Egyptian scribes tended to abbreviate rather than expand.<sup>45</sup>

In his eighth chapter "the 'conflate' or longer readings are not a proof of lateness", Harry Sturz gives a number of reasons followed by examples to dispel the myth of the inferiority of longer readings to shorter readings:

(a) That some Byzantine so-called conflate and longer readings have been proved to be early:- Jn. 10:19-  $\sigma\chi\lambda\omicron\mu\alpha\ \omicron\upsilon\nu$  (D, 1241, r<sup>1</sup>, Sy<sup>s</sup>) - Western reading;  $\sigma\chi\lambda\omicron\mu\alpha\ \pi\alpha\lambda\iota\nu$  (X B L W X 33 WH) Alexandrian;  $\sigma\chi\lambda\omicron\mu\alpha\ \omicron\upsilon\nu\ \pi\alpha\lambda\iota\nu$  (A T Δ Θ Λ Π Ψ ρ) - Byzantine. Note: P<sup>45</sup> and P<sup>75</sup> support the Alexandrian reading whereas P<sup>66</sup>, the earliest of them support the Byzantine.

(b) That conflation is not confined to the Byzantine text alone:- Jn. 5:15 -  $\alpha\nu\eta\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\nu$  (P<sup>66</sup> P<sup>75</sup> B ρ K) - Byzantine;  $\alpha\pi\eta\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\nu$  (D K U Δ α ρ) - Western;  $\epsilon\iota\pi\epsilon\nu$  (X C L ρ ε β ο W-H) - Alexandrian.  $\alpha\nu\eta\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\nu$  και  $\epsilon\iota\pi\epsilon\nu$  αυτους (W) - Alexandrian.

(c) Conflations are also found in B and the Beta text-type:- Mk. 1:28  $\epsilon\upsilon\theta\upsilon\varsigma$  (A D E F G H K M S T Δ Π Φ ρ.);  $\pi\alpha\nu\tau\alpha\chi\omicron\upsilon$  (W 579 622 θεο' αεκ);  $\epsilon\upsilon\theta\upsilon\varsigma$   $\pi\alpha\nu\tau\alpha\chi\omicron\upsilon$  (X<sup>c</sup> B C L f<sup>13</sup>, etc.); omit (X\* @ f' 28 33 249 474 517 700, etc.).

Finally on this thesis, Carson misrepresents the arguments of Hodges concerning the Majority Text as based purely on numerical superiority. It cannot be denied that Hodges considers the majority support of MSS as nearer to the autographs than the T.R., the Alexandrian text-type or any other kind of text. But on the other hand, the common belief among protagonists of the Byzantine text is that each individual Ms is characteristically different from the others and thus contributes significantly towards the rediscovery of the N.T. text as Burgon

observed a hundred years ago. None seems to be closely related to another genealogically; they are as Lake put it, "orphan children".

A most remarkable thing, the large number of MS witnesses generate a unified and dynamic text with ancestors stretching as far back to remote antiquity, as far as the second century as has already been proved by Sturz.

(3) Thesis three: "The Byzantine Text-type is demonstrably a secondary text".

Whenever proponents of W-H and the Eclectic method seek to subject the Byzantine text to a position of disrepute, they resort to the tripartite platform for its secondary nature; Secondary because of conflate readings; secondary because of internal evidence; secondary because of the silence of the fathers.<sup>47</sup>

Carson believes the Byzantine text is secondary on the basis of sporadic conflation or harmonization precipitated by scribes, particularly in the Gospels. He is of the opinion that as textual critics pore over MSS they recognize this tendency of harmonization. Gordon Fee is one example he cites, whose study of a portion of the Byzantine text reveals thirty-eight major harmonizations against one in the Alexandrian text.

This is the second time the issue of harmonization or conflation has been mentioned by Carson, but in a different form. Wilbur N. Pickering thinks "by the choice of this terminology it is assumed that the diverse readings found in the minority of MSS are original and that copyists felt impelled to make parallel accounts agree". Concerning the same word Harry Sturz writes, "in the first place it is argued that the Syrian text must be late in its origin and edited in its nature because evidence seems to indicate that it was made from the other two types (i.e. the Alexandrian and the Western). The supposed proof for this lies in what W-H called 'conflate' readings".<sup>49</sup>

W-H, the originators of their theory, speak for themselves:

The priority of two at least of the three texts just noticed to the Syrian text is further brought to light by the existence of a certain number of distinctively Syrian readings which prove on close examination to be a combination of the Western and of neutral readings.<sup>50</sup>

However, the validity of such a theory has every now and then been challenged and put to the test. Those who care to question ideologies suggest "perhaps it is time to ask whether it ever has been or can be proved that such an interpretation is correct".<sup>51</sup>

Van Bruggen believes the theory of harmonization has not at any time been validated and that it will never be validated. Some of the views or so-called proofs are done under the control of the whims and caprices of the one conducting the research. The whole process is often characteristic of sampling from other text-types where similar conflation is apparent.<sup>52</sup>

On his part, Kilpatrick admits the Byzantine text has its own characteristic harmonization but other complete texts do have theirs also. Therefore, we must not only single out the Byzantine as the culprit of conflation, but the others also.<sup>53</sup> Van Bruggen even thinks it is not sufficient to give illustrations of harmonization on the part of the Byzantine since one could use any examples that suit one's own taste. With this view in mind, Van Bruggen makes two suggestions - The first suggestion is that according to method we must first ask how a text is formed or determined. Such a determination of the text, he advised, must not be based on selected readings because it will soon be found out that one does his selection in accordance to what he is trying to prove. Secondly, he thinks methodwise, it is difficult to determine what is harmonized or assimilated in a text without first knowing the original.<sup>54</sup>

Further disproving Hort's view of harmonization, P. Walters adds that Hort's judgement of what is right and suitable centres around his "neutral" text. He put his standard and model in this "neutral" text and made it what he wanted it to be.<sup>55</sup>

By way of reiteration in the light of what has been said already concerning the primary nature of the Byzantine text in the face of papyri discovery, Sturz remarks:

But when the Chester Beatty papyri appeared, such agreements became too much for the theory to hold. The brilliant scholar Burkitt was frankly puzzled about it. Though he did not wish to favour the Byzantine text in any degree, in his article 'the Chester Beatty Papyri' while commenting on various features and allignments of the papyrus, he remarked on two instances where P<sup>45</sup> agrees with the Byzantine reading. One of these is Mark 7:31 and the other is Luke 10:41, 42. After listing the evidence for Mark 7:31, he says in part: 'I have no particular affection for S (the Received or Byzantine Text), but I cannot believe it is here the actual villain of the piece.'<sup>56</sup>

From the above citation, and many others, it appears unjustified to promote the secondary nature of the Byzantine text-type. In one of his books, Text of the Epistles, Zuntz traces the rejection by critics of the Byzantine text-type as primary to Griesbach, and considers such rejection erroneous.<sup>57</sup> As the discussion has revealed, it is not all textual critics who pore over MSS who find frequent and unambiguous evidence for Byzantine conflation as Carson hastily concludes.

(4) Thesis Four: "The Alexandrian Text-type has better Credentials than any other Text-type now available"

This thesis starts off with an emphasis on better manuscript support for the Alexandrian Text.- than any other known text-type. An instance quoted is P<sup>75</sup>, a second century MSS having a text close to Codex Vaticanus, a fact which sends the date of the Alexandrian text back to the second century. Moreover, he thinks the Alexandrian text is not recessional.

Therefore, it is close to the original text, the best so far that is perfectly preserved in Codex B(Vaticanus). He admits the Alexandrian text is not always to be preferred but the textual critic must take into account external evidence of other MSS and weigh them against internal evidence. This and other reasons make today's textual critics go for the eclectic text.<sup>58</sup>

It must be indicated that a lot of what Carson says in this thesis is a repetition of what he had said before in his preceding thesis and to which the present writer has already addressed himself. In any case, the issues restated will be discussed in an attempt to correct Carson's argument once more that the case concerning the Alexandrian type and its rival groups needs careful and balanced investigation lest the textual critic should become too biased for the Egyptian text.

The question of demarcating text types so as to make some better than the others should not be pushed too far, seeing that the so-called text-types may well represent mixed or "wild" texts. In other words, there is seemingly what is called cross-fertilization among the MSS. For example, Codex B and its supposed allies disagree constantly amongst themselves. Very many these disagreements go undisclosed in a very limited critical apparatus like that of the UBSGNT, and Nestle-Aland likewise has to omit a large number because the critical apparatus would then fill more than half the page. P<sup>75</sup> is the only major papyrus which supports codex B, and even there the support is not complete. There are numerous instances in St. Luke and St. John where P<sup>75</sup> disagrees with B on major variants. P<sup>45</sup> and P<sup>66</sup> are mixed texts that disagree with B.

At this juncture, it is worth observing what one learned scholar, Herman C. Hoskier has to say on the nature of the Alexandrian tradition. Hoskier's work "Codex Vaticanus and Its Allies" is quoted in David Otis Fuller's edited work, Which Bible?. In defence of Carson's claim for the superiority of the Alexandrian text and its non-recessional nature, Hoskier

presents a thesis which he seeks to defend:

My thesis is then that it was B (Vaticanus) and Aleph (Sinaiticus) and their forerunners with Origen who revised the 'Antioch' text. And that, although there is no older base than either of these groups, the 'Antioch' text is purer in many respects, if not 'better', and is nearer the original base than much of that in vogue in Egypt.<sup>59</sup>

Even though Hoskier may be presenting a good case, he bases his case on detailed evidence in claiming so much for the Byzantine text. In any case, it is worth seeing how he defends his thesis:

In the first place, Hoskier sees some inconsistency in the witness of X and B. He observes that "the old Syriac sometimes supports the true text of the Aleph and B family, where Aleph singly or B singly deserts the family to side with a later variation; is it not therefore possible, and indeed likely, that in some instances Aleph and B may both have deserted the reading which they ought to have followed, and that they and not the old Syriac are inconsistent?"<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, he notes Aleph and B differ in about 3000 places in the Gospels and that on occasion B is guilty of presenting an ungrammatical reading.<sup>61</sup>

In another development of his thesis, Hoskier takes into account one of many methods used by Hort for arriving at what he calls the "most trustworthy" manuscripts. In his estimation, "naturally Hort regards those manuscripts as most trustworthy which give the readings recognized by Origen; and those no doubt were the readings which in the Third Century were most preferred at Alexandria. Thus Hort's method inevitably led to the exclusive adoption of the Alexandrian text".<sup>62</sup>

To press the corrupt nature of X and B and their allies further, Hoskier discusses the position of Burgon in textual critical work when he affirms, "Burgon's position remains

absolutely unshaken. He did not contend for acceptance of the 'Textus Receptus', as has so often been seriously stated. He maintained that Aleph and B had been tampered with and revised and proved it in his causes of the corruption of the traditional text.<sup>63</sup> On the same question of the corrupt nature of the Alexandrian text, Hoskier adds:

Nearly all revision appears to centre in Egypt, and to suppose all the other documents wrong when opposed to those Egyptian documents is unsound and unscientific; for we must pre-suppose not only 'Syrian' revision but a most foolish revision which did away with these 'improvements' of the Egyptians and Alexandrians, or which destroyed the 'neutral' text without rhyme or reason.<sup>64</sup>

Hoskier is not the only one with this belief. Harry Sturz says "W-H, therefore, were mistaken in regard to their insistence that all the pre-Syrian evidence for readings was to be found in the Alexandrian, Neutral, and Western texts, i.e. that these three text-types and their chief witnesses preserved the complete second-century picture of the textual tradition on which the Syrian editor(s) built".<sup>65</sup> By this statement, Sturz is denying the exclusive purity of the Alexandrian text. By quoting Colwell, Sturz goes further to explain how the editing of the Alexandrian text was done from the Byzantine when he says,

E.C. Colwell had made the important observation that in some instances one could see the process of editing going on in Egypt in the corrections of P<sup>66</sup>. In some cases the correction was made from an Apha type (Byzantine) to a Beta (Alexandrian) type. For examples of these found in list 1 notice Jn. 7:39, where P<sup>66</sup> corrects from the Byzantine to the Alexandrian text-type, also Jn. 7:40 and 8:54, where P<sup>66</sup> again corrects from the Byzantine to the combination of Alexandrian and Western type, and in John 12:9, where P<sup>66</sup> corrects from the Koine either to a single reading or to one which is very lightly attested.<sup>66</sup>

It could be said then that the most likely candidate for scholarly revision is the Alexandrian text-type, emanating from Alexandria where there was a long tradition of critical scholarship on Greek classical texts such as Homer. Bruce Metzger himself speaks of Alexandrian pruning.<sup>67</sup>

In conclusion, available evidence such as the one that has already been discussed makes Carson's argument peripheral. Those who regard the Alexandrian Text as the best will make use of the Eclectic method as the best solution since this method involves the arbitrary picking and choosing of readings from the same family led by B for the construction of the N.T. text when there is so much disagreement among those family members. It is still true that codex B dominates the so-called eclectic texts.

(5) Thesis Five "The argument to the effect that what the Majority of believers in the history of the Church have believed is true, is ambiguous at best and theologically dangerous at worst; and as applied to textual criticism, the argument proves nothing very helpful anyway".

Certainly, Carson is trying to refute the notion that "what the majority of believers in the history of the Church have believed is true".<sup>68</sup> For that matter, his difficulty lies in defining "believers" and "Church" since in the Latin Church in the Middle Ages it was hard to define Evangelical believers as we understand them today. So, in Carson's estimation, those believers, whoever they were, did not know anything whatsoever about textual criticism but accepted what they read or what was read to them. For instance, the prominence of the Latin Vulgate in 1450 would have represented it as God's word or text to the people, not the Byzantine or any other Greek Text.<sup>69</sup>

In response to Carson, the writer wonders whether it is not worth saying that the dominance of the Textus Receptus in the early history of the Church and its position as the bulwark of the KJV and certain vernacular translations in the Third World is not a known fact already. Of course it is a known fact as may be testified by the following scholars:

(a) Frederick Kenyon - "For two hundred and fifty years, and to a great extent even today, this Greek text and this English Bible remained in possession of the field, and few people realized that they were not wholly satisfactory".<sup>70</sup>

(b) Bruce Metzger - "Having secured an undeserved pre-eminence, what came to be called the Textus Receptus of the New Testament resisted for 400 years all scholarly efforts to dispel it in favour of an earlier and more accurate text".<sup>71</sup>

(c) F.G. Kenyon & A.W. Adams - "In this uncritical form, therefore, the Greek New Testament was given to the world and its influence endures to the present day".<sup>72</sup>

(d) J. Harold Greenlee - "Thus the standardized but inferior text which supplanted the ancient local texts, and whose general form became the manuscript text for eight centuries, became likewise the accepted form of the printed text - its precise printed form the result of mere chance".<sup>73</sup>

The writer could go on quoting other scholars who recognize the dominance of the T.R. for centuries up to our present epoch. But as is usual with critics of the Byzantine and T.R. texts, even though the fact of the dominance of the T.R. is well attested, attestations of the same text is often accompanied by remarks such as, chance, propaganda and illiteracy. On the other hand, those who use versions based on the T.R. and the Majority Text tradition simply say that what they have is the best, not only because the Majority read it or because they are told, but because they have experienced what they believe is theologically true. It is this postulation of the users of the T.R., the Majority Text or the K.J.V. that Carson is in disagreement with.

Therefore, in trying to disprove the issue of "what the Majority of believers in the history of the early Church have believed is true",<sup>74</sup> Carson raised the question of ambiguity of the words "Believers" and "Church", and the ignorance of these believers in matters of textual criticism.

As regards the term "believers" the definition is not far fetched. A believer in the Christian sense of the word is simply somebody who has put faith in Jesus Christ and who

has accepted Him as his Saviour and Lord regardless of what local Church or denomination that person may belong to. From such a definition, can we actually say that of all professing Christians in the Dark and Middle Ages, the Waldensians are the only ones who could be called Christians? Ofcourse not.

Furthermore, let us consider the word "True". Carson says "... What the majority of believers consider true is ambiguous".<sup>75</sup> As it may seem, Carson is making a philosophical statement in regard to the word "True". What may be true to him theologically, may not be true to others since their definition of what is "true" is in keeping with their own experience. In the case of the T.R. and the K.J.V., those who maintain that both of these have true validity, might have made their affirmation on their historical experience of the text. In such a case, should such a stance be regarded as "ambiguous at best and theologically dangerous at worst?"<sup>76</sup>

On the part of the illiteracy rate of believers in the Middle Ages in things in general and textual criticism in particular, it is worth pointing out in support of Carson's position here that in the Middle Ages anywhere in Europe or the Eastern Churches, the level of literacy amongst the common people was very low, far lower in fact than in many parts of Africa today. Literacy was confined to monks and priests, but in the Christian Universities after the Dark Ages, learning flourished. The Venerable Bede commented copiously on the scriptures, he and others like King Alfred translated parts of the scriptures into English.

On the other hand, Carson is mistaken to suppose that believers in all parts of Europe in the Middle Ages were illiterate and therefore, did not make any judgement as to what to believe or not to believe. Bearing in mind that of course the common people did not understand the mass when it was conducted in Latin, yet it is worth pointing out that in the Greek, Syriac, Armenian, Georgian, Ethiopic, Gothic and Coptic Churches, the congregations did understand what was read to them during the

Middle Ages (although Arabic was steadily displacing Syriac and Coptic as living languages in the latter part of the Middle Ages). In our time, as it is worth indicating, a great many people do not understand textual criticism but they accept what their church leaders tell them about the integrity of versions and which ones are of better help.

In closing, it should be mentioned that since the emergence of the Textus Receptus up to the present time, it is evangelicals who disagree with the theory and praxis of modern textual criticism, and who also understand why they regard the Byzantine text as better, who have a Christian duty to warn believers about what is going on.

(6) Thesis six "The argument that defends the Byzantine text by appealing to the providence of God is logically and theologically fallacious"

Carson's discussion under thesis six centres mainly on the subject of providence which he thinks may have a multi-faceted interpretation. Casting suspicion on any argument which rests wholly and solely on providence, he hastens to point out that the God who preserved the Byzantine text for almost 1000 years, also preserved the Western, Caesarean and Alexandrian texts. During this period of one thousand year reign of the Byzantine text in one secluded area of the world, he maintained, the non-Byzantine texts were unknown, and moreover, the Latin Vulgate, based on the Western text, thrived unhindered. Continuing, Carson believes that great men whom God made use of in the first three centuries relied heavily on the non-Byzantine texts, as is the case with many present-day scholars, such as Warfield and Packer. He concluded by saying that the world population is rapidly increasing and that sooner or later a great many people will be using versions, such as the Good News For Modern Man, based on non-Byzantine texts. In the same conclusion, Carson asks whether this was against the providence of God and challenged supporters of the Byzantine text to justify this development in order to continue their argument for the transmission of the Byzantine text-type.

Before fully dealing with the case of providence as presented in this thesis, certain misconceptions which Carson has taken as facts must be corrected: The first of such misunderstanding has to do with his unquestioned belief in the existence of the Caesarean text. The idea of a Caesarean text-type is of course a matter of mere reflection in Streeter's mind. "It was expected that Streeter's hypothesis would be subjected to careful and continuing scrutiny and it has to be admitted that in the opinion of many scholars the claims originally made for it require modification".<sup>77</sup>

For Lake, the Caesarean text is simply another term for variants that exist in groups of manuscripts such as  $\text{\textcircled{M}}$ , 565, 700, Families 1, 13, 28, the Georgian Version, etc.<sup>78</sup> "On the other hand, Lake's further observation, that the text was too hastily called 'Caesarean' because of its close relation with the text of Origen and Eusebius, is more serious".<sup>79</sup> In order to maintain a balanced view concerning the Caesarean text, Kenyon -Adams offer the following advice:

In either case the Caesarean tradition is not a text in its own rights, and cannot commend the authority of an independent text-form such as Streeter claimed for it. The Caesarean text, which is the latest addition to our textual apparatus, requires more study before its character and extent can be regarded as fully determined.<sup>80</sup>

The second point of correction concerns the Latin Vulgate which Carson considers entirely Western. Actually, the Latin Vulgate does not exhibit a predominantly Western text. Apart from the European kind of Latin MSS Jerome was alleged to have used, the Greek MSS he consulted clearly "belonged to the Alexandrian type of text",<sup>81</sup> such as  $\text{\texttimes}$  and B. Kenyon-Adams go further to indicate that "In Jerome's hands, then, the Old Latin Version, already considerably modified from its African form in the direction of the Greek MSS, took on a distinctively Alexandrian colour".<sup>82</sup> From these instances of evidence, it is certain Carson pushed his impressions concerning the Latin Vulgate and the Caesarean text-type too far.

Apart from the foregoing issues, Carson raised two major points: (a) That modern Evangelical scholars accept the modern text which are based on the Alexandrian MSS. This point is partly true because there are a number of Evangelical scholars whom one can readily recall to mind as those who support the critical texts. However, policies set out by authorities of the critical texts are a promoting factor for such texts. A clear example is the policy of the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship as promulgated in their Bible dictionaries which makes it a must to accept the critical texts.

Furthermore, among the list of men cited as representatives of high calibre users of the critical text, such as Parker and Warfield, there is hardly one except Fee that can be described as a textual critic, any more than Fuller, Terence Brown and others, who support the T.R. can be described as textual critics.

As may be seen, the present trend of textual criticism does not seem to favour the Eclectic method as the best method, and its texts as the best texts. Concerning the UBS method and its texts, J.M. Ross says, "a number of reviews of the original edition were published in 1966 and 1967. Some of these acclaimed it as an improvement on all previous editions, others noted various weaknesses".<sup>83</sup> Moreover, Eldon Jay Epp's evaluation of the Eclectic method suggests it is unsatisfactory. He writes:

One result is that the eclectic is seen most clearly as symptomatic of this severe and crucial problem. Yet, eclecticism is not more than this, for it is unable to find a conclusive way to overcome the 'crisis of criteria'; indeed, the very name 'eclectic' (if as seems likely - it refers to the choice of appropriate criteria from among many) discloses the fact that the method does not have the solution.<sup>84</sup>

In spite of the current balanced judgement of certain textual critics (Ross and Epp are not conservative evangelicals) as we have just seen, in regards to methodology and text, a good number of Evangelical scholars think it is unscholarly to reject

or make a critique on the critical text but there are others such as Sturz and Hodges who are against this view. (b) Carson's second point focusses on the subject of preservation. He seems to indicate that a great many supporters of the Majority Text press the case for the preservation of scripture too strongly to the exclusion of other text-types, and make this a basis for claiming a position for the primacy of the Majority text. This allegation may not be true of all the Byzantine text supporters with the exception of Burgon, Hills and a few others.<sup>85</sup> In any case, preservation of scripture must not be made light of any more than it should be blown out of proportion. The reason is that the text God preserves brings Glory to Him, no matter the circumstances and the frailty of the people whom He uses. God preserved the Byzantine text and He preserved other texts as well, but it is a historical fact that all the early printed texts were Byzantine.

In conclusion, the growing multiplicity of modern English versions and vernacular translations based on the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament Text, and based especially on Dynamic Equivalence, is not a hidden phenomenon. The point to underscore here is that this is not to mean those versions are better than others, such as the K.J.V. and the N.K.J.V. Furthermore, those supporters of the Majority Text who understand God's preserving activity as an unbiased venture, see the proliferation of versions as having God's guidance to some extent. God may use a version to bring people to Himself, no matter how inadequate such a version may be. But is this God's best?

Thesis Seven "The argument that appeals to fourth-century writing practices to deny the possibility that the Byzantine text is a conflation, is fallacious"

The argument of this thesis is purposely directed against Hills, author of the King James Version Defended whom Carson referred to as saying that "The Byzantine text could not be a fourth century compilation from other texts because editors of that period did not have desks to write on"<sup>86</sup>. What is not clear in Carson's discussion is whether he regards Edward F.

Hill's opinions as representing the convictions of every supporter of the Majority text. If this is the case, then the situation is quite unfortunate. Michael Holmes, who is on the staff at Bethel College, Minnesota, in the U.S.A. sees the top proponents of the Majority text as belonging to two camps, even though his postulation is open to challenge. He says, "while the basic position of the Majority text advocates is similar, the arguments brought to bear in support of that position vary considerably, and it is necessary to distinguish two groups. There are elements of continuity between them, but the differences are significantly great so as to require separate treatment".<sup>87</sup> The first group according to Holmes embraces Terence, Brown, David Otis Fuller, J.J. Ray and E.F. Hills. Zane Hodges, Wilbur Pickering and Jacob Van Bruggen belong to the second group.<sup>88</sup> One thing is worth noting; whenever Hills speaks, he is not necessarily speaking for every supporter of the Majority text.

While Hills insists on the opinion that the long debated conflation of the Byzantine or Majority text could not have happened since there were no desks for scribal use at the time, Carson is of the opinion that some must have stood in order to do their writing and that Tatian, who wrote his four Gospel harmony or Diatessaron, must have had some manuscripts around him to make the work he undertook possible. Furthermore, he thinks the Byzantine text underwent a long, gradual process of recension. A resume of Carson's argument under thesis seven presents us with a two-fold issue: (1) Writing desks (2) Conflation.

(1) To begin with, the absence and presence of writing desks in the fourth century as a platform for promoting and confuting a recension of the Byzantine text is not much of a case to debate about. The reason is that no one is able to give satisfactory evidence for the use and non-use of writing desks in as much the same way the case for conflation has never been validated.

A very revealing article concerning scribal use of desks

is that of Bruce M. Metzger which appeared in the book, Historical and Literary Studies, 1968, entitled "When did scribes begin to use writing desks?" In that presentation, Metzger underscores that scribes began using writing desks during the eighth and ninth centuries. Moreover, he indicated that the normal position suitable to a scribe for writing is the sitting position.<sup>89</sup>

In his book, A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament, fourth edition, F.H. Scrivener's list of writing materials include "stone, wood, tablets covered with wax, the bark of trees, the dressed skins of animals, the reed papyrus, paper made of cotton or linen".<sup>90</sup> These materials "are the chief materials on which writing has been impressed at different periods and stages of civilization".<sup>91</sup> As far as this list is concerned, no mention is made of a writing desk, and Metzger's conclusions do not support Carson's notion of the existence of writing desks in the fourth century either.

Still further, Carson's reference to Tatian and his Diatessaron is meant to indicate that since the Diatessaron is characteristic of a mixed text, therefore, Tatian had MSS around him and that he must have made use of a desk for doing his work. In the light of such an argument, the question should be asked: Does the presence of a mixed text in a manuscript suggest a desk was used for copying that manuscript? Lake takes up the issue and affirms that codex B and 579 point to other Gospel harmonies circulating in about the same time as Tatian's Diatessaron. Apart from the other Gospel harmonies, "Tatian's Greek Diatessaron, translated by himself into Syriac about the year 170, is the only form of the Gospels which had wide vogue in the Assyrian Church at this period"<sup>92</sup> and "finds its relations in West European texts"<sup>93</sup>

The heart of the argument is: Tatian's work is second-century and that there are early second and third century papyri of a mixed character of text like Tatian's such as P<sup>45</sup> and P<sup>66</sup>. Taking Metzger's evidence for the absence of writing desks before the eighth and ninth centuries, there is a possibility that Tatian must have stood while doing his textual work, and

probably, he must have solicited the help of other scribes in a scriptorium. In conclusion, the writer should like to add as he has already indicated, that according to evidence, it is still uncertain whether desks existed before the 8th and 9th century or not. So, Hills may well be right.

(2) The second major point raised by Carson is the long debated Byzantine conflation. In their methodology of presentation, W-H and Carson differ but agree in aim and result. That is to say, whereas Carson maintains "it may well be a conflation that developed in several stages",<sup>94</sup> W-H suggest that "in fact the Syrian text has all the marks of having been carefully constructed out of materials which are accessible to us on other authority, and apparently out of these alone... all the readings which have an exclusively Syrian attestation can be easily accounted for as parts of an editorial revision; and none of them have the stamp of genuineness to attest the use of extraneous and purer sources".<sup>95</sup> W-H's recension theory is instantaneous whereas Carson's is gradual but the results arrived at by both of these theories is that the Byzantine text is secondary. But this position must be questioned.

The various names of personalities who allegedly spear-headed the so-called Byzantine recension differ from one scholar to the other. In Wilbur Pickering's estimation, "Hort tentatively suggested Lucian (who died in 311) as perhaps the leader in the movement and some scholars subsequently became dogmatic on the subject... F.C. Burkitt went further than Hort and specified Rabbula, Bishop of Edessa from AD 411-435, as the author of the revision".<sup>96</sup> Rabbula is perhaps wrongly regarded as the reviser of the Peshitta.

In any case, whether the recension of the Byzantine text was gradual or otherwise, present day textual research suggests that the theory is nothing more than a mythical postulation. The following words of Metzger suggest some uncertainty on the matter of the Byzantine recension and Lucian's connection with it:

By way of summarizing ancient testimonies concerning Lucian's textual work, we find that his contemporaries generally regarded him as an able scholar, entirely competent to undertake such a recension. As a native Syrian he could, of course, have consulted the Syriac version; he also appears to have had some acquaintance with Hebrew... But we are told nothing as to the amount of revision which he undertook in either Old or New Testament text, the nature of the manuscripts which he consulted, the relation of his work to the Hexapla, and other similar matters.<sup>97</sup>

In his previous discussion on the Syriac Peshitta, and pre-Nicene textual witness to the Byzantine text in the light of present day discovery of MSS of the second century, the present writer considers such a discussion and its conclusion on sound evidence has nullified the so-called recension argument. The verdict for the "Syrian or Byzantine recension" theory is given in the Divine Original of the Trinitarian Bible Society in the following words:

Although entirely lacking in historical evidence, the Syrian Recension theory was particularly attractive because it appeared to give the process of recasting the Greek Text in the mould of the Vatican/Sinai MSS. Three documents belong to a small group exhibiting the kind of Greek text familiar to and generally approved by Origen, whose pronounced Arian tendencies sufficiently explain his preference for MSS of this character. In many passages relating to the person of Christ this type of text dilutes the testimony of the Holy Scriptures to our Lord's deity.<sup>98</sup>

The Trinitarian Bible Society is not alone in affirming that the theory of Byzantine Recension is mistaken and biased. Based on evidence ascertained from his study of early papyri, Sturz concludes: "In view of the above, it is concluded that the papyri supply valid evidence that distinctively Byzantine readings were not created in the fourth century but were already in existence before the end of the second century and that, because of this, Byzantine readings merit serious consideration".<sup>99</sup> In view of the foregoing, Carson's recension theory is without proof.

Thesis Eight: "Textual arguments that depend on adopting the T.R. and comparing other text-types with it are guilty, methodologically speaking, of begging the issue; and in any case they present less than the whole truth":

Undoubtedly, Carson starts his discussion on the adoption of the T.R. as a comparative base for other text-types by referring to Jasper James Ray's booklet among others which cite the K.J.V. and then proceeds to show how omissions and changes in other versions differ from it. Carson stressed that the same method can be used against the T.R. and the K.J.V. by employing as a comparative base, another version over against the K.J.V. Furthermore, he makes two observations: (1) That the K.J.V. is sometimes guilty of omitting words that are present in other versions (2) That in a few places such as I Jn. 5:7-8, the T.R. adds words that are not in any way included in the Byzantine text. In closing, he warns that it is wrong to make the T.R. or K.J.V. the comparative base of differences between the K.J.V. and other present day versions.

Carson is right in pointing out that there is a danger in slanting arguments for the sake of it, such as the one surrounding the Comma Johanneum. On many occasions, some defenders of the K.J.V. who know no Greek or Hebrew do quote as 'difference in text' words or phrases which in fact merely represent a differing rendering of the same Greek or Hebrew words in the underlying text. In this way, the New K.J.V. has been taken to task for omitting or altering the sacred text, when the New K.J.V. is in fact following an identical text but with a different translation. On the other hand, it is quite unfortunate to note that Carson has only one instance mentioned where the T.R. differs from the entire Byzantine Tradition.

Coming back to the issue of employing the T.R. as a comparative base for other versions whether Greek or otherwise, the present writer would like to point out that this has been the practice even before the time of W-H when scholars decided to part company with the Textus Receptus. Jack Finegan, while tracing the "development of a critical approach", also explains

the method used when he says, "for sometime the work that was done consisted largely in simply bringing together the variant readings found in the various manuscripts. Ordinarily the Textus Receptus was still printed as if it were the standard text, and the variants were shown in comparison with it, a method that is still, in fact, a useful method in collation".<sup>100</sup> Another person who testifies for the use of the T.R. as a collating base as far back as the 16th century is Bruce Metzger. Even though he exaggerates about the T.R., an argument that has been disproved in chapters two and three, and in the early part of chapter four, yet still his testimony for the collating base is worth listening to. He says "but almost all of the editors of the New Testament during this period were content to reprint the time-honoured but corrupt Textus Receptus, relegating the evidence for the earlier readings to the apparatus".<sup>101</sup>

The question to ask now is, whom is Carson complaining against? Is the complaint against the supporters of the Byzantine text or those of the Eclectic tradition who also use the T.R. as a collating base? Those Textual Critics who came after the time of Erasmus made use of the T.R. as a collating base simply because they did not have any other base with which to start. But it does seem once they started making use of the T.R. it became impossible to get away from it, instead, they bequeathed the method to the present generation of textual critics. Interestingly, the T.R. is still the collating base for the current International Greek New Testament Project.

Thesis Nine: "The charge that the non-Byzantine text-types are theologically aberrant is fallacious":

The focus of thesis nine is on theological aberrancy of the non-Byzantine text, an allegation which in the opinion of Carson, is promoted by proponents of the Byzantine text.

Carson agrees that "none of the text-types distinguished by contemporary textual criticism is theologically heretical in the way that defenders of the K.J.V. sometimes suggest".<sup>102</sup>

Then, on the question of errors in the transcription of manuscripts, he suggests that most of these are unintentional and that where errors are intentional, they result from a desire to improve grammatical construction and the train of thought. Furthermore, he maintains it is not heretical when an individual title or phrase is omitted. The reason for such an omission must be ascertained and that many a time the omission may be found out to be accidental as is the case with Luke 14:27. Continuing, he stressed that a great many changes or omissions are lacking in theological significance. The reason given is, whenever a particular doctrine is involved, there are always other passages to testify to this doctrine. In order to prove his point, Carson reproduces a list of 8 selected verses compiled by Victor Perry, in which the N.I.V. refers to Jesus as God seven times, and the King James four times. His conclusion was that Bible doctrines are not just based on one verse. Still further, he thinks all textual traditions, such as the Greek texts, besides the form of the modern translations, are orthodox. He believes that even the omission of Mark 16:9-20 can be defended on the basis of the argument in thesis nine.

The issue in question is one of great significance. It is not without the writer's observation that the case for theological aberrancy of the non-Byzantine text-types has had wide promotion in recent years in pamphlets, booklets and books.

In slightly the same way Carson claims "all the textual traditions are orthodox",<sup>103</sup> W-H too deny any semblance of corruption of the N.T. text when they write, "nor must it be forgotten how strong an assurance of incorruptness in the varying parts of the text of the New Testament is supplied indirectly by many of the variations which do exist, in as much as they carry us back by the convergence of independent lines of transmission to a concord of testimonies from the highest antiquity."<sup>104</sup> Contrary to these affirmations, Burgon-Miller expended their energies in writing a book mainly focussed on textual corruptions. The Book, entitled, Causes of the Corruption in the Traditional Text, highlights the following among other things: Chapter ten

discusses Intentional Omissions; Chapter thirteen discusses Corruption by Heretics, and Chapter fourteen Corruption by the Orthodox.<sup>105</sup> Apart from this work of Burgon-Miller, there is another scholar, Charles Williams, who looked into this aspect of corruption and alteration in a book entitled, Alterations to the text of the Synoptic Gospels and Acts, (Blackwell, 1951). By the look of Carson's presentation, it is not clear whether he has come across either of the books the writer has just mentioned.

Carson hardly deals with corruption by heretics, and perhaps naturally, follows the more extreme position of the defenders of the K.J.V. in drawing attention to individual verses. What is of far greater importance is the amount of corruption in an individual MS cited as a significant witness to the omissions here and there. Burgon-Miller addressed themselves to this subject when they wrote:

Thus, if it be observed in the case of a codex (a) that entire sentences or significant clauses are habitually omitted:- (b) That again and again in the course of the same page the phraseology of the Evangelist has upon clear evidence been seriously tampered with: and (c) that interpolations here and there occur which will not admit of loyal interpretation:- we cannot but learn to regard with habitual distrust the codex in which all these notes are found combined. It is as when a witness, whom we suspected of nothing worse than a bad memory, or a random tongue, or a lively-imagination, has been at last convicted of deliberate suppression of part of his evidence, misrepresentation of facts, in fact, deliberate falsehood.<sup>106</sup>

The degree of doubt placed on a MS known for its unintentional omissions is not less than the degree of doubt placed on a MS that is guilty of intentional omissions. Burgon-Miller pursue the subject further by commenting on intentional omission:

But now suppose the case of a MS in which words or clauses are clearly omitted with design; where expressions are withheld which are confessedly harsh or critically difficult, whole sentences or parts of them which have a known controversial bearing; - suppose further that the same MS abounds in worthless paraphrase, and contains apocryphal additions throughout:- what are we to think of our guide then? There can be but one opinion on the subject. From

habitually trusting, we shall entertain inveterate distrust.<sup>107</sup>

To push the argument further, there is a sure need to draw examples from two of the beloved Egyptian codices and their Western counterpart ( **X B D** ). It is interesting to note that based on the authoritative evidence of Codex Sinaiticus ( **X** ), the phrase, "Son of God" is completely omitted from the Greek text of Mark 1:1 in all editions of the Nestle Text from the first edition up to the twenty-fifth. The words are not also found in the British and Foreign Bible Society Greek Text, commonly known as Nestle-Kilpatrick. The UBS<sup>3</sup> and Nestle-Aland<sup>26</sup> texts do have the words in brackets. Certain modern versions such as the R.S.V., N.E.B., N.A.S.V., N.I.V. and N.A.B. cast doubt on the words in their margins.

Therefore, as the evidence for the omission of "Son of God" from Mark 1:1 stands, Codex Sinaiticus is given preferential treatment over against the other witnesses which include the words. The question then is: Is the majority of MSS witness better than the lone witness of **X** or vice versa?

In the Divine Original, Terence Brown disagrees with the method of preferring a few MSS over against the testimony when he says,

The advocates of the R.S.V. endeavour to assure their readers that the numerous changes in the text do not affect any fundamental doctrine. They allege that the alterations are exclusively dictated by newly discovered manuscripts and by the gains of scholarly research in the Biblical languages. These assurances are not in accordance with the facts. Fundamental doctrines relating to the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ are weakened and obscured in the R.S.V. and the translators appear to have made some changes on dogmatic rather than linguistic or documentary grounds.<sup>108</sup>

In conclusion, two important points ought to be emphasized. Firstly, the term heretic is not limited to the one who systematically changes every doctrine at one sitting to suit his

theological or doctrinal persuasion as is the case with Marcion. The term may also include someone who sporadically changes a doctrine here and there. Secondly, the term Orthodox is hazy in Carson's usage. Talking about intentional changes he says "when an intentional change affects the meaning of the passage, there is a demonstrable tendency to move the meaning in the direction of the orthodoxy and forms of piety current at the time, not away from it".<sup>109</sup> Yet the most serious corruptions are heretical.

In actual fact, not every textual tradition is orthodox in its entirety or aberrant in its entirety. Those who claim total inerrancy for their textual tradition should take a look at their postulations once more lest they should fall where they think they stand. Such an attitude is naivety at worst and extremism at best. There are extremists among the supporters of the Majority Text. Caution should be taken lest every supporter should be classed as an extremist, but it is a historical fact that heretics did corrupt the sacred text.

Thesis Ten: "The King James Version was not accepted without a struggle, and some outstanding believers soon wanted to replace it":

As a matter of fact, a lot on this subject has already been dealt with in chapter two and much of what has already been said need not be repeated here. Carson pointed out that the King James Version went through a lot of struggle before it was finally accepted. He went on to say that even though Brian Walton, author of the well known Polyglot called for a revision of the K.J.V., a good number of Church prelates helped promote it by encouraging its use in the churches.

It is not certain whether Carson's mention of the early rejection of the K.J.V. is meant to indicate the K.J.V. is inferior. If this is his trend of thought, it must be stressed that a lot has been written on works that were rejected at first sight but later accepted and promoted by the same people. Dr. J.B. Lightfoot, a contemporary of Westcott and Hort, and one of

those who pressed for the need for the revision of the K.J.V. made remarks that are worth mentioning in this connection. His remark "On a Fresh Revision of the English New Testament" was a long comparison between the struggle of Jerome's Vulgate to gain acceptance over the Old Latin Version and the anticipated struggle that would ensue before a new revision of the K.J.V. would triumph. At the end of his reflection, Lightfoot encouraged himself in the belief that a revision would eventually win favour, because as in the law of natural selection, an inferior species would give way to a superior one so the fresh revision would eventually replace the K.J.V.<sup>110</sup> But quite the contrary, the K.J.V. and the text behind it are still thriving. The R.V. was rejected by and large by a good number of English-speaking Christians. It is certain that it will never now gain wide acceptance.

In the light of all that has been said, the question that should now be asked is: Does Carson mean the K.J.V. will give way to the N.I.V. or to any other version of the Eclectic text? Moreover, it appears when Carson was writing he had not known that the New King James Version had come off the press. This new form of the Old King James is gaining wide acceptance among students in theological colleges, the clergy and the laity in the U.S.A. and the U.K.

In closing, Carson's tenth thesis is nothing more than a mere historical reflection. As a result, it lacks depth, and does not seem to have any textual relevance.

Thesis Eleven: "The Byzantine Text-type must not be thought to be the precise equivalent of the T.R.":

This thesis seems to be the shortest of Carson's theses because the argument given in defence of it is nothing more than a paragraph. In any case, Carson's point of concern is that the Byzantine Text-type must not be thought of as the precise equivalent of the T.R., since the T.R. is based on a mere handful of late MSS, in comparison with thousands of witnesses that attest

the Byzantine text.

Only those who argue on peripheral grounds will disagree with Carson concerning this issue. On the other hand, Carson seems to indicate that this difference in text has never been brought into the open by supporters of both the T.R. and the Majority Text. Contrary to this impression of Carson, it should be noted that these differences are known by supporters of the Majority Text, and in fact, anyone who is familiar with the 1982 edition of the Greek New Testament according to the Majority Text would attest to the fact that these differences are clearly indicated in apparatus 1 of that Text. In that text, an example of the description of the apparatus by Zane C. Hodges and Arthur L. Farstad reads: "the 1885 Oxford edition of the Textus Receptus was employed as a working base against which the manuscripts date were compared. Whenever our text differs from the Oxford Textus Receptus, the variation is noted in the first apparatus".<sup>111</sup>

It must be stressed on the other hand that most of the differences between the T.R. and Majority text are of a very minor character, making no possible differences in translation. A small number are noteworthy, and, in Matthew's Gospel, for example, they occur on an average of 1.5 approximately per chapter. The really remarkable phenomenon, however, is that Erasmus, having access to "a mere handful of relatively late MSS" produced a text so broadly representative of the Byzantine text, and similarly remarkable, that at the same time Stunica, in Spain using quite different (and even today, unknown) Majority text MSS produced in the Complutensian Polyglot, a text very closely resembling that of Erasmus, i.e., a Byzantine text.

Notwithstanding, the T.R. is not without flaws. For instance, there is the problem of its adoption of a very small number of readings taken from the Latin Vulgate which have little or no Greek manuscript support. In addition, there is also its considerable number of variants. But a careful collation of these variants may reveal that such readings have an unquestionable

ancestry partly due to the use of minuscule 1.

As regards the complex nature of transmission, a common maxim often employed by Dean Burgon is "all readings are old". This maxim points to the complex textual transmission of the N.T., the complexity of which makes it impossible to explain satisfactorily how these old readings were found in the handful of relatively late MSS which Erasmus worked with. In actual fact, no textual critic has ever been able to identify with any degree of certainty any of the MSS used by Stunica, except that they are Byzantine.

It is worth, reiterating in closing that the differences underlying the T.R. and the Majority text are of minor importance. The truth concerning these differences is not kept in the dark but is clearly shown in the apparatus of the Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text. See appendix C.

Thesis Twelve: "The argument that ties the adoption of the T.R. to verbal inspiration is logically and theologically fallacious":

The argument of this thesis ties up with that of thesis eleven because both arguments centre around the T.R. Whereas in thesis eleven Carson warns that the T.R. and the Majority Text must not be considered one and the same, here the discussion is focussed on inspiration as tied to the T.R.

From the outset Carson underscores that it is wrong to confuse verbal inspiration of the New Testament with acceptance of the Textus Receptus as the only inspired Greek Text. Furthermore, he thinks this immediate adoption of the Textus Receptus as the only inspired Greek Text is often accompanied by such references as Deut. 4:2, Pro. 30:5-6; Rev. 22:19 and Ps. 119:89 to back up the statement, "since God inspired the scriptures verbally, therefore He must have preserved them even to the details of the words..."<sup>112</sup> After these preliminary remarks, Carson goes on to discuss four main objections:

1. Firstly, that the Byzantine text-type as previously discussed in thesis eleven has many variations among its members. Thus, any ascription of verbal inspiration on one particular text-type will in no way resolve the existence of textual problems discovered when various readings from two different traditions are compared vis-a-vis. Additionally, he thinks it must be understood that the T.R. has major problems to overcome, including the interpolations from the Vulgate and the Greek renderings of Revelation, made by Erasmus from the Vulgate. On this same issue, Carson further observes that if Jn. 5:3b-4 is not found in the earliest witnesses of a wide geographical distribution, then such a text cannot be regarded as verbally inspired by God.

2. Secondly, that the Bible as originally written is verbally and fully inspired, it was not dictated by God but through human agents He breathed His inerrant word into the minds of its writers. Carson cites a few prominent evangelicals who he said subscribed to this doctrine but support neither the T.R., nor the Byzantine text. Moreover, he feels it is absurdly futile to call a particular text - "inerrant" since text-types come about by closely comparing a large number of different manuscripts.

3. Thirdly, that if total inerrancy and verbal inspiration are confined to the original autographs, this does not mean we have no sure word from God. To prove his point, Carson cites John Warwick Montgomery, writer of "Biblical Inerrancy: what is at stake?" who argues: (a) There is a great distance between the view that the scriptures are fallible, and the opposing view that although we do not have the autographs, we shall still believe the scriptures as originally given are inerrant. (b) Textual criticism confirms Shakespeare's words, 'to be or not to be' as being what he wrote; similarly, the vast majority of the N.T. is textually certain. (c) Where the text is less than certain, high probability concerning the true reading exists. (d) Where there is probability and not certainty, no doctrine or code of conduct is affected. (e) The degree of uncertainty raised by textual questions is less than that raised by different

interpretations of scripture amongst evangelicals.(f) As we go back along the MS traditions the demonstrable errors thin out. If we could close the gap between our textual traditions and the autographs all errors would be eliminated. (g) Although the evidence of the textual tradition to the original autographs is not inerrant, this does not preclude inerrancy in the autographs.

4. Fourthly, that it must always be born in mind that the purpose and goal of all textual criticism is to get as close to the original text as possible.

By the look of the argument, it seems Carson's attention is directed against the supporters of the T.R. rather than the many others such as Hodges and Pickering who regard the Majority or Byzantine text (of which the T.R. is a fair representative) as a more faithful representation of the original autographs than a text constructed chiefly from Alexandrian manuscripts or on an eclectic principle. The impression given by Carson is that the supporters of the T.R. are separate from the supporters of the Majority text. On the contrary, a great many people who support the Majority text support the T.R. It can also be observed that Carson overstated his argument by giving the impression that when a doctrine is promoted by certain supporters of the T.R., it is the totality of the supporters of the Majority text that promotes it.

As regards the frequently quoted verses for the installation of the T.R. as the only inspired text, this is a practice that is associated with the Ray-Fuller group. This practice of using proof texts was presumably born out of reacting against the eclectic method and the escalating publication of versions which are suspected of watering down the witness of Holy scripture. On this issue, David Otis Fuller while comparing the New American Standard Version with the King James Version in his pamphlet, On Your Guard! God's Holy word the Bible, comments:

The whole issue of this confusion engendered by such a

multiplicity of versions is narrowed down to the following: If the reader believes the Bible to be the verbally plenary, inspired Word of God in the original manuscripts then of necessity he must believe that God has providentially preserved it through the ages to the present hour.<sup>113</sup>

A closer look at the verses cited by Carson as proof texts of the T.R. supporters do not give the impression of extolling one text over against the other. Rather, they speak of the infallibility and trustworthiness of scripture with a warning attached to avoid any meddling with it either by way of addition or subtraction. The Ray-Fuller group uses these verses with particular emphasis on the textual tradition behind the K.J.V. While one cannot agree that the T.R. or the K.J.V. are in any way as inspired as the original autographs, yet the Ray-Fuller group have the justification of historical fact on their side. The historical fact is that the Byzantine text-type has been in possession of the transmission of the Greek text since at least the sixth century, thence until the first printed Greek New Testaments in the sixteenth century, and still in the form of the K.J.V. in constant use by very large numbers of Evangelicals. This text-type has received new impetus from the publication of the New King James Version and the Greek New Testament according to the Majority text. As narrow as the Ray-Fuller group could be in using narrow and confined scriptural references for upholding the inspirational superiority of the T.R., yet a thought-provoking question worth asking is, in view of the numerous changes made in the "New" English Versions, beginning with the R.V. in 1881, which present a considerably different text in a version unknown to the Church at large before 1881, (36,000 changes made to the K.J.V. by the R.V. Translation committee) are Ray and Fuller not justified to draw the attention of the Christian world to such a fact? Where there is no overstatement of the case, is Fuller not justified to make the following statement:

We do not say the King James Version is infallible. There are changes that could be and should be profitably made, but we do say and with emphasis, there are no errors found therein. The four or five thousand extant Greek manuscripts

of the New Testament, in whole or in part, agree in ninety to ninety-five percent with the text of Erasmus, while the Greek text of Westcott and Hort, founded as it was on two of the worst manuscripts, Codex Sinaiticus, and Codex Vaticanus, is filled with errors and contradictions as of necessity it must have been with such a shaky unstable, inaccurate foundation.<sup>114</sup>

The point at issue is that a statement like the one first made by Otis Fuller must be based on facts and evidence, a right which everyone has. At this juncture, the writer would like to discuss Carson's four major points in their logical order:

Point one: The Diverse nature of Byzantine Witnesses and the Problems of the T.R.: This point has been dealt with in thesis eleven. To reiterate what has been said before, the differences between the T.R. and the Byzantine text are minute compared to the differences between the Byzantine and the modern critical texts. Most of the differences between Byzantine manuscripts are of an extremely minor character, reflecting each manuscript as an individual, but not affecting translation in any way at all. When one turns to the differences among the small group of papyri and uncials used to construct the critical text, the differences between the individual manuscripts are immense. No one who has carefully examined Hoskier's "Codex B and its allies" as presented in Which Bible can fail to be aware that there is no such entity as a consistent Alexandrian text-type.<sup>115</sup> Hoskier himself quotes Dr. Salmon as saying:

Yet, great as has been my veneration for Hort and my admiration of the good work that he has done, I have never been able to feel that his work was final, and I have disliked the servility with which his history of the text has been accepted, and even his nomenclature adopted, as if now the last word had been said on the subject of New Testament criticism.<sup>116</sup>

Therefore, from this and other comments made from time to time by textual critics, it seems quite unjustified to deny that the Alexandrian text-type has its problems from the very stage of its inception. The T.R. has no such major problem to overcome:

its Latin interpolations and a few verses put into translating Greek from Latin by Erasmus attest only to the fact that, like all human productions, this treasure is "in earthen vessels". It does not affect the general consistency of the T.R. as a printed representative of the Byzantine text-type.

Point two: Verbal and plenary inspiration of scripture:

Carson's main point of emphasis under this section is simply that "Whenever verbal inspiration has been affirmed or presupposed, it has been ascribed only to the autographs"<sup>117</sup> and that the inerrancy of the New Testament cannot be tied to any particular text-type, because a text-type is made up of many individual manuscripts, and it is their concensus which constitutes a text-type.<sup>118</sup>

As far as the argument stands, by ascribing inerrancy to only the autographs, Carson is creating a big problem for the rest of scripture in defiance of the witness of scripture itself which is, "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Tim. 3:16). If as Carson says, "in fact, divine inspiration so operated that even where the human authors were hammering out their own deeply felt and very personal concerns, the result was theopneustos, God-breathed, even to the detail of the words used",<sup>119</sup> is he not contradicting himself by limiting inspiration to the autographs? Cannot this also be taken as a mistaken view of II Tim. 3:16? To insist that only the autographs were inspired is to liken the scriptures to any other piece of literature at best and to undermine their integrity at worst. In his reflections on inspiration in his book, Thy Word is Truth, E.J. Young warns against explaining the claims of the scriptures away:

If, however, we do accept the teaching of the Bible, God grant that we may not be ashamed of that teaching! The Bible in manifold ways, has proclaimed and asserted its divinity. It has emphatically declared that in a unique manner it has come to us from God. If, in professing to believe the Bible, we are going to be serious, let us accept its claims and not try to explain them away!

Let us follow our God who cannot lie; and since He cannot lie, let us believe that His word is truth itself. Those copies of scripture which came forth from God Almighty were infallible and inerrant. No matter what we may say to the contrary, no matter how much they may seek to obscure the issue, in the very nature of the case it could not have been otherwise.<sup>120</sup>

Therefore, in view of the foregoing statement, where does the limitation of inspiration to the autographs stand? If inspiration is not limited to the autographs, then not only is the T.R. as part of scripture inspired, but the whole of scripture is inspired as well (2 Tim. 3:16).

This brings us to the question of the inspiration of the text-type which supporters of the T.R. are allegedly promoting. Unequivocally, as the overall inspiration of scripture has been pointed out above, all text-types, not only the Byzantine, have a stamp of God's inspiration, seeing that they are an outgrowth of the original autographs as the history of textual criticism reveals. So, even though Carson says "to concede that total inerrancy or verbal inspiration is restricted to the autographs does not mean we have no sure word from God",<sup>121</sup> great caution must be taken because his position is dubious and those words undermine the authority of scripture.

Point three: This section continues the argument of point two which has just been concluded, and is chiefly concerned with presenting Montgomery's defence of verbal inspiration in spite of the fact that the original autographs are beyond recovery. The point at issue here is where Carson quotes Montgomery as saying the "demonstrable errors thin out"<sup>122</sup> the earlier one reaches back into the textual history of the N.T. Such a statement does not have adequate foundation since there is no such thing as thinning out of errors in the manuscripts which have survived. As one who did far more collating probably than any other textual scholar in the 19th century, Scrivener states:

It is no less true to fact than paradoxical in sound that

the worst corruptions to which the New Testament has ever been subjected, originated within a hundred years after it was composed: that Irenaeus (AD 150) and the African Fathers, and the whole Western, with a portion of the Syrian Church used far inferior manuscripts to those employed by Stunica or Erasmus, or Stephens, 13 centuries later, when moulding the T.R.<sup>123</sup>

With such an insight into the history of Transmission, it is naive to assert that "errors thin out" the nearer one reaches the sacred source. The corruption of the text stretches as far back to the time immediately after the writing of the autographs. See John's warning in Rev. 22:18 to 19. In the second century Marcion was already altering the scriptures and there must have been others.

Point four: Carson's fourth point focusses on the undisputed goal of textual criticism which is "to get as close to the original text as possible".<sup>124</sup> In reality, all textual discoveries and all bona fide research into the Greek text, the versions and the Fathers are to be welcomed unreservedly as contributions towards the history of the transmission of the N.T. text. We still know very little about this transmission, because so much must have perished, and the multiplicity of various readings is so vast as to constitute a constant challenge to collation and research into the history of the sacred text. What divides evangelicals is the use to which such material is put in the New critical texts and the employment of the eclectic method, which as Epp rightly points out, has led to an impasse in New Testament Textual studies, with no positive progress from Hort.<sup>125</sup> Real progress in textual criticism is made only after evidence has been carefully sifted and examined, and then presented objectively and without bias, as in the first Luke Volume of the International Greek New Testament project published by Clarendon Press and edited by J.N. Birdsall and J.K. Elliott.

Finally, it must be emphasized that Carson has a case against those few supporters of the T.R. who overstretch their arguments for the integrity and inspiration of that particular text. While reacting against these supporters of the T.R.,

Carson overstated the position he defends and gave a distorted view of inspiration and infallibility of scripture.

Thesis Thirteen: A resume of thesis thirteen is as follows: Carson points out that there should be no misuse of truth in textual matters by quoting part of the evidence, or repeatedly appealing to false evidence or by discrediting textual work done by scholars who are not necessarily evangelical in their Christian confession. Some of the 1881 Revisers are called Romanists by T.R. supporters because the readings of the 1881 Revisers are akin to the R.C. Vulgate. In addition, T.R. supporters do not only disregard such terms as "transcriptional probability" or "intrinsic probability", but excoriate W-H as emissaries of the devil. In reply to the argument against W-H, Carson points out that W-H were not quite as conservative as modern conservative evangelicals, adding that Westcott himself wrote some very sound books. Therefore, Carson raised the question whether it is impossible to accept their contributions without condemning them, seeing that many modern evangelicals follow Tregelles and accept the basic textual theory of W-H.

Carson concludes his thesis by citing men like Dr. Fuller who he considers a well known example of those who slant evidence in defence of the T.R.<sup>126</sup>

As has already been portrayed, the argument as it stands is subdivided into three main parts: (1) Condemnation of the 1881 Revisers as Romanists (2) Undervaluing the principle of intrinsic and transcriptional probabilities (3) Portraying Westcott and Hort in diabolical garb. The overall thrust of the thesis centres around Carson's concern over the use of slanted argument by defenders of the K.J.V., T.R. and Byzantine text-type. Of course, no defenders of Holy Scripture would deny that slanted arguments not only produce acrimony, but in the long run they do not serve the cause of Christ and the promulgation of the Gospel.

Coming back to the allegation that the work of the 1881 revisers was akin to the Roman Catholic Vulgate, and that those

revisers were Romanists, the present writer would like to emphasize that such a statement if it was ever made, was made outside the leading of the Holy Spirit, even if that statement has some truth in it. However, the reference to Roman Catholics is more complicated because it was not until well after the 2nd World war that the R.C. Church opened the door to vernacular translations, and this has been followed quite rapidly by common language translations with Protestants. Many Catholics now hold leading and influential positions in Bible societies which are partners in the United Bible Societies, and one of their outstanding textual scholars, Rev. Fr. Carlo Martini is on the U.B.S. Greek New Testament Committee of five.<sup>127</sup> Undoubtedly, some Protestants would regard this entry into the U.B.S. as a major means of re-securing for the R.C. Church a similar authority to that it enjoyed before the Reformation.<sup>128</sup>

The second major point has to do with the principle of intrinsic and transcriptional probabilities about which Carson says, "another little book in front of me slates such expressions as 'intrinsic probability' and 'transcriptional probability'... The author thinks they belong to methods that are not according to sound rules of Bible interpretation".<sup>129</sup> It should be made clear that this subject has already been discussed in chapter three - "Twentieth century Eclecticism - Its Nature and Origin" and the present writer feels there is no need repeating that lengthy discussion in this section. All that needs to be said is that opinions on this subject of transcriptional and intrinsic probabilities vary among eclectists. In J.M. Ross's evaluation of the U.B.S. Greek New Testament he brings out the inequalities of both probabilities when he said that "Of course, every student of the N.T. has his own views on the probabilities of readings, but perhaps an impression may be recorded here - which remains in many instances, in spite of the explanation in the committees commentary - that often the editors have attached a high degree of probability to readings which others would consider much more doubtful or would even reject altogether".<sup>130</sup>

The idea Ross is passing across is simply that a certain

selection of readings on the principle of both intrinsic and transcriptional probability is biased and pre-conceived since the textual critic concerned already has in mind preferred manuscripts such as X B or D. Ross gives a long list of passages wherein the U.B.S. method of intrinsic and transcriptional probability is biased: (a) In Matthew - 1:16; 1:25; 6:28; 10:3; 23:14; 27:49 (b) In Mark - 9:29; 16:1 (c) At Luke 14:5 where the N.E.B. prefers onos, "donkey", to huios, "son", (d) At John 1:34 both the N.E.B. and the J.B. employ weight of manuscript authority rather than intrinsic probability.<sup>131</sup> Furthermore, Ross points out that "while some of the A and B ratings seem overconfident, in other cases the editors seem to have been guided rather needlessly cautious in giving a C or D rating where there can be little doubt as to the true reading. For instance, Mt. 12:47 is rated only C and enclosed within square brackets because of 'the age and weight of the diverse text-types' that omit the words".<sup>132</sup>

Another keen interpreter of twentieth century eclecticism is Eldon J. Epp who thinks there is an interlude in twentieth century textual criticism as a result of a number of factors which the present writer has already referred to earlier on. One of these factors, undoubtedly, is the "lack of progress in the evaluation of readings".<sup>133</sup> On intrinsic probability, Epp observes that supporters of the eclectic method employ "only principles from one small corner of criticism, particularly intrinsic probability, with heavy emphasis on harmony with the author's style or suitability to the context. What is worse, they tend to de-emphasize, sometimes drastically, the historical factors in textual criticism, including the date and provenance of manuscripts, and they generally eschew the task of reconstructing the history of the text".<sup>134</sup>

The evidence already investigated suggests that transcriptional and intrinsic probability cannot be trusted without some precautions taken. So, supporters of the K.J.V. and the T.R. have every right to give their opinions on this subject provided their opinions are based on sound evidence such as that we have

already discussed. But while doing so, caution must also be taken lest they should offend a Christian brother with truth that is not based on love.

With the foregoing remarks on intrinsic and transcriptional probability, let us proceed to the third point which has to do with portraying Westcott and Hort in derogative terms. As far as the observation of the writer goes, it would seem unjustified to infer that all supporters of the K.J.V., T.R. and the Byzantine text are guilty of this unprofessional practice of generalizing about the character of a fellow textual critic. In any case, as the history of textual criticism stands, a keen textual critic who is also a supporter of another tradition may want to read the biography of other textual critics in order to actually know who those persons are in terms of their beliefs since it is possible for what a textual critic is to rub off on his textual work. From this perspective, the writer asks: What do the records say about Westcott and Hort so that we may know them better, and make an evaluation as to whether what is said about them is true or false?

Studies on the lives of Westcott and Hort are drawn "mainly from their own letters, partly from the comments of their respective sons, who collected and published their lives and letters..."<sup>135</sup> Among the many things their biographies reveal, the following are worth considering: (1) Their philosophy of higher criticism - In his letter to a certain Rev. Rowland Williams, written in October 21, 1858, Hort indicated his antipathy against Evangelicals and the doctrines they uphold. From his own pen, he writes, "Evangelicals seem to me perverted rather than untrue. There are, I fear, still more serious differences between us on the subject of authority, and especially the authority of the Bible".<sup>136</sup> Apart from his battle against the authority of Scripture, Hort tended to have a strong leaning toward Darwinism. In his letter of April 3, 1860, to John Ellerton, he mentioned the following: "But the book which has most engaged me is Darwin. Whatever may be thought of it, it is a book that one is proud to be contemporary with... My feeling is

strong that the theory is unanswerable'.<sup>137</sup> (2) Their anti-protestantism - As high Anglicans, Westcott and Hort did not see any essence in Protestantism since 'the position of the small protestant bodies on the continent', Westcott maintains, 'is, no doubt, one of great difficulty'. On his part, Hort thinks 'Protestantism. is only parenthetical and temporary'.<sup>138</sup> (3) Their support for Evolution - It is quite unbelievable to read what Westcott and Hort think of the first three chapters of Genesis and the question of the Garden of Eden. Westcott comments: "no one now, I suppose, holds that the first three chapters of Genesis, for example, give a literal history. I could never understand how anyone reading them with open eyes could think they did". On Hort's part, he says, "I am inclined to think that no such state as Eden (I mean the popular notion) ever existed and that Adam's fall in no degree differed from the fall of each of his descendants...".<sup>139</sup> (4) Their view concerning the Atonement - "Both rejected the atonement of the substitution of Christ for the sinner, or vicarious atonement; both denied that the death of Christ counted for anything as an atoning factor. They emphasized atonement through the incarnation. This is the Catholic doctrine".<sup>140</sup>

In the light of all the evidence that has been made available to us, it now seems clear why many evangelical textual critics look at the endeavours of W-H askance when dealing with the transmission and integrity of the sacred scriptures.

By way of contrast from the point of view of Character, Burgon, in spite of his negative views on the education of women at University level, was an outstanding Christian believer, with the greatest possible respect and reverence for the word of God.<sup>141</sup> Miller, his friend and follower, considers this so because, although both he and Burgon were moderate high churchmen, both had derived their devotion to the Word of God from evangelical backgrounds, and this basic part of their Christian heritage they had retained unimpaired. There is a lot of sense in Dr. Hills' insistence that the transmission of the Word of God cannot be treated like that of ordinary secular literature, and **secondly** that

it should be practised by born-again Christians who acknowledge the special problems of its transmission.<sup>142</sup>

With the foregoing background, it must be emphasized that Evangelicals can be divided into three groups vis-a-vis New Testament textual criticism - (1) Unashamed defenders of the T. R. (2) Majority text-type supporters. (3) The remaining evangelicals who in supporting the Greek critical texts, stand beside liberal protestants, the ecumenical movement and the R.C. establishment. However, it is fair enough to indicate that not all Roman Catholics favour the Hortian texts, for instance, Alejandro Diez Macho, of Madrid, discoverer and editor of the "Neofiti Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch".<sup>143</sup>

In closing, the writer wishes to indicate that Carson's thirteenth thesis calls attention to a very sensitive issue in present-day textual criticism. But what makes the presentation inadequate is Carson's restricted and biased presentation of the facts on the major points of the thesis - namely, the excoriating of the 1881 revisers as Romanists, the undervaluing of the principles of Intrinsic and transcriptional probability, and portraying Westcott and Hort in diabolic terms. As far as the discussion goes, Carson proved nothing.

Thesis Fourteen: "Adoption of the T.R. should not be made a criterion of orthodoxy. Some churches and individuals try to exclude others who do not follow the K.J.V." This thesis is the last of all Carson's fourteen theses and stands as the most non-textual of all. Comments should hardly be necessary at all, although Churches tied to the K.J.V. should be able to explain charitably to others what they regard as the deficiencies of the modern versions they **disapprove** of. The writer would like to advise those who feel strongly about this matter to search for themselves the reasons why all modern versions based on Alexandrian or W-H text-type texts can be regarded as mutilated or impoverished both in the narrative and theological parts of the New Testament. There may be no Churches which insist on the New International Version (N.I.V.), for example, but in Colleges, psycho-

logical pressures from lecturers can be very strong for the adoption of a modern version by all students attending those lectures, both because such a version is "more scholarly" and because it is "easier to understand". So, this fourteenth thesis is double-edged. That is, the promoters of modern versions and translations based on the eclectic principles insist that their texts be used but are at the same time critical of those who promote the T.R. and the K.J.V, and dismiss their efforts to set up the K.J.V. as a "criterion of orthodoxy".

#### Conclusion

After carefully reading and investigating Carson's fourteen theses in the light of up to date textual critical evidence, the present writer has come to realize that the issues Carson took up with supporters of the Majority text-type, K.J.V. and T. R. are pertinent but the discussion is slanted in an attempt to give prominence to the Eclectic text. A good number of antiquated theories which have already been disproved by textual scholars in accordance to known and accepted facts are the ones still promoted by Carson as the reader might have observed. For instance, the theory of the secondary nature of the Byzantine text, the theory of Byzantine (Syrian) conflation and superiority of a few Egyptian MSS no longer stand since such theories have never at any time in the history of textual criticism been given adequate validation. So, Carson's book, The King James Version Debate - A Plea For Realism, is misleading because on many occasions he himself failed to be realistic in his presentation. If known facts and evidence are rejected at the expense of love for theory, could it just be because this is the fashionable craze of Twentieth century Eclecticism?

#### PART TWO: An Examination of Michael Holmes' "Majority Text Debate - New form of an old issue".

Having dealt with Carson's fourteen theses which have been found to be inadequate in many respects even though they highlight current textual issues in our day, an examination of Michael Holmes' contribution to the field is also worth considering since such a contribution further elucidates the trend eclecticism leads to in the twentieth century.

It must be emphasized from the onset that among the many textual critics under the eclectic tradition already cited, Michael Holmes is one of those whose discussions give the best unbiased perspective in present day textual criticism. This does not mean his presentation of the Majority text debate so without flaws as not to need any rebuttal. In fact it is because of his inadequate presentation of the deliberations of present day textual arguments in the light of recent discoveries that the present writer undertakes to evaluate his article.

It must be borne in mind that the issues covered by Holmes in his article are by no means new as his title suggests - "The 'Majority text debate!'. New form of an old issue". In much the same way as D.A. Carson, Michael Holmes' concern centres around what might be called the resuscitation of the T.R. - Majority text debate in which the critical texts and W-H's one hundred year old textual critical theory are undervalued and rejected. On his part, Michael Holmes distinguishes two groups among proponents of the Majority text, having a common position but varying forms of arguments. The first group he suggests, comprises Terence Brown, David Otis Fuller, J.J. Ray and E.F. Hills. This group according to Holmes is uninformed and emotive, one that bases its argument on the divine inspiration of scripture. In Holmes' words their "wrongly-directed zeal for the K.J.V. and the Greek text it represents has made them careless with regard to facts, and ignorance has too frequently resulted in the substitution of invective and special pleading for reasoned arguments".<sup>144</sup> The second group of "a much more

sophisticated and creditable - appearing line of approach"<sup>145</sup> consists of Zane C. Hodges, Wilbur Pickering, and Jacob Van Bruggen. With this group, "the ad hominem arguments have largely (though not entirely) disappeared and a priori theological statements no longer form the primary basis of their arguments. Instead, one finds a determinant effort to point out problems in the views of Westcott and Hort (especially in Pickering), and an attempt to set the preference for the Majority text on some kind of historically-grounded basis".<sup>146</sup>

Talking about the method employed by the Majority text proponents, Holmes affirms it is one of "text and method" since they reject the critical texts and the method used to arrive at those texts. In the delineation of his approach, Holmes quickly points out that his aim is not to give a summary of every view of each participant in the debate but to deal with the "key issues raised by the Majority text proponents, and how well these have fared under the criticism they have received."<sup>147</sup>

Once more, the reader must be reminded that the subject-matter discussed by Holmes is not at all new as this will soon be made evident in subsequent discussions. Holmes' discussion and that of Carson are simply a reduplication in modern form of W-H's textual critical arguments which have found their highest elevation in the eclectic textual critical method. It must be indicated that the present writer has already discussed a good number of Holmes' points in the previous chapters. In any case, the writer will seek to address himself again to some of the main issues raised and will make constant references to previous work already done on Carson's fourteen theses as it seems necessary.

1. A point of correction: Before going into the heart of the matter in the article under consideration, the present writer wishes to point out a mistake made by Holmes in his second paragraph claiming that the T.R. debate "was originally sparked off in 1881 by the publication of Westcott and Hort's New Testament in

the original Greek".<sup>148</sup> The history of the T.R. debate is already dealt with in chapter two - "the History of the debate against the T.R. and the Majority Text". The date of the beginning of the debate goes as far back as Griesbach, Tregelles and Tischendorf before W.H. came on the scene, the time during which a long line of German and other scholars sought to replace the T.R.<sup>149</sup> It must be indicated that this pre-1881 tendency against the T.R. witnessed the doughty defence of F.H. A. Scrivener and Dean Burgon.

2. The Textus Receptus - Majority Text debate and its ramification: This section inevitably forms the core of Holmes' argument. The argument begins with the recognition "that some 80% to 90% of known manuscripts represent the Majority text-type"<sup>150</sup> and that the rejection of these vast majority of manuscripts by W.H. and other scholars was based on a two-fold a priori possibility - (1) the theoretical which is solely based on W.H.'s genealogical principle. The point made by Holmes discredits the attestation of the majority of manuscripts for any given New Testament text. Quite the contrary the genealogical method, as has already been pointed out in chapter three, is by no means a valid rule for measuring the authenticity of both individual and text-types on account of the complexity of the transmission of the New Testament text and in fact Hort never practised it in constructing his text. Therefore, to lean on so unrealistic a theory as the genealogical method is tantamount to leaning on a foundation that cannot bear any substantial weight. Leon Vanganay considers the genealogical method "useless" while Ernest Gadman Colwell regards it as "not of primary importance".<sup>151</sup>

The second reason W.H. employ in order to reject the Majority text is the historical. In Holmes' words, the argument for rejection on historical grounds is as follows:

Historically, Hort considered the Majority text to be a late recension characterized by inferior secondary readings. He considered it to be late because it was found in none of the earliest manuscripts, nor was it used by any

ante-Nicene Father, and viewed its readings as secondary because when tested by the canons of internal evidence, such as harmonization, or brevior lectio potior (preferring the shorter reading), they repeatedly prove to be inferior to those of other text-types. As for its recensional character, he suggested that it was due to the editorial activity of Lucian of Antioch in the early fourth century.<sup>152</sup>

This argument of W-H that Holmes elaborates here is the same as that Carson advanced in his first four theses against the Majority text and the T.R. in his book, The King James Version Debate - A Plea for Realism.<sup>153</sup> With all certainty, this complex theory is not only unfounded, but is inadequate and impractical seeing that present day research has contradicted it on a very wide scale. On this matter, Holmes gives a balanced view-point:

While most scholars continue to view the Majority texts as late and secondary, Hort's explanation of its origin is widely rejected. There is no direct evidence that Lucian ever worked on the New Testament text, nor can the Majority text any longer be traced back to a single event. In fact, 'neither the origin of the Byzantine text viewed as entirely nor the origin of its various sub-forms in the course of history is known'. Thus most textual critics are in the position of rejecting a key part of Hort's argument while continuing to accept his results.<sup>154</sup>

Holmes' comments make Carson's fourteen theses against the Majority text and the T.R. look dubious and outdated like those of Westcott and Hort. Moreover, such an evaluation of the argument leads not only to an understanding of the danger of making generalizations that cannot be substantiated, but also sheds a flood of light on the mysterious transmission of the New Testament text. Harry Sturz in the Byzantine text-type and New Testament Textual Criticism confutes and refutes W-H's theory in a very adequate way in the light of present day scholarly research. The reader is therefore advised to refer back to the discussion on Carson's first four theses at the beginning of this chapter.

Continuing, a few comments should be made concerning the ambivalent attitude of some scholars who even though they are

aware that Hort's theory is wrong, yet they accept his text as good even though the results of a theory surely cannot be good when the principles underlying that theory are found to be conflicting and inadequate. It is because of this incompatibility of theoretical principle that Majority text proponents always seek the chance to present their arguments in favour of their text.

3. The defence of the Majority text: The reason for seeking to offer an answer for the existence of the Majority text as far as the defenders of that text are concerned, is that W-H's explanations offer no adequate solution at all. According to Holmes, Majority text supporters consider W-H's arguments "unscientific", and in seeking to remedy the situation, Hodges and his friends "offer a reconstruction of the text that not only accounts for the origin and uniformity of the 80%, but of the (on their view) deviant 20% as well: the Byzantine text is original, and the other textual traditions represent expected deviations from it. Only this view, Hodges feels, adequately accounts for all the data".<sup>155</sup> Holmes points out that the arguments set forth are like Hort's both theoretically and historically. The present writer should make it clear that even though these Majority text defenders aim for the same destination, yet they disagree on some minor details:

Hodges and Van Bruggen - Hodges firmly believes that the age of a text determines its chances of survival and reproduction in plurality. His claim may not be entirely wrong because in accordance with man's inclination, what is best is sometimes more likely to survive than the worst. But Hodges' weakness lies in his putting too much emphasis on statistics and the "normal transmission" of the New Testament text. Normal transmission cannot be true for the New Testament since scribal corruption of the text started very early.

Although in another development Hodges and Van Bruggen claim that all early surviving MSS derive their origin from Egypt in an attempt to ascribe the early corruption of the N.T. text to the Alexandrian scribes, Holmes does not consider this view as

having any weight. But this plausibility cannot be ruled out as Sturz suggests: "E.C. Colwell had made the important observation that in some instances, one could see the process of editing going on in Egypt in the corrections of P.<sup>66</sup> In some cases the correction was made from an Alpha type (Byzantine) to a Beta (Alexandrian) type. For example of this found in list 1 notice John 7:39, where P<sup>66</sup> corrects from the Byzantine to the Alexandrian text-type, also John 7:40 and 8:54 where P<sup>66</sup> again corrects from the Byzantine to the combination of Alexandrian and Western type".<sup>156</sup>

Pickering: On his part, Pickering makes the same conclusions for the primacy of the Majority text as were made by Harry Sturz: that the Majority of readings are early, and supported by the Early Fathers.<sup>157</sup> Holmes' response to Pickering and his contemporaries' arguments is not entirely favourable. He agrees with the notion that Byzantine readings are early in the light of the discovery of the papyri especially P<sup>45</sup> and P<sup>46</sup> but he does not accede to the idea that such readings are attested by the Early Fathers, nor does he believe in the early existence of the Majority text-type. In his opinion, "While individual readings are early, the Majority text as an identifiable grouping of readings is not". This statement sounds paradoxical. On this Harry Sturz elucidates, "The Byzantine text-type has preserved second-century tradition not preserved by other text-types".<sup>159</sup> Is it not the combination of readings that make up the text-type? Since the existence of early Byzantine readings are confirmed, then there must have been present the Byzantine text-type.

Since the early Church Fathers have already been given a lengthy discussion at the beginning of this chapter, there is no need of reduplicating the discussion again. The fallacy of the silence of the Fathers used as a criterion for discrediting the Byzantine text requires further reexamination by those who promote it. Taking the ambivalent idiosyncrasies of the Fathers into account, one should be cautious not to make a big issue out of their testimony. Gordon Fee may make his conclusions but the

fact remains that much trouble is still being taken to arrive at an accurate documentation of patristic quotations.

The Radical Dislocation view: In order to discredit Hodges' "statistical argument", his reasonably "normal transmission" theory to explain why the Alexandrian text disappeared and to further prove that the Majority text is secondary, Holmes puts forward the radical dislocation theory: (1) The destruction of MSS in the pre-Constantinian persecution of the Christian church. This is a known fact but it does not mean every manuscript in the possession of the Christians at that time was destroyed. There was a great number of Christians who boldly refused to disclose the whereabouts of their scriptures even under torture and preferred to die so that the scriptures might be preserved. To this happening, Dr. Augustus Neander testifies:

Without being asked they boldly avowed that they were Christians, and possessed copies of the sacred scriptures, but that they would surrender them on no account. Others again disdainfully spurned the means of evasion which the humanity of the magistrates furnished them with. They refused to comply with the suggestions of those who, desirous of executing the imperial ordinance only in form would have had them surrender other writings in the place of the Bible. They imagined that they ought to follow the example of Eleazar (II Macab VI) who would not even seem to eat of the swines' flesh.<sup>160</sup>

So, those who gave their copies "were designated afterwards by the name of Traditores", and "were removed from the communion of the Church".<sup>161</sup> In view of the foregoing explanation it cannot be true that all the copies of the scriptures were destroyed. Moreover, this aspect of the Radical Dislocation theory does not explain the origin of the Majority text, nor prove whether every bit of Christian scripture in all the Christian centres was completely destroyed. (2) The Spread of Islam: This second aspect of the theory states that when Islam spread later, it became so antagonistic to Christianity that even the scriptures were detested and destroyed. The spread of Islam in the opinion of many scholars cannot have caused the entire scriptures to be destroyed. Furthermore, if as history points out, MSS came to Byzantium

sometime later from Caesarea and Antioch, how could the Majority text have not been known even in the Greek Church? It must be certain then that the Islamic invasion did not inhibit the geographical transmission of the scriptures. (3) The Reduction in the geographical range of Greek: This third argument of the theory focusses on the fact that by the sixth century Greek was not used anywhere else in Europe except within the Byzantine empire. In favour of this theory, Holmes affirms that "while it is true that 90% extant manuscripts are of Byzantine character, it is also true that about 90% were written after the restriction of Greek to basically the confines of Byzantium".<sup>162</sup> The restriction of Greek to the empire is a fact which must not be denied. But it must also be borne in mind that during this time, Greek was still being used in Alexandria in the Middle Ages until it gave way to the Coptic language and Arabic.

Although this three-fold radical dislocation view is said to be "adequate to explain the numerical superiority of the Majority text",<sup>163</sup> yet it must be remembered that this is just a theory that has not been fully validated. It is true these incidents mentioned in the theory took place in history but to argue for the disappearance of the Alexandrian text and the numerical plurality of the Majority text on such historical happenings, is special pleading.

On page seventeen of his article, Holmes drives home the point "that the manuscripts known today do not accurately represent the state of affairs in earlier centuries",<sup>164</sup> a proof which he thinks is based on Patristic references to variants once widely attested but now found in a few or no Ms witnesses at all. His illustrative passages - Mark 16:9-20; Mt. 5:22; Rom. 3:9; and Hebrews 2:9 are characteristic of the fluctuating witness of manuscripts to New Testament readings from one era to the other.

It is certainly clear here that Holmes' discussion of this situation is not meant to confute the existence of the Majority

text as a text-type in its own rights, but rather to prove that the transmission of the scriptures was not normal, and moreover, that the question of statistics is by far insufficient to disprove this fact. In agreement with Michael Holmes, New Testament transmission of the scriptures should never be conceived as normal because apart from scribal errors, "heretical assailants of Christianity... self-constituted critics, who (like Dr. Hort) imagined themselves at liberty to resort to 'instinctive processes' of criticism; and who, at first as well as 'at last' freely made their appeal 'to the individual mind'",<sup>165</sup> tampered with the scriptures. On this tendency, Burgon says, "Vanquished by the Word Incarnate, Satan next directed his subtle malice against the Word written".<sup>166</sup> In any case, it must not be taken for granted that the radical dislocation theory which presupposes the abnormality of transmission is right because the conclusions attached to it are mere conjectures. Nevertheless, transmission was not normal and the contributions of the Fathers show how mysterious this transmission is. Therefore, Holmes' discussion on this subject also helps make the Eclectic method look fictitious by basing their critical judgments heavily on a few so-called good early manuscripts which have survived the "dislocation".

The last part of Holmes' paper rests on the methodological practice of textual criticism (how one does textual criticism). This particular subject - matter is already comprehensively dealt with in chapter three. Much is not going to be said again but new arguments will be dealt with as they appear.

Michael Holmes starts his discussion on textual methodology with W-H's "Internal Evidence" and "Neutral text" method which later fell under disrepute because of its inadequacy. Holmes points out that the insufficiency of the canons "is hardly grounds for their total rejection, rather, it points out the need to use them with discrimination".<sup>167</sup> Continuing, he adds that other textual critics who differ from W-H apply both internal and external evidence in an attempt to arrive at objective results.

As the present writer has already indicated, internal evidence is rather more subjective than objective. The influence of this method extends to the modern versions such as the RSV, NEB, NASV and the GNB. But a combination of both the internal and external can lend credibility to the results arrived at provided a great deal of caution is employed.

On the other side of the argument, Pickering and Van Bruggen go for the Majority method of counting manuscripts. This method is quickly dismissed as misleading because it is allegedly suspected of leaving out internal criteria and re-duplicating Burgon's "seven notes of truth". Actually, Burgon's "seven notes of truth" could be found to be very objective if studied and applied circumspectly. Furthermore, the Majority method does not replace the objective study of individual manuscripts. This fact is clearly demonstrated by the apparatus of the Greek New Testament according to the Majority Text, where MSS and readings are cited after detailed investigation. Therefore, both Fee and Van Bruggen are wrong in saying that once the Majority principle is applied, there will be no more need for the practice of textual criticism.

After all the major issues have been discussed, Michael Holmes commends Hodges for his efforts in editing a new edition of the Majority critical text. In his opinion, the attitude of Hodges to textual work deserves credit because to some degree, Hodges considers textual criticism a necessary discipline. Furthermore, Holmes observes that even though the Majority text is different from the T.R. it might prove useful as it would shed more light on the history of the Byzantine text-type.

Candidly, Holmes himself must be commended for his fair remarks seeing that the Greek New Testament according to the Majority text has often met with degrading remarks, such as "pseudo-scientific" and "unhistorical". But favourably, another observer, J.K. Elliott considers it "a refreshing change".

*Before Holmes concluded his discussion, he came back to*

the point where he indicated that even though the New Majority text will be welcome, it must not be construed that the critical texts will be completely set aside in its favour. The reason he suggests for saying so is that references to Patristics and statistics are not compatible with what is at present considered actual evidence.<sup>168</sup> It is a pity Michael Holmes has to put so much emphasis on the early Fathers as if they are a major factor for the reconstruction of the New Testament text. The place the early Church Fathers occupy in textual criticism is not above that of the New Testament Greek manuscripts and early versions. Most scholars' method of choosing a variant reading of any given passage of the New Testament centres around "the traditional and time-honoured procedure of beginning with the Greek manuscripts themselves, and then supplementing their testimony by consulting the early versions and the patristic quotations. Since the latter are subject, as we have seen, to some special limitations and drawbacks, a majority of modern textual scholars consider Patristic evidence, so long as it stands alone, to count for almost nothing in ascertaining the original text".<sup>169</sup> In other words, Patristic evidence cannot stand alone but has to be backed by the testimony of the New Testament Greek Manuscripts and the early versions, even though there are some scholars like F.G. Conybeare and Kirsopp Lake who argue for the predominance of Patristic evidence. See appendix B for the fluctuating, ambivalent and mutilated testimony of the Fathers.

Finally, Holmes ends his presentation with a conclusion that should set every serious textual critic thinking:

At the same time, it must be stated that the Majority text advocates have highlighted some of the real questions and issues facing contemporary New Testament textual criticism. Their criticisms serve as a salutary reminder of the provisional character of current critical texts. The fact that the UBS<sup>3</sup> and Nestle-Aland editions are identical does not mean that the 'original Greek' has been perfectly recovered! To treat what is printed in these editions as if it were the Original is to commit the ironic mistake of substituting a 'new T.R.' for an old one.<sup>170</sup>

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Part of what Holmes is saying has already been underscored by Professor Eldon Jay Epp, in his "Twentieth Century Interlude in New Testament Textual Criticism". Moreover, a good number of the delegates at the 1983 textual criticism seminar of the Society of New Testament Textual Studies (SNTS) which was held at Canterbury were not at all pleased with the critical texts of the UBS and the kind of publicity attached to them as if they are the final word in textual criticism. (personal communication from Dr. P.J. Johnston).

### Conclusion

Michael Holmes' "Majority Text Debate: New Form of an old Issue", could not have been anything less than what the title suggests. That is to say, he simply presents in his own words the same case against the Majority Text which has so often become the modus operandi of present-day Eclecticism. Even though Holmes represents his school of thought well, yet fair enough, he presents the facts both ancient and modern, in a much better way than his counterparts - D.A. Carson and Gordon Fee. Nevertheless, he is found repeating the same old mistakes (1) A distorted view of the history of the transmission of the New Testament Text. (2) Reproducing and endorsing W-H's theory. (3) and promoting the Radical Dislocation theory as a proof both for the disappearance of the Alexandrian Text-type and the seeming proliferation of the Majority or Byzantine Text. Again, it must be emphatically stated that even though Holmes appears much more careful and diplomatic, yet still he fails because the theories he endorses have no basis of authority seeing that they have been refuted and confuted time and again.

#### PART THREE: An Examination of Gordon Fee's

#### "The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text"

This third part of chapter four closes the discussion on how eclecticism is practised and postulated in the twentieth century. But this time, the discussion centres around one of the works of a well known textual critic by the name of Gordon Fee,

Professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts. It must be clearly declared that the debate raised by Gordon Fee is no more new than the preceding ones, even though he introduces new ideas and arguments here and there, through his inventive genius.

At first sight, Fee's appraisal of the Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text (G.N.T.M.T.) appears very objective. He affirmed that the G.N.T.M.T. "could serve as a useful tool, by providing a more definitive collating base (for some purposes) and a better textual reference point than is available in the time honoured Textus Receptus (T.R.)"<sup>170</sup> In the second paragraph of his presentation, Fee begins to register some hesitation and delineate his purpose for writing:

As useful as it might be, however, the editors intend for more than simply to present an edition of the N.T. that appears in the Majority of the Byzantine MSS. Despite some proper disclaimers (see on pp. X and Xliii), they clearly believe that this edition is also very close to the original N.T. text itself. Indeed, this conviction has motivated the entire enterprise.<sup>171</sup>

Furthermore, apart from the foregoing observation, he avers that the method used by Hodges and Farstad, co-editors of the G.N.T.M.T., was accurate, seeing that they (H-F) made use of "the work of Hoskier and Schmid for the Revelation and on Von Soden, with help from Tischendorf, for the rest".<sup>172</sup> Fee also noted that whenever Soden's K MSS split, more often than not K<sup>x</sup> is chosen instead of K<sup>F</sup>. But problem arises when the witness of K<sup>x</sup> splits, leaving the editors the alternative of not choosing on Majority basis, but on what they believe is the original N.T. Text. This situation, Fee fears, makes H-F's method tentative. Having looked at this introductory part on Fee's presentation, the following important textual questions will now be discussed:

1. Remarks on H-F's attitude to Textual Criticism: (1) W-H's alleged failure to provide convincing arguments regarding the Byzantine text - On this point, Fee seems to be saying that of all the challenges made against W-H, the one most popularly

promoted by Majority Text protagonists (H-F included) is that W-H failed to 'advance convincing objections to the authenticity of the Majority Text'.<sup>173</sup> This argument, of course, hinges on the fact that W-H's genealogical method was ineffective since it fails to give adequate explanations on the history of the transmission of the N.T. text. To this allegation, Fee's reply is, "while it is true that many would fault W-H here, in many ways their genealogical work, as has been repeatedly demonstrated by many scholars, is nearly irrelevant to their overall methodology (contra H-F, P.Xii). W-H were not perfect, but neither was Edison's first light bulb, and further studies have confirmed over and over again how basically sound their work was, not withstanding all the refinements it has undergone. The firm evidence for this is patently clear in the various critical texts, all of which, including those most critical or independent of W-H, are very close to W-H's text in comparison with the T.R."<sup>174</sup>

Fee must be commended for noting that the genealogical principle of W-H has been decried by scholars a number of times and that W-H were not perfect. But his use of the phrase "basically sound" is dubious and amounts to ignoring the facts. Moreover, to consider the closeness of present-day critical texts to the text of W-H as a proof for the validity of the genealogical method is tantamount to being ignorant of textual facts. Therefore, two facts must be brought to the open in this connection in order to correct Fee: The first is that nearly all so-called critical texts start either with W-H (as UBSGNT) or Nestle, which is very close to W-H. Even the N.E.B. which has a strong "Western" bias starts with Nestle. So, the critical texts should be similar to W-H. Secondly, it is absolutely true that Von Soden did not start with W-H or Nestle, and the texts of Von Soden, Merk and Bover differ considerably from W-H.

The present writer has already dealt with the problem underlying the similarity of modern critical texts in chapter three - "Eclecticism: Its Origin and Nature". What this similarity in critical texts suggests is not progress in textual criticism, but an interlude as a result of little creativity and

more reduplication of former works of other textual critics as Eldon J. Epp affirmed (see chapter three). Fee is wrong in his statement about the similarity of critical texts as a platform for enthroning W-H's theory.

(2) Statistical approach and the normal transmission theory: Fee is right in taking H-F to task for relying heavily on statistics as a basis for proving that the Majority text is original since such a line of thought can only account for an uninterrupted or normal transmission of the N.T. text. With such a mindset, H-F can be faulted for equating the transmission of the N.T. text with the transmission of any other atheistic literature just as W-H can be faulted for using the same critical principles for determining the N.T. text as were used by textual critics of classical or pagan literature and ancient folklore of which "the devout and profoundly meditative Plutarch, who wrote near the close of the first century, may be considered the representative of this direction of mind in religious speculation, which in his day was fully developed".<sup>175</sup>

The case for normal transmission of the scriptures can only be promoted by those who do not want to take into account the struggle the same scriptures went through as a result of the attacks of heretics. Satanic attempts to disrupt the scriptures came from many directions: (a) corruptions deliberate and intentional by heretic and orthodox alike; (b) by pagan persecutions of the early church and destruction of MSS, and (c) to some extent by the Moslem attack on Christianity from the sixth century onwards. Most of these points are already dealt with under the discussion on Holmes' article (see part II, chapter four).

(3) The Early Versions and the Church Fathers - The slighting of the early Versions and the Church Fathers in the G.N.T. M.T. is another important issue that bothers Gordon Fee. In their introduction on page xviii of their text, H-F write:

The present edition does not cite the testimony of the ancient versions or Church Fathers. Nor are the

lectionary texts considered. This is not because such sources have no value for textual criticism. Rather, it is due to the specific aims of this edition, in which the primary goal has been the presentation of the Majority text as this appears in the regular manuscript tradition.<sup>176</sup>

Unfortunately, H-F's foregoing statement in their introduction undermines the integrity of the G.N.T.M.T. to some degree. Even though the slighting of the early Versions and the Fathers, is done on purpose, yet it is difficult to see how one can do textual criticism apart from those two substantial witnesses. So, Gordon Fee is right in saying that available historical evidence in the early Versions and the Fathers must be taken into account in seeking the original N.T. text. The effort that seeks to validate the notion of the early existence of the Majority text by using the Greek MSS alone in the face of so complex a history of the transmission of the text is farcial or absurdly futile.

It is also worth pointing out that because of so outlandish a statement on the neglect of the early Versions and the early Fathers, H-F have given Gordon Fee an opportunity to misrepresent their aim and to cause him to give an erroneous view of the Versions and the Fathers. Gordon Fee remarks:

Hodges-Farstad, however, simply dismiss from consideration a great body of early evidence - especially the ancient versions and Church Fathers (p.xviii) - allegedly because it plays such havoc with their theory. The facts are these: In the Western Church there is not a trace of the Majority Text. In Egypt that text is unknown until after the sixth century, and even when it is found it is in the form of the K<sup>x</sup> form. Furthermore, all the early Eastern Fathers in a variety of locales (e.g. Origen and Eusebius in Caesarea, Cyril in Jerusalem, Epiphanius in Cyprus) show no evidence of the K text...<sup>177</sup>

As the facts testify Fee's presentation is mistaken in the light of present day research and discoveries. To use H-F's argument as an incentive to make such unfounded statements so as to reduce the date of the early existence of the Byzantine text-type to a later date in spite of unknwn facts is failure

to speak the truth. However, in his recent book, as has already been mentioned over and again, Sturz has already given convincing evidence for the early existence of the Byzantine text-type as a whole.<sup>178</sup>

On advancing his theory of the lateness of the Byzantine text, Fee argues on page 109 that the former in its earliest extant form in codex A and Chrysostom is not known before the fourth century but this raises a crucial question which neither Fee, nor any other pro-Hort critic has ever been able to answer: Where did codex A (and parts of codex W) get the Byzantine text-type from? Clearly, Chrysostom did not invent it. Therefore, to ascribe it (in Hort's now discredited theory) to a recension is unhistorical, and to describe it as "a process" accounts for nothing observable except the agreement of sixth to ninth century Byzantine uncials in certain readings not found in Chrysostom or codex A (but often shared with other manuscripts broadly described as "Alexandrian").

By way of recommendation, Sturz's The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism, will make good reading for the reader who wishes to find out more about the early existence of the Byzantine text and the issue of the early Fathers. It must be concluded that the Byzantine text was known everywhere including the West.<sup>179</sup> If so, Hort's theory is fictitious and shattered since he considers the Byzantine text-type a conflation of the so-called Neutral and Western texts.<sup>180</sup> The Byzantine text is attested to by the Versions and the Fathers. Sturz quotes Zuntz as saying:

To sum up. A number of Byzantine readings, most of them genuine, which previously were discarded as "late", are anticipated by P<sup>46</sup>. Our inquiry has confirmed what was anyhow probable enough. The Byzantine did not hit upon these readings by conjecture or independent error. They reproduce an older tradition. The existence of this tradition was in several cases borne out by some versions or patristic quotations; but where such evidence is not forthcoming, the inference proved no less certain. How then - so one is tempted to go on asking - where no Chester Beatty Papyrus happen to vouch for the early

existence of a Byzantine reading? Are all Byzantine readings ancient? In the cognate case of the Homeric tradition G. Pasquali answers in the affirmative; and indeed it seems to me too unlikely that the Byzantine editors ever altered the text without manuscript evidence.<sup>181</sup>

With so abundant a testimony from the MSS, Versions and Early Fathers in favour of the early existence of the Byzantine-text, where does Fee stand? He is mistaken in his assumptions.

(4) Hodges-Farstad alleged isolation of the early corrupted evidence to Egypt- The issue of Egyptian corruption is not at all new. This has come right through from the first chapter up to this point. But worthy of note in Fee's argument is the fact that apart from presenting tangible facts, he resorted to an exaggeration of the case. Even though Gordon Fee avers that "the papyri, B X and C" are extant examples of the most undervalued MSS, yet his position in regards to "the combined evidence of P<sup>75</sup> B and D Latt precisely because this evidence is both early and independent"<sup>182</sup> is worth challenging.

On closer examination of the two sections of the critical apparatus provided by H-F, it clearly shows time and again that not only do X and C side with the Byzantine against B but also that the extant papyri are by no means Egyptian-oriented. It has to be emphasised then that much of the evidence presented in these papyri can nowhere be found in any other modern critical text (including N/A<sup>26</sup>).

Furthermore, it must be stressed that quite often, P<sup>75</sup> disagrees with its supposed ally. Moreover, looking at the nature of P<sup>75</sup> as to the portions of Scripture it covers (extant for barely half each of Luke and John) it would look like one is presenting mutilated facts when P<sup>75</sup> and B are considered a text-type for the whole of the N.T. In fact, other papyri of almost the same date as P<sup>75</sup> - for example, P<sup>45</sup>, P<sup>46</sup>, P<sup>66</sup> - often disagree with B in all areas of the N.T. where all are extant.

So, there must be some reasons why Fee deliberately fails to mention P<sup>46</sup>. The reason must be that P<sup>46</sup> is quite often not in agreement with his few selections. What is also troubling is that of his Hortian selection of P<sup>75</sup> B with D Latt as being the best evidence for the original N.T. text. The only difference between him and Hort is the replacement of Sinaiticus by P<sup>75</sup> as an ally of B. Since P<sup>75</sup> is extant for barely half each of Luke and John, and the other papyri often disagree with B, does it mean that B + D Latt alone form an adequate criterion for the N.T. text? This mindset in the face of so complex a history of transmission is tantamount to rejecting a large part of the evidence that is vital for the recovery of the original text of the N.T.

Before closing this discussion, Fee's statement on page 110, second paragraph, "if all the known leaders, teachers, and early translators of the N.T. had only corrupt texts, then where in the church does this true text survive? After all, the majority of people were illiterate",<sup>183</sup> ought to be investigated a little lest it should be conceived as truth. The word "if" undoubtedly gives some hypotheticality as to whether the Byzantine Text-type was known at all. To reiterate what has already been discussed in part two of chapter four on the Fathers, it must be remembered that the church Fathers quoted loosely on occasion, and sometimes defended readings no longer extant in any known manuscript. The same case applies to the early translators whose translations were often not very literal. For instance, if their Greek texts (as in the Syriac versions) were not already corrupted by Tatian's Deiatessaron, they themselves added corruptions in the process of translation, either by abbreviation, addition or harmonization. This irresponsible translation approach can be substantiated by for example, collating Syr<sup>C,S</sup> in Luke 9. In addition, the Old Latin translations fall into the same category. Scrivener once pointed out that "if we extend our researches to the manuscript copies of Scripture or of its versions which abound in every great library in Christendom, we see in the very best of them variations which we must at once impute to the fault of the scribe, together with many others of a grave

and more perplexing nature, regarding which we can form no probable judgement, without calling to our aid the resources of critical learning".<sup>184</sup> Therefore, in the light of the foregoing statement of Scrivener and what has already been said elsewhere in this thesis, the use of corrupt texts by the early church does not mean that the Byzantine text was unknown. Majority text supporters still believe that the Byzantine text was present from at least the second century, and was used in Egypt, Antioch, and Constantinople. Fee has presented mutilated evidence by insisting that the Byzantine text is not known by the Western church, a position which Zuntz clearly disapproves: 'purely (i.e. distinctively) Byzantine readings, as we saw before may be ancient. We can now add: Byzantine readings which recur in Western witnesses must be ancient. They go back to the time before the Chester Beatty papyrus was written; the time before the emergence of separate Eastern and Western traditions; in short, they reach back into the second century'.<sup>185</sup>

What the discussion leads to is that whether one considers that the transmission of the sacred text was providentially overruled by God or not, the fact remains that in the Greek-speaking church it was predominant and largely quoted from the fourth century; and it is simply a historical fact that, in both the Textus Receptus and the Complutensian Polyglott, it was the Majority text which formed the undeniable basis of the printed edition.

(5) Internal and External Evidence - By bringing into the discussion the issue of Internal Evidence as played down by Hodges and Pickering at the expense of External evidence, Fee is still seeking to fault H-F for promoting a normal transmission theory. Much discussion has gone into this in chapter three and a large part of chapter four. The truth is that both criteria of evidence - the Internal and External have their pros and cons; and one must not be overemphasized at the expense of the other.

### Conclusion

Gordon Fee's reflections on Textual Criticism as they relate to the Majority Text and its Greek New Testament provide another avenue for mulling over the problems surrounding textual work today. His views on the fact that the transmission of the N.T. text is not normal, and that the Early Versions and Fathers must not be neglected in textual work are quite agreeable. But on the other hand, his position on the uniformity of the critical texts as proof that Hort's method is right, his insistence that the Early Versions and Fathers do not register any support for the Byzantine text and his Hortian mindset of enthroning codices ~~X~~ B, C, P<sup>75</sup> D Latt in utter isolation of the others is unjustified. Evidence based on facts has disproved the credibility of his arguments.

## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> J.H. Greenlee, Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), p.81.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>3</sup> D.A. Carson, The King James Version Debate - A Plea for Realism (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), pp. 9-10.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.10.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.44.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp.43-44.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.43.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid., p.44.
- <sup>9</sup> Brook F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort, The New Testament in the Original Greek (London: Macmillan, 1903), pp.1-2.
- <sup>10</sup> Carson, The King James Version Debate - A Plea for realism, pp.44-45.
- <sup>11</sup> Kenyon-Adams, The Text of the Greek Bible, p.209.
- <sup>12</sup> Carson, The King James Version Debate - A Plea for realism, p.45.
- <sup>13</sup> Sturz, The Byzantine Text-type and New Testament Textual Criticism, p.55.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp.55-6.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid., p.56.
- <sup>16</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, Chapters in the History of New Testament Textual Criticism (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1963), p.38.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., p.39.
- <sup>18</sup> Sturz, The Byzantine Text-type and New Testament Textual Criticism, p.56.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., p.61.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., p.62.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp.62-62.

- <sup>22</sup> Souter, The Text and Canon of the New Testament, pp.60-61.
- <sup>23</sup> B.F. Westcott, The Bible In The Church. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), p.132.
- <sup>24</sup> Carson, The King James Version Debate - A Plea for Realism, p.45.
- <sup>25</sup> Frederick H. Scrivener, A Plain Introduction To The Criticism of the New Testament, p.230.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., p.230.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., p.231.
- <sup>28</sup> Sturz, The Byzantine Text-type and New Testament Textual Criticism, p.26.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., p.78.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., p.78
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid., p.79.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., p.81.
- <sup>33</sup> Carson, The King James Version Debate - A Plea for Realism, p.48.
- <sup>34</sup> Metzger, The Text of the New Testament, pp.169-170.
- <sup>35</sup> Westcott and Hort, p.545.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid., pp.546-7.
- <sup>37</sup> Carson, The King James Version Debate - A Plea for realism, p.50.
- <sup>38</sup> Kenyon-Adams, The Text of the Greek Bible, p.148.
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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p.86.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., pp.87-88.

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p.73.

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p.136.

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p.141.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p.14.

<sup>65</sup>Sturz, The Byzantine Text-type and New Testament Textual Criticism, pp.62-3.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p.63.

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid., pp.54-55.

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The conclusion of this piece of work- "The use of the New Testament Greek Text: A critique of the Eclectic Textual Critical Method" centres around the hypothesis: "A closer examination of the eclectic textual critical method of Textual Criticism in the light of available research will find it faulty and in need of careful revision for the enhancement of the kind of textual work that will foster unity and cooperation among textual critics for the edification of the Church of Christ". The thrust of the hypothesis is evident in all the chapters that have been discussed so far:

Chapter one- Preliminary considerations: In this section, the problem of conflict and lack of cooperation among textual critics resulting in the derogatory use of language in books and pamphlets is presented. The lack of a thorough knowledge of the transmission of the N.T. text is also seen as one main reason for the promotion of erroneous textual theories which can only be corrected when the right mind and motive are employed in doing textual work.

In chapter two- The History of the Debate against the Textus Receptus and the Majority Text is discussed so as to bring into light reasons for the rise of the age long textual debate which is so much a current phenomenon of our time. At the end of this chapter, it is observed that the debate versus the Textus Receptus and the Majority Text was sparked off on more or less scholarly and resentful reasons rather than on the basis of spiritual commitment for the spread of the Gospel.

Chapter three- Twentieth century Eclecticism: Its nature and origin sought to discuss in the first place what eclecticism is all about. Originating as an outgrowth of W-H's defective method, eclecticism is found to be inadequate as a result of its utter dependence on internal evidence in disregard of external evidence. The presence of division among its members concerning which method is best for doing actual eclectic textual work, and the obvious similarity of modern critical texts, suggests that twentieth century eclecticism is in a period of interlude or inactivity as far as genuine creative work is concerned.

In chapter four- Twentieth century defence of the Eclectic

Text, the writer highlighted the fact that instead of being on the offensive as before, eclecticism is now seen taking a defensive role against supporters of the Majority text, the T.R. and the K.J.V. but on closer investigation of the defences of such prominent men as D.A. Carson, Michael Holmes and Gordon Fee, it is found out that they erred in many ways even though their motives may perhaps be genuine. They err on the history of the transmission of the N.T. text, the secondary status of the Majority or Byzantine text, the Byzantine conflation theory, the radical dislocation theory, their use of versional and Patristic evidence, their estimation of the T.R., to name a few instances. On the other hand, it must not be construed that the presentation of such men are all the time absolutely wrong. In any case, it should be indicated that much recasting is needed in the areas where eclecticism's proponents are wrong in the light of tangible present-day evidence derived from objective research.

The history of transmission is very complex. To understand and interpret it well, one has to keep abreast with the facts - both ancient and modern. It must be borne in mind that the Western Text (represented in codex D, Bezae - fifth and sixth century), the Egyptian Text (represented in X and B, fourth century), and the Byzantine Text (represented in AW, fifth century) epitomize and emblazon the miraculous history of the N.T. text. For reasons not sufficiently known yet, the Western and Egyptian texts disappeared in history for a total number of twelve hundred years and finally appeared on the scene in the nineteenth century. The radical dislocation theory seeks to give reasons for the disappearance of these texts. But quite the contrary, the presence of the Byzantine text-type continued to be felt in unbroken transmission up to the time of printing in the sixteenth century. It became the text of Erasmus' T.R., Stunica's Complutensian Polyglott and the Patriarchs' text of 1904, a Western lectionary text of the Greek church from earliest times. The same Byzantine text is the Majority text in our era. The papyri have shown that this text is known as far back as the 2nd century.

With this remarkable picture of transmission before us can anybody be ever justified to claim superiority for one text-type over against the other, especially when one of such text-types had disappeared for twelve centuries? The Byzantine text-type has been found to be an ancient unedited and independent witness with an unbroken transmission record. The theory that the Byzantine text is a mixture of the Western and Alexandrian texts no longer stands because its transmission continued in history unimpeded from origins in the 2nd century.

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APPENDIX A  
DEFINITIONS

This study will involve the use of many terms used in textual studies. Since the readership for which this work is intended is wide, there is every need to define the necessary terms that will be used:

1. Textual Criticism

In its restricted sense, Textual Criticism is the study that seeks to ascertain and construct the original wording of the Biblical text (here restricted to the New Testament), that is, the closest approximation to the original autographs. It is the present writer's conviction that this study is essentially different from similar study of ancient non-biblical books. It is clear from much early evidence that from the beginning of the Christian era, the New Testament text has been subjected to Satanic assaults on its integrity in an attempt to destroy saving faith (Burgon, Corruption, p.12, last paragraph).

2. Higher and Lower Criticism

Higher, in contrast to Textual or Lower, criticism starts with the text as its basis and from there goes on to determine the literary elements of the text, such as style, vocabulary and historical background, and best known today from the terms Source Criticism, Form Criticism and Redaction Criticism. The term Lower Criticism is not much used in the twentieth century, and in fact is identical with Textual Criticism. Lower here, originally meant "basic" rather than "inferior". It is basic since all genuine theological study is based on the best attainable Bible text.

3(a) Eclecticism

This is the commonly accepted method adopted in the twentieth century to arrive at the best N.T. Greek Text, For example, Tasker, (Introduction, page viii see page 7 of this Appendix No. (10)) says, "the fluid state of textual criticism today makes the adoption of the eclectic method not only desirable but inevitable".

It is the method employed by the editors of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament (UBSCNT) and the New International Version (NIV) (preface to the N.T., p.8, Hodder, 1974) - "The Greek text used in the work of translation was an eclectic one".

Eclecticism involves the selection of what is considered to be the best reading from a number of competing variants in a large range of N.T. Manuscripts, either by an individual editor or more usually by a committee of scholars. For the rules adopted see 3(b) below.

3(b) "Canons of Textual Criticism"

These rules are those normally adopted by eclectic textual criticism:

- (1) The shorter reading is often preferable.
  - (2) The harder or more difficult reading is often preferable to the easier reading.
  - (3) The reading from which the other reading in a variant could most easily have developed is preferable.
  - (4) The reading which appears to be characteristic of the author is generally preferable.
- (acknowledgement to Greenlee, pp.114-115).

4. Internal Evidence and External Evidence

Internal Evidence is that derived from the application of the rules described in 3(b) above.

External Evidence involves value judgments on the basis of the quality of the individual MSS (regarded as authoritative) as witnesses to the variants in any particular reading which has to be decided on. Manuscripts have usually since the nineteenth century been divided into text-types, to which textual critics attach varying degrees of importance. (The text-types are considered under 5 below).

5. Text-types

- (a) Alexandrian: This generally refers to a type of text

found in a relatively small group of manuscripts (referred to as MSS), which appear to have an Egyptian provenance. This is sometimes referred to as 'the Egyptian recension'. The chief representatives are codices B,  $\chi$ , L amongst the uncials and where extant in Luke and John, P<sup>75</sup> (see 6 below, list). It is regarded as the best type by an influential group of textual critics, such as the UBSGNT Committee.

(b) Western: This is an overall term applied to a variety of N.T. MSS found in early Christendom both in the East and the West, which exhibit on the whole a "wild text" form of the N.T. text, with remarkable additions and omissions. The chief Greek representative is Codex D, supported sometimes by the Old Latin and so-called 'Old Syriac' versions.

(c) Byzantine: This is also known as the Traditional Text of the New Testament, the Majority Text and (in its earlier printed form) the Textus Receptus. It represents the consensus of Greek MSS since the Fourth century which enjoyed a relatively undisturbed transmission until the invention of printing. Its origins are acknowledged to be very early by critics of most schools of thought although it has been attacked because the printed form of the text was based on later copies.

(d) Caesarean: This text, said to represent one used by Origen and Eusebius at Caesarea, had never been clearly identified except possibly in Mark's Gospel. Metzger (Metzger, Chapters, p.67) probably rightly considers "the Caesarean text is disintegrating", and it is better not to regard it as an established text-type.

Note: Mixed Texts - It has become clear since the discovery of P<sup>45</sup> and P<sup>66</sup> that at a very early stage in transmission, MSS became subject to mixture of text-types, and this is found also in Codex  $\mathcal{W}$ , leading us to avoid too hasty value judgements on the quality or excellence of certain MSS for use as external evidence.

## 6. Listing of Greek Manuscripts

This list is not intended to be exhaustive. For a comprehensive list the reader is referred to the UBSGNT Third edition, pages xiii ff. See also the Majority Text, Introduction pages xvi and xvii for an abbreviated list set out book by book for the N.T.

Papyri	P <sup>45</sup>	Chester Beatty	Gospels and Acts	3rd Century
	P <sup>46</sup>	Chester Beatty	Pauline Epistles	c.200 A.D.
	P <sup>66</sup>	Bodmer	John's Gospel	c.200 A.D.
	P <sup>75</sup>	Bodmer	Luke and John	c.200 A.D.
Uncials (MSS in Greek capitals)				
	$\chi$	Codex Sinaiticus	Whole N.T.	4th Century
	A	Code Alexandrinus	Whole N.T.	5th. Century
	B	Codex Vaticanus	Whole N.T. less Heb.9:14 - Rev.	4th. Century
	C	Codex Ephraem	Portions of the whole N.T.	5th, Century.
	D	Codex Bezae	Gospels/Acts (variously dated)	3rd. to 5th. Century.
	D	Codex Claramontanus	Pauline Epistles	6th. Century
	K	Codex Cyprius	Gospels	9th. Century
	L	Codex Regius	Gospels	8th. Century
	W	Codex Washington	Freer Gospels	5th. Century
	$\Delta$	Codex Sangallensis	Gospels	9th. Century
	$\Theta$	Codex Koridethi	Gospels	9th. Century
	$\Pi$	Codex Petropolitani	Gospels	9th. Century.

## 7. Important Early Versions

The term version in Textual Criticism denotes an early translation of the N.T. from the Greek into another ancient language. The basic N.T. versions used for textual purposes today are written in Latin, Syriac and Coptic. Versional evidence is often used or cited in order to support the reliability of a variant reading in terms of age and frequent use. Why are the versions

so important? The importance of the versions for establishing the N.T. text is that we can date their origins with reasonable accuracy, and their origins sometimes witness to a N.T. older than, for example, Codex B and X. Full accuracy in reaching equivalence to the original Greek is usually possible because earlier translators kept close to the meaning of the original Greek. There is dispute about the original dates of the Syriac versions (except Syr<sup>h</sup>).

The following is a list of N.T. early versions that will be referred to in this study:

- (1) Latin Versions:
  - (a) Old Latin (it) 2nd-4th. Centuries
  - (b) Jerome's Latin Vulgate (Vg) 4th. Century
- (2) Syriac Versions:
  - (a) Syriac Sinaitic (Syr<sup>s</sup>) 3rd. Century
  - (b) Syriac Curetonian (Syr<sup>c</sup>) 3rd. Century
  - (c) Syriac Peshitta (used by all Syriac Churches) (Syr<sup>p</sup>) 3rd-4th. Century.
  - (d) Syriac Palestinian (Syr<sup>pal</sup>) 5th. Century
  - (e) Syriac Harklean (Syr<sup>h</sup>) 7th. Century
- (3) Coptic Versions - 3rd.-4th. Centuries.
  - (a) Coptic Sahidic (Cop<sup>sa</sup>) (Southern Egypt)
  - (b) Coptic Boharic (Cop<sup>bo</sup>) (Northern Egypt)

#### 8. (a) Collation

The term collation is used in Textual Criticism for the factual comparison of the readings of manuscripts of a given kind to record textual differences with the aim of reconstructing the history of the text. The normal collating base is the Textus Receptus of the Greek New Testament published by Oxford University Press in 1827 with many subsequent reprints.

(b) Variant Reading - This refers to a variation in the wording of a passage of scripture as found in the comparison

of two or more MSS of the text in hand. In other words, it is a reading that differs from other readings often as a result of omission, addition or expansion on the part of the scribe, or involves differences in the spelling of a given word (which may affect translation).

#### 9. Critical Apparatus

This refers to the textual critical notes which are usually given in Hebrew and Greek editions of the O.T. and N.T. which cite the MSS sources and readings that either support (or vary from) the printed text. It is the synthetic and concise description of the results of collation, employing generally accepted symbols and abbreviations which represent the MSS or versions cited. Methods of constructing a Critical Apparatus differ. UBSGNT cites very full evidence for a strictly limited number of variants (see 10 below), while Nestle-Aland twenty-sixth edition (NA<sup>26</sup>) gives limited evidence for a much wider range of variants. The Majority Text (MT) apparatus gives very full information for a large number of variants but omits Western evidence and Versional evidence. It is essential to consult the introduction to a critical edition to ascertain the method used in constructing a critical apparatus.

#### 10. Editions (selected) of the Greek New Testament since 1827-

(1) H KAINH ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ - Novum Testamentum, Clarendon, 1827 with reprints, (This is the edition of the Textus Receptus used by the International Greek N.T. Project).

(2) H KAINH ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ. The New Testament underlying the English Authorized Version of 1611. Trinitarian Bible Society, London, 1977 (Textus Receptus edited by Theodore Beza). N.B. The Authorized English Version is also known as the King James Version.

(3) Novum Testamentum Graece, ed. C. Tischendorf, 8th edition, Leipzig, 1869, 2 volumes.

(4) The New Testament in the Original Greek, ed. Westcott

and Hort, Macmillan, 1881, Vol 1 - Text; Vol 2 - Introduction, Appendix.

(5) Novum Testamentum Graece, Editions from 3 (1901) to 25 (1968)., ed. Nestle, Stuttgart, Württemberg Bible Society. (This is a resultant text combined from Tischendorf, Westcott and Hort and a third editor, B. Weiss).

(6) H KAINH ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ, 2nd. edition ed. G. Kilpatrick, British and Foreign Bible Society, London, 1958. (This has almost the same text as Nestle.<sup>3-25</sup>)

(7) NOVUM TESTAMENTUM GRAECE, 26th. edition, ed. Nestle-Aland. (This has the same text as UBSGNT 3rd. edition (see below) but has a much fuller critical apparatus.)

(8) The Greek New Testament, ed. by Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo Martini, Bruce Metzger and Allen Wikgren. 2nd. edition 1968, United Bible Societies, Stuttgart.

(9) The Greek New Testament, ed. by Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger and Allen Wikgren, 3rd. edition corrected 1983. United Bible Societies, Stuttgart. (This text is the same as Nestle-Aland 26th. edition above, but gives much fuller information on a limited selection of textual variants)

(10) The Greek New Testament , being the text translated in the New English Bible, 1961, Oxford and Cambridge, ed. R.V.G. Tasker. (This edition contains an appendix with a discussion of a small number of textual variants)

(11) Novum Testamentum Graece et Latine, ed. A. Merk Rome, 1964. (This edition relies heavily on Von Soden, see below).

(12) The Greek New Testament according to the Majority text Zane C. Hodges and A.L. Farstad; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1982. (This edition is similar to the Textus Receptus, but based on a wide range of Greek MS evidence largely derived from Von Soden, see below).

(13) Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt. Vol. 4. Text mit apparat, H. von Soden, Gottingen, 1913.

APPENDIX B: AMBIVALENT WITNESS OF THE FATHERS-ORIGEN (Ante-Nicene), CHRYSOSTOM (Post-Nicene).

Chrysostom	Origen	Majority Text	U.B.S.	Comments
13:40 του δειωνος τουτου	του δειωνος	του δειωνος τουτου	του δειωνος	Chrysostom=Maj Origen=UBS
13:43 εκλαμψουσιν	λαμψουσιν	εκλαμψουσιν	Same as Maj.	Origen=D, 517, 1424, pc. (Legg) Chrysostom=Maj UBS
13:44 Omit υπαγει	?	Include	Same as Maj.	Chrysostom= ?
14:2 Ιωαννης ον εγω απεκε- εινα	τον εγω απεκε- εινα	Ιωαννης ο βαπτισ- της	Same as Maj.	Origen=D (see Mk. 6:16) Chrysostom= ?

APPENDIX B: AMBIVALENT WITNESS OF THE FATHERS-ORIGEN (Ante-Nicene), CHRYSOSTOM (Post-Nicene).

MATTHEW VS	Chrysostom	Origen	Majority Text	U.B.S.	Comments
14:3a	εδησεν αυτων	εδησεν αυτων	εδησεν αυτων	εδησεν [αυτων]	Chrysostom=Maj Text Omit αυτων X B 700, pc. Origen = Maj Text.
14:3b	εθεεο εν φυλακη	εν φυλακη και απεθεεο	εθεεο εν φυλακη	εν φυλακη απε- θεεο	Chrysostom=Maj Text Origen=Xc 33. Origen is earliest evidence for addition of kai (see Tisch. in loc)
14:9	δωτα τους ορκους	δωτα ορκους	δωτα δε τους ορκους	δωτα τους ορκους	Chrysostom=UBS Origen =?
14:13a	ακουσας δε	ακουσας δε	και ακουσας	ακουσας δε	Chrysostom and Origen=UBS
14:13b	οχλοι ηκολουθη- σαν αυτω	οχλοι αυτω ηκολουθησαν	οχλοι ηκολου- θησαν αυτω	Same as Maj.	Chrysostom=Maj and UBS Origen?

APPENDIX B: AMBIVALENT WITNESS OF THE FATHERS-ORIGEN (Ante-Nicene), CHRYSOSTOM (Post-Nicene).

Matthew vs	Chrysostom	Origen	Majority Text	U.B.S.	Comments
14:15a	Οι μεθ' εγώτων αυτοῦ	Οι μεθ' εγώτων αυτοῦ	Οι μεθ' εγώτων αυτοῦ	omit αὐτοῦ	Chrysostom and Origen=Maj.
14:15b	ἡ ὡρα ἡδὴ παρεγενεσθαι	ἡ ὡρα παρεγενεσθαι ἡδὴ	ἡ ὡρα ἡδὴ παρεγενεσθαι	Same as Maj	Chrysostom=Maj + UBS. Origen= X Zf <sup>1</sup> 26 1582. (see N/A 26 and Legg).
14:15c	ἀπορῦστον τοὺς οὐρανοὺς	ἀπορῦστον οὐρανοὺς οὐρανοὺς	ἀπορῦστον τοὺς οὐρανοὺς	Same as Maj	Chrysostom=Maj + UBS. Origen= X CZf <sup>1</sup> 89 2 1241, 1582, Syr hmg
14:16	Ἰησοῦς	Ἰησοῦς	Ἰησοῦς	[Ἰησοῦς]	Chrysostom and Origen=Maj.
14:21	γυναικῶν καὶ παιδῶν	παιδῶν καὶ γυναικῶν	γυναικῶν καὶ παιδῶν	Same as Maj.	Chrysostom = Maj + UBS Origen = D of It

EXPLANATION TO APPENDIX C

HEADING OF COLUMNS EXPLAINED WHERE NECESSARY

Msl Minuscule No. 1, said to have been used by Erasmus, has a significant number of Egyptian readings.

Very Early 2-5 Century. This includes all the earliest Greek evidence, much of which dates from exemplars with second century origins.

Very early Version or Ante-Nicene Fathers. The early versions are Italic, Vulgate, Syr<sup>CSP</sup> and Coptic. The early Fathers included are Origen and Eusebius. This column is rarely important.

Early Greek 6-9 century. This includes all the old uncial evidence up to the 9th century.

Late Reading 10th century - This is minuscules evidence up to the first printed Greek N.T.s (Erasmus and Complutensian Polyglot 1514-1520).

Affecting Translation KJV/AV. A tick here indicates that if the Majority Text is followed, the KJV/AV translation would have to be altered.

Shorter or longer reading. A dash here indicates that the variant readings are of the same length.

Lectionary with TR/M. The only complete example of the Greek Church Lectionary Text is that of the Patriarch's Text, 1904, embodying readings of the church liturgy from ancient times.

Complutensian with TR.M. This reflects the various readings on the N.T. volume of the Complutensian Polyglot, prepared by Stunica from MSS totally independent of those used by Erasmus.

T.R. with U.B.S. This column shows where the T.R. reading which disagrees with the Majority Text is supported by UBSGNT<sup>3c</sup>

T.R. with D versus M/UBS. This column indicates the apparent

"Western" influence of MSS like Codex D on the text of the T.R. where the T.R. disagrees both with the Majority Text and UBS<sup>3c</sup>.

SUMMARY OF SELECTED COLUMNS FOR LUKE'S GOSPEL AS A WHOLE

Total Numbers

Number of variants where the T.R. disagrees with the Majority Text	186
Number of Times where the TR agrees with Msl	82
Number of Times where the TR has a very early Greek reading (2-5th centuries)	101
Number of Times where the Lectionary Text is with the Majority against the T.R.	121
Number of Times where the Complutensian Polyglot is with the Majority Text against the T.R.	140
Number of Times the T.R. (against the Majority Text) agrees with UBS <sup>3c</sup>	56
Number of Times the T.R. is supported by Codex D against both the Majority Text and the UBS <sup>3c</sup>	26
Number of 'late' T.R. readings.	44

Conclusion

It appears that the Textus Receptus constitutes a remarkable text of the N.T. which, while overall agreeing with the Majority Text, contains a considerable number of very ancient readings which Erasmus could not have found just from Msl and other "very late MSS". (see next pages for selected examples)

APPENDIX C

SELECTION OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MAJORITY TEXT AND THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS IN LUKE'S GOSPEL  
(BY PERMISSION OF DR. PETER J. JOHNSTON)

CH	VS	MSL	VERY EARLY EARLY 2-5C	VERY EARLY VERSION OR A.N. FATHERS	EARLY GREEK 6-9C	LATE READING (10C -	AFFECTING TRANSLATION AV/KJV	SHORTER OR LONGER	LECT WITH TR/M	COMPL WITH TR/M	TR WITH UBS	TR WITH D vs M/UBS
4	29	X	V	-	-	-	X	L	TR	M	X	V
4	35	V	V	-	-	-	X	L	TR	M	V	X
4	38	X	X	X	X	V	X	L	M	M	X	X
4	42	X	X	X	V	X	X	-	M	TR	X	X
5	6	X	V	-	-	-	X	-	M	M	X	V
5	8	V	V	-	-	-	X	L	M	M	X	X
5	19	X	X	X	X	V	X	L	M	M	X	X
5	25	V	X	X	V	-	X	-	M	TR	X	X
5	29	X	X	X	X	V	X	L	M	TR	X	X
5	30	X	X	X	V	-	X	S	M	M	X	X
5	36	V	V	-	-	-	V	L	TR	M	V	X
6	7	X	V	-	-	-	V	L	M	M	V	V
6	9	V	V	-	-	-	V	-	M	M	V	V
6	10	V	V	-	-	-	V	L	M	M	V	V
6	10	X	X	-	V	-	V	L	M	TR	X	X
6	23	V	X	X	X	V	X	L	M	M	X	X
6	26	X	V	-	-	-	V	L	M	M	X	V
6	26	V	V	-	-	-	V	L	TR	M	V	X

SELECTION OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MAJORITY TEXT AND THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS IN LUKE'S GOSPEL  
(BY PERMISSION OF DR. PETER J. JOHNSTON)

CH	VS	MS1	VERY EARLY EARLY 2-5C	VERY EARLY VERSION OR A.N. FATHERS	EARLY GREEK 6-9C	LATE READING (100 -	AFFECTING TRANSLATION AV/KJV	SHORTER OR LONGER	LECT WITH TR/M	COMPL WITH TR/M	TR WITH UBS	TR WITH D vs M/UBS
6	28	X	X	V	X	V	V	L	M	M	X	X
6	34	X	X	-	V	-	X	L	M	M	X	X
6	35	V	X	X	X	V	X	L	M	M	X	X
7	2	V	V	-	-	-	X	-	TR	M	V	X
7	6	X	V	-	-	-	X	-	TR	M	V	X
7	9	V	V	-	-	-	X	-	TR	M	V	X
7	11	X	V	-	-	-	X	-	M	TR	X	V
7	12	X	V	-	-	-	X	L	TR	M	V	X
7	16	X	V	-	-	-	X	-	M	M	X	X
7	24	V	V	-	-	-	X	L	TR	M	V	X
7	31	X	X	V	X	V	V	L	M	M	X	X
7	34	X	X	X	V	-	X	-	M	M	X	X
8	3	V	V	-	-	-	V	-	TR	TR	X	X
8	3	V	V	-	-	-	V	-	TR	TR	X	X
8	8	X	V	-	-	-	X	-	M	TR	X	V
8	18	X	V	-	-	-	X	-	M	M	X	V
8	18	-	V	-	-	-	X	-	M	M	V	X
8	33	V	X	X	V	-	X	-	M	TR	X	X

SELECTION OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MAJORITY TEXT AND THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS IN LUKE'S GOSPEL  
(BY PERMISSION OF DR. PETER J. JOHNSTON)

CH	VS	MS1	VERY EARLY EARLY 2-5C	VERY EARLY VERSION OR A.N. FATHERS	EARLY GREEK 6-9C	LATE READING (100 -	AFFECTING TRANSLATION AV/KJV	SHORTER OR LONGER	LECT WITH TR/M	COMPL WITH TR/M	TR WITH UBS	TR WITH D vs M/UBS
8	34	X	X	X	X	V	V	L	M	TR	X	X
8	43	X	X	X	X	V	X	L	M	M	X	X
8	51	X	V	-	-	-	X	-	M	TR	X	V
8	51	X	V	-	-	-	V	-	M	M	X	X
9	1	X	X	X	V	-	V	L	TR	TR	X	X
9	5	V	V	-	-	-	X	-	M	M	V	X
9	9	V	V	-	-	-	X	L	TR	M	X	X
9	10	V	V	-	-	-	X	-	TR	TR	V	X
9	13	X	V	-	-	-	X	-	M	TR	X	X
9	23	V	V	-	-	-	X	L	M	M	V	V
9	24	X	V	-	-	-	X	-	TR	M	V	X
9	27	X	V	-	-	-	X	-	TR	M	V	X
9	27	X	X	X	V	-	X	-	M	TR	V	X
9	28	X	X	X	X	V	X	L	M	M	X	X
9	33	V	V	-	-	-	X	L	TR	TR	V	X
9	33	X	V	-	-	-	X	-	M	M	X	X
9	38	V	V	-	-	-	V	-	TR	M	X	V
9	40	V	X	X	X	V	X	-	M	M	X	X
9	41	V	V	-	-	-	X	-	M	M	X	X
9	49	X	X	X	V	-	X	L	M	M	V	X