

APPENDIX C - Examples of Modern Criticism

TEXTUAL SAMPLING

It seems unreasonable that individuals and organizations professing to champion a high view of Scripture and defending its inerrancy and verbal plenary inspiration should embrace a Greek text which effectively undermines their belief. Since their sincerity is evident, one must conclude that they are uninformed, or have not really looked at the evidence and weighed the implications.

In the small sampling of modern textual scholarship that follows,¹ the reading of the *Textus Receptus* is transliterated first and that of UBS³ second, followed by any others. Beside each variant, in parenthesis is a literal equivalent in English. To each variant is attached a statement of manuscript and versional support similar to that found in the "critical apparatus" of UBS³ (If the reader is unfamiliar with the process of interpreting the statements of support; he should move on to the discussion). "**Byz**" usually represents **over** 90% of the extant (known) Greek MSS/mss. The set of variants with their respective supporting evidence is followed by a brief critique of the implications.

Luke 4:44

"Galilaias" (of Galilee) - A, D, E, G, K, M, U, X, Y, G, D, Q, P, Y, 047, 0211, +6unc, f¹³, 33, **Byz**, lat, syr^p

"Ioudaias" (of Judea) - P^{75vid}, Aleph, B, C, L, Q, R(W)f¹, **Lect**, syr^{s,h}, cop

Problem: Jesus was in Galilee (and continued there), not in Judea.

Discussion: In the parallel passage, Mark 1:35-39, all texts agree that Jesus was in Galilee. Thus UBS³ contradicts itself by reading "Judea" in Luke 4:44. Bruce Metzger, writing as spokesman for the committee which edited the issue, makes clear that the UBS editors did this on purpose when he explains that their reading "is obviously the more difficult, and copyists have corrected it ... in accord with the

¹ This entire Appendix has been adapted from: Wilbur N. Pickering, *What Difference Does It Make?*, (Dallas, TX:, 1990), pp. 1-17.

parallels in Mt.4:23 and Mk.1:39."¹ This error in the eclectic text is reproduced by the LB, NIV, NASB, NEB, RSV, etc.

Luke 23:45

"eskotisthe" (was darkened) - A, C^c, D, E, G, K, M, Q, R, U, V, W, X, Y, G, D, Q, P, Y, 0117, 0135, +5unc, f^{1,13}, **Byz, Lect**, lat, syr, Diat

"eklipontos" (being eclipsed) - P⁷⁵, Aleph(B,C^{vid}), L, 0124, (cop)

Problem: An eclipse of the sun is impossible during a full moon. Such an eclipse may only occur at the new moon phase. Jesus was crucified during the Passover, and the Passover is always at full moon (which is why the date for Easter shifts around). UBS introduces a scientific error.

Discussion: The Greek verb "ekleipw" (ekleipw) is quite common and has the basic meaning "to fail" or "to end", but when used of the sun or the moon it refers to an eclipse. Moreover, our word "eclipse" comes from this Greek root. Indeed, such versions as Moffatt, Twentieth Century, Authentic, Phillips, NEB, New Berkeley, NAB and Jerusalem overtly state that the sun was eclipsed. While versions such as NASB, TEV and NIV avoid the word "eclipse", the normal meaning of the eclectic text that they follow is "the sun being eclipsed."²

Mark 6:22

"autes tes Hrodiados" ([the daughter] herself of Herodias) - A, C, E, G, H, K, M, N, S, U, V(W,q)U, G, P, S, F, W, f⁽¹⁾¹³, 33, **Byz, Lect**, lat, (syr,cop,Diat)

autou ... Hrodiados (his [daughter] Herodias) - Aleph, B, D, L, D

Problem: UBS in Mark 6:22 contradicts UBS in Matthew 14:6

Discussion: Matthew 14:6 states that the girl was the daughter of Herodias (the former wife of Philip, King Herod's [Herod Antipas])

¹ *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, (New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), pp. 137-138.

² Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 242. Metzger dismisses the reading of the vast majority of the MSS as "the easier reading" (p. 182).

brother, who was then living with Herod). Here UBS makes the girl out to be Herod's own daughter, and calls **her** "Herodias". Metzger defends the choice of the UBS Committee with these words: "It is very difficult to decide which reading is the least unsatisfactory" (p. 89)! The modern versions, usually identifying with UBS, part company with this rendering.

Matthew 5:22

eikh (without a cause) - 01^c, D, E, K, L, M, S, U, V, W, D, q, P, S, 0233, f1.13, 33, **Byz**, **Lect**, it, syr, cop, Diat

(missing!) - P⁶⁷, Aleph*, B, 045, vg

Problem: A contradiction is introduced – cp. Eph.4:26, Psa.4:4, etc. Anger is to be controlled and properly directed, but not absolutely forbidden (as the UBS reading does, in effect).

Discussion: Anger is ascribed to Jesus (Mk.3:5) and to God, repeatedly. Again Metzger appeals, in effect, to the "harder reading": "it is much more likely that the word was added by copyists in order to soften the rigor of the precept, than omitted as unnecessary" (p. 13). Are there not other reasons why it might have been omitted? The external evidence against the omission is massive, as well as being the earliest. Most modern versions join UBS in this error.

I Corinthians 5:1

onomazetai (is named) - P⁶⁸, 01^c, 044, **Byz**, syr

(missing) - P⁴⁶, Aleph*, A, B, C, D, F, G, 33, lat, cop

Problem: It was reported that a man had his father's wife, a type of fornication such that not even the Gentiles spoke of it. Notwithstanding, the UBS text affirms that this type of incest did not even exist among the Gentiles – a plain falsehood.

Discussion: Strangely, such evangelical versions as NIV, NASB, Berkeley and LB propagate this error. Interestingly, versions such as TEV, NEB and Jerusalem, while following the same text, avoid a categorical statement.¹

¹ The UBS apparatus gives no inkling to the user that there is serious variation at this point; Metzger also doesn't mention it.

Luke 3:33

tou Aminadab (of Aminadab) & tou Aram (of Aram) - A, E, G, K, N,
U, D, P, Y, 047, 0211 (D,Q)+7unc, 33, **Byz, Lect**, lat, syr^{p,h}

tou Aminadab (of Aminadab), tou Admin (of Admin), & tou Arni (of Arni)

tou Admein,		tou Arnei - B
tou Adam,		tou Arni? - syr ^s
tou Adam,	tou Admin,	tou Arnei - 01*
tou Adam,	tou Admein,	tou Arnei - cop ^{sa}
tou Admein,	tou Admin,	tou Arni - cop ^{bo}
tou Aminadab,	tou Admin,	tou Arnei - 01 ^c
tou Aminadab,	tou Admin,	tou Arhi - f ¹³
tou Aminadab	tou Admh,	tou Arni - X
tou Aminadab	tou Admein,	tou Arni - L
tou Aminadab	tou Admein,	tou Aram 0102 (P ^{4?})

Problem: The fictitious "Admin" and "Arni" have been intruded into Christ's genealogy.

Discussion: UBS has misrepresented the evidence in its apparatus so as to hide the fact that no Greek MS has the precise text it has printed – a text which is a veritable "patchwork quilt". In Metzger's presentation of the UBS Committee's reasoning, he writes, "the Committee adopted what seems to be the least unsatisfactory form of text" (p. 136). The UBS editors concoct their own reading and proclaim it "the least unsatisfactory"! What is so "unsatisfactory" about the reading of the vast majority of the MSS except that it doesn't introduce any difficulties?

There is complete confusion in the Egyptian camp. That confusion must have commenced in the second century, resulting from several easy transcriptional errors, simple copying mistakes. "ARAM" to "ARNI" is very easy (in the early centuries only upper case letters were used); with a scratchy quill the cross strokes in the "A" and "M" could be light, and a subsequent copyist could mistake the left leg of the "M" as going with the "K" to make "N", and the right leg of the "M" would become "I".

Very early Aminadab was misspelled as Aminadam, which survives in some 25% of the extant MSS. The "Adam" of a, syr^s and cop^{sa} arose through an easy instance of homoioarcton (the eye of a copyist went from the first "A" in "Aminadam" to the second, dropping "Amin" and leaving "Adam"). "A" and "D" are easily confused, especially when written by hand.

"Admin" presumably came from "AMINadab", though the process was more complicated. The "i" of "Admin" and "Arni" is corrupted to "ei" in Codex B (a frequent occurrence in that MS). Codex a conflated the ancestor that produced "Adam" with the one that produced "Admin", etc. The total confusion in Egypt should not surprise us, but how shall we account for the text and apparatus of UBS³ in this instance? And whatever possessed the editors of NASB, RSV, TEV, LB, Berkeley, etc. to embrace such an outrageous error?¹ Not one MSS has this reading!

Matthew 19:17

Ti me legeis agathon; oudeis agathos ei me eis, ho Theos (Why do you call me good? No one is good but one, God) - C, E, F, H, K, M, S, U, V, W, Y, D, S, F, W, f¹³, 33, **Byz, Lect**, syr^{p,h}, cop^{sa}, Diat

Ti me erotas peri tou agathou; eis estin ho agathos (Why do you ask me about the good? one is good) - Aleph, L, Q(B,D,f¹,syr^s)

Ti me erotas peri tou agathou; eis estin ho agathos, ho Theos - lat, syr^c, cop^{bo}

Problem: UBS in Matthew 19:17 contradicts UBS in Mark 10:18 and Luke 18:19 (wherein all texts agree here with the Byzantine).

¹ Luke 3:33 offers yet another related textual difficulty. The H-F Majority Text (not the TR) has been misled by von Soden and inserts Joram between Aram and Hezron. Out of 26 extant uncials only nine read Joram; 17 do not, and they are supported by the three earliest Versions. Joram was probably an early corruption of Aram that was subsequently conflated with it; the conflation survives in a large segment of the Byzantine tradition, which is seriously divided here. It is possible that defenders of the eclectic text will appeal to the case of Cainan in verse 36 as being analogous to "Admin" and "Arni". Cainan as son of Arphaxad does not occur in the Masoretic Text, but does in the Septuagint. Any analogy must be denied as "Cainan" is attested by all texts, whereas the UBS reading in verse 33 is the creation of the editors, based on the complete hodgepodge among the "Egyptian" witnesses.

Discussion: Presumably Jesus spoke in Aramaic, but there is no way that whatever He said could legitimately yield the last two translations into Greek given above.¹ That the Latin versions offer a conflation suggests that both the other variants must have existed in the second century. Indeed, the Diatessaron overtly places the Byzantine reading in the first half of that century.

During the 2nd century, the Church in Egypt was dominated by Gnosticism. That such a "nice" gnostic variant came into being is no surprise, but why do modern editors embrace it? Because it is the "more obscure one" (Metzger, p. 49). This "obscurity" was so attractive to the UBS Committee that they printed another "patchwork quilt". The precise text of UBS³ is found only in the **corrector** of Codex B. Further, no two of the main Greek MSS given as supporting this eclectic text (a,B,D,L,Q,f¹) precisely agree! Most modern versions join UBS in this error also.

John 6:11

tois mathetais, hoi de mathetai (to the disciples, and the disciples) – 01^c,
D, 038, 044, f¹³, **Byz**(syr^s)

(all missing) – P^{66,75vid}, Aleph*, A, B, L, N, W, 063, f¹, 33, lat, syr^{c,h}, cop

Problem: UBS in John 6:11 contradicts UBS in Mat.14:19, Mk.6:41 and Luk.9:16 (all agree here with the Byzantine).

Discussion: Mat.14:19, Mk.6:41 and Luk.9:16 all have Jesus giving the broken bread and fish to the disciples, who then distributed to the crowd. They do not have Jesus Himself giving directly to the crowd. The attempt to defend the UBS reading here by an appeal to an "analogy" like Herod's slaughter of the innocents is lame. Mat.2:16 records that Herod "sent and killed" all the male children in Bethlehem, but the actual killing would have been done by soldiers, not by Herod the Great himself. But even this statement says that he "**sent**", which overtly means it was an order carried out by others.

John 6:11 is in the middle of a detailed narrative account wherein the disciples have already been actively participating. In fact, verse 10

¹ In His teaching on general themes, the Lord Jesus presumably repeated Himself many times, using a variety of expressions and variations on those themes. But in this case we are dealing with a specific conversation, which in all likelihood was not repeated.

records that Jesus had given them an order. The UBS rendering of verse 11 is unacceptable.¹ Inconceivably, almost all modern versions join UBS in this error.

Acts 19:16

auton (them) – H, L, P, S, Y, **Byz**, syr^s

amfoteron (both of them) – P, Aleph, A, B, D, 33, syr^p, cop

Problem: The sons of Sceva were *seven*, not two.

Discussion: To argue that "both" can mean "all" on the basis of this passage is to beg the question. An appeal to Acts 23:8 is likewise unconvincing. "For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection – and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. "Angel" and "spirit", if not intended as synonyms, at least belong to a single class, spirit beings. However, the Pharisees believed in "both" – the resurrection and spirit beings.

There is no basis here for claiming that "both" can legitimately refer to seven (Acts 19:16).² Yet, most modern versions do render "both" as "all". The NASV actually renders "both of them," making the contradiction overt!

Matthew 1:7-8

Asa (Asa) – E, K, L, M, S, U, V, W, G, D, P, S, W, 33, **Byz, Lect**, lat^{pt}, syr

Asaph (Asaph) – Aleph, B, C, f^{1,13}, lat^{pt}, cop

Problem: Asaph does not belong in Jesus' genealogy.

¹ As in 1 Corinthians 5:1, the UBS apparatus again gives the user no inkling that there is serious variation at this point. Metzger also offers no comment.

² Metzger's discussion is interesting: "The difficulty of reconciling [seven] with [both], however, is not so great as to render the text which includes both an impossible text. On the other hand, however, the difficulty is so troublesome that it is hard to explain how [seven] came into the text, and was perpetuated, if it were not original, ..." (pp. 471-472). Note that Metzger assumes the genuineness of "both" and discusses the difficulty that it creates as if it were fact. His assumption is baseless and the difficulty it creates is the result of his presuppositions.

Discussion: Asaph was a Levite, not of the tribe of Judah; he was a psalmist, not a king. It is clear from Metzger's comments that the UBS editors understand that their reading refers to the Levite (p. 1).

In fact, "Asaph" is probably not a misspelling of "Asa". Not counting Asa and Amon (see v.10), Codex B misspells 13 names in this chapter; Codex a misspells 10. These misspellings involve dittography, gender change, or a similar sound ("z" for "s", "d" for "t", "m" for "n"). They are not harmless misspellings such as adding an extraneous consonant, like "f", or trading dissimilar sounds, like "s" for "n".

In response to Lagrange, who considered "Asaph" to be an ancient scribal error, Metzger writes: "Since, however, the evangelist may have derived material for the genealogy, not from the Old Testament directly, but from subsequent genealogical lists, in which the erroneous spelling occurred, the Committee saw no reason to adopt what appears to be a scribal emendation" (p. 1).

Thus Metzger frankly declares that the spelling they have adopted is "erroneous". The UBS editors have deliberately imported an error into their text, which is faithfully reproduced by NAB (New American Bible). RSV and NASB add a footnote stating that the Greek reads "Asaph". It would be less misleading had they said that a tiny fraction of the Greek MSS so read. The case of Amon vs. Amos in verse 10 is analogous to this.

Matthew 10:10

mede hrabdous (neither staffs) – C, E, F, G, K, L, M, N, P, S, U, V, W, Y, G, D, P, S, F, W, f¹³, **Byz**, syr^h, cop^{bo}

mede hrabdon (neither a staff) – Aleph, B, D, Q, f¹, 33, lat, syr^p, cop^{sa}

Problem: In both Matthew 10:10 and Luke 9:3 UBS has "neither a staff," thus contradicting Mark 6:8 where all texts have "only a staff."

Discussion: In Luke and Matthew the Byzantine text reads "neither staffs", which does not contradict Mark. The case of the staffs is analogous to that of the tunics; they were to take only one, not several. A superficial reader would probably expect the singular. That some scribe in Egypt should simplify "staffs" to "a staff" comes as no surprise, but why do the UBS editors import this error into their text? Almost all modern versions follow UBS here and in Luke 9:3.

John 7:8

oupo (not yet) – P^{66,75}, B, L, T, W, X, D, Q, Y, f^{1,13}, **Byz, Lect**, syr^{pt}, cop, Diat^{pt}

ouk (not) – Aleph, D, K, P, lat, syr^{pt}, Diat^{pt}

Problem: Since Jesus did in fact go to the feast (and doubtless knew that He was going), the UBS text makes Him a liar.

Discussion: Since the UBS editors usually attach the highest value to P⁷⁵ and B, isn't it strange that they reject them in this case? Here is Metzger's explanation: "The reading ["not yet"] was introduced at an early date (it is attested by P^{66,75}) in order to alleviate the inconsistency between ver. 8 and ver. 10" (p. 216). So, they rejected P^{66,75} and B because they preferred the "inconsistency". NASV, RSV, NEB and TEV read the same as the eclectic text.

Acts 28:13

perielthontes (fetched a compass) – P⁷⁴, 01^c, A, P, 048, 056, 066, 0142, **Byz, Lect**, syr^{p,h}

perielontes (taking away [something]) – Aleph*, B, Y, cop^{sa(bo)}

Problem: The verb chosen by UBS, "periairew", is transitive, and is meaningless here.

Discussion: Metzger's lame explanation is that a majority of the UBS Committee took the word to be "a technical nautical term of uncertain meaning" (p. 501)! Why do they choose to disfigure the text on such poor evidence when there is an easy transcriptional explanation? The Greek letters omicron (o) and theta (q) are very similar. When one follows the other in a word, it would be easy to drop out one of them, in this case the "theta". The word "perielthontes", which means "sailed in a circuitous route", is hardly "a technical nautical term".

2 Peter 3:10

katakaesetai (shall be burned up) – A, 048, 049, 056, 0142, 33, **Byz, Lect**, lat, syr^h, cop^{bo}

heuresetai (shall be found) – (P⁷²)Aleph, B, K, P, syr^{ph} (cop^{sa})

Problem: The UBS reading is nonsensical; the context is clearly one of judgment.

Discussion: Metzger actually states that their text "seems to be devoid of meaning in the context" (p. 706)! So why did they choose it? Metzger explains that there is "a wide variety of readings, none of which seems to be original." "Shall be burned up" certainly cannot be said to be meaningless. NASV abandons UBS here, giving the Byzantine reading; NEB and NIV render "laid bare"; TEV has "will vanish".

The previous examples may not strike the reader as being uniformly convincing; however, there is a cumulative effect. By ingenuity and mental gymnastics, it may be possible to appear to circumvent one or another of these examples but with each added instance, credibility decreases. One or two such circumventions may be deemed as possible, but five or six become highly improbable. There are dozens of further examples any one of which taken singly may not seem to be all that alarming. But they too have a cumulative effect and **dozens** of them should give the responsible reader pause. Is there a pattern? If so, why? But for now, enough has been presented to permit us to turn to the implications.

IMPLICATIONS¹

How is all of this to be explained? The answer lies in the area of presuppositions. There has been a curious reluctance on the part of conservative scholars to come to grips with this matter. To assume that the editorial choices of an unbelieving scholar will not be influenced by his theological bias is naive in the extreme.

To be sure, both such scholars and the conservative defenders of the eclectic text will doubtless reply "Not at all – our editorial choices are derived from a most straightforward application of the generally accepted canons of N.T. textual criticism." And what are those canons? As stated in chapters VI and VII herein, the four main ones are:

- (1) the reading that best accounts for the rise of the other reading(s) is to be preferred;
- (2) the harder reading is to be preferred;

¹ The reader is reminded that this Appendix has been adapted from Dr. Pickering's 1990 *What Difference Does It Make?* Beginning at this section to the end of Appendix C has been adapted from his pp. 12-16.

- (3) the "shorter" is to be preferred; and
- (4) the reading that best fits the author's style and purpose is to be preferred.

From B.M. Metzger's presentation of the UBS Committee's reasoning in the cited examples, it appears that for nearly half their decision was based on the "harder reading canon". But, how are we to decide which variant is "harder"? Will not our theological bias enter in?

Consider, for example, Luke 24:52. The Nestle editions 1-25 omit "they worshipped him" (and in consequence NASV, RSV and NEB do also). UBS retains the words, but with a {D} grade (a very high degree of doubt). Yet only one solitary Greek manuscript omits the words (Codex D) supported by part of the Latin witness. In spite of the very slim external evidence for the omission, it is argued that it is the "harder" reading.

If the clause were original, what orthodox Christian would even think of removing it? On the other hand, the clause would make a nice pious addition that would immediately become popular, if the original lacked it. However, not only did the Gnostics dominate the Christian church in Egypt in the second century, there were also others who did not believe that Jesus was God come in the flesh. As unbelievers, would they be likely to resist the impulse to delete such a statement?

How shall we choose between these two hypotheses? Will it not be on the basis of our presuppositions? Indeed, in discussing this variant, along with Hort's other "Western non-interpolations", Metzger explains (p. 193) that a minority of the UBS committee argued that "there is discernable in these passages a Christological-theological motivation that accounts for their having been added, while there is no clear reason that accounts for their having been omitted." Had no one on the entire committee ever heard of the Gnostics?

THE MYTH OF NEUTRALITY

The myth of neutrality and scholarly objectivity needs forever to be laid to rest. Anyone who has been inside the academic community knows that it is liberally sprinkled with bias, party lines, fads, vendettas, personal ambition, spite, and just plain meanness – quite apart from those with a hatred of the truth of personal accountability to an intelligent and moral sovereign Creator. Neutrality and objectivity should never be assumed,

most especially when dealing with God's Truth – because in this area neither God nor Satan will permit neutrality. The Lord Jesus said: "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters abroad (Mat.12:30)." Thus, God Himself declares that neutrality is impossible; one is either for Him or against Him.

Christ Jesus clearly and unmistakably claims to be God. Faced with such a claim we have only two options, to accept or reject ("Agnosticism" is really a passive rejection). The Bible claims to be God's Word. Again our options are but two. It follows that when dealing with the text of Scripture, neutrality is impossible.

The Bible is clear about satanic interference in the minds of human beings, and most especially when they are considering God's Truth. II Corinthians 4:4 states plainly that the god of this age/world blinds the minds of unbelievers when they are confronted with the Gospel. The Lord Jesus said the same thing when He explained the parable of the sower: "When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts" (Mk.4:15, Lk.8:12).

Furthermore, there is a pervasive satanic influence upon all human culture. I John 5:19 states that "the whole world lies in wickedness." The picture is clearly one of massive influence, if not control. All human culture is under pervasive satanic influence, including the culture of the academic community. Ephesians 2:2 is even more precise: "in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience." Satan actively works in the mind of anyone who rejects God's authority over him. For someone who claims to believe God's Word to accept an edition of the Bible that was prepared by unbelievers is to ignore the teaching of that Word.

Interpretation is preeminently a matter of wisdom. An unbelieving textual critic may have a reasonable acquaintance with the relevant evidence, he may have knowledge of the facts, but that by no means implies that he knows what to do with it. "The fear of the Lord is the **beginning** of wisdom" (Prov.9:10). Thus the unbeliever has none, at least from God's point of view. Wisdom is not the same as I.Q., knowledge or education. It is not merely the acquisition of facts. It entails knowing what to do with those facts. This comes not only from the experiences of life, but above all else – by the guiding and revelation from God. Anyone who edits or translates the text of Scripture needs to

be in spiritual condition such that he can ask the Holy Spirit to illumine him in his work as well as protect his mind from the enemy.

WHY USE SUBJECTIVE CANONS?

It is clear that the four canons mentioned above depend heavily upon the subjective judgment of the critic. But why use such canons? Why not follow the mss evidence and faith in God's promises?

It is commonly argued that the surviving manuscripts are not representative of the textual condition in the early centuries of the Church. The official destruction of MSS by Diocletian (A.D. 300), and others, is supposed to have decimated the supply of MSS such that the transmission was totally distorted to the extent that, presumably, we cannot be sure about anything. Such an argument not only "justifies" the eclectic proceeding, it is used to maintain its "necessity". However, the effectiveness of the Diocletian campaign was uneven in different regions.

Even more to the point are the implications of **the Donatist** movement which developed right after the Diocletian campaign. It was predicated in part on punishing those who had betrayed their manuscripts to destruction during the recent persecution. Obviously, some did **not** betray their MSS or there would have been no one to judge the others. Moreover those whose commitment to Christ and His Word was such that they who withstood the torture would be the most careful about the pedigree of their MSS. Hence, the purest specimens would have been the most likely to have survived. The main stream of transmission would have this fountain as its origin.

Since the Byzantine (majority) textform dominates over 90% of the extant MSS, those who wish to reject it cannot concede the possibility that the transmission of the text was in any sense normal. If it had been, then the majority must reflect the original wording, especially since the consensus is so massive. Thus, it is argued that the "ballot box" was "stuffed" – that the Byzantine text was imposed by ecclesiastical authority, but only after it was systematically concocted from other older texts in the early 4th century. Yet, as we have already stated, there exists absolutely no historical evidence to support this conjecture.

Also, numerous studies have demonstrated that the mass of Byzantine MSS are not monolithic; there are many distinct strands or strains of transmission, seemingly independent. Some of these go back to the 3rd

century (if not earlier). This is demonstrated by Codex a in that it conflates some of those strands in Revelation. Asterius, a pupil of Lucian of Antioch (d. 341) used MSS that were clearly Byzantine. His *Syntagmation* is generally believed to have been published before the Council of Nicea (325); accordingly, his MSS would have been 3rd century.

But why is "the shorter reading to be preferred?" Because, we are told, scribes had a propensity to add bits and pieces to the text. But that would have to be a deliberate act, for it has been demonstrated that accidental loss of place (a parablepsis) results in omission far more often than addition. For the most part, the only way to add accidentally is to copy part of the text twice, however the copyist would have to be really drowsy not to catch himself at it. So, any time a shorter reading could be the result of parablepsis, it should be viewed with suspicion.

Even when deliberate, omission should still be more frequent than addition. If there is something in the text that someone doesn't like, it attracts his attention and he may be tempted to do something about it. Correspondingly, it requires more imagination and effort to create new material to add than to delete that which is already there. Material suggested by a parallel passage would be an exception. Further, it has been demonstrated that most scribes were careful and conscientious, avoiding even unintentional mistakes. Those who engaged in deliberate editorial activity were really rather few, but some were flagrant offenders (like Aleph in Revelation).

Why is "the harder reading to be preferred?" The assumption is that a perceived difficulty would motivate an officious copyist to attempt a "remedy". But in the case of a such a presumed deliberate alteration, how can degrees of "hardness" actually be ascribed? We don't know who did it or why. Due allowance must be made for possible ignorance, officiousness, prejudice, and malice. Moreover, this canon is unreasonable for the more absurd a reading is, whether by accident or design, the better is its claim to be "original" since it will certainly be the "hardest".

It does not take a prophet or an apostle to see that this canon is wide open to satanic manipulation, both in the original creation of variants and in their present day evaluation. Nevertheless, since it is demonstrable that most copyists did not make deliberate changes, where there is massive agreement among the extant MSS this canon should not

even be considered. Indeed, where there is massive agreement among the MSS none of the subjective canons should be used – they are unnecessary and out of place. Of the more than 6,000 differences between UBS³ and the *Textus Receptus*, the vast majority of the readings preferred by the UBS editors have slender MS attestation. That liberal critics would reject the witness of the MSS in favor of subjective considerations should come as no surprise; but why do conservative believers embrace their conclusions?

CONCLUSION

In Jesus' day there were those who "loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:43), and they are with us still. But, the "praise of men" comes at a high price. One must accept their value system, a value system that suffers direct satanic influence. To accept the world's value system is basically an act of treason against King Jesus; it is a kind of idolatry. Those conservative scholars who place a high value on "academic recognition," on being acknowledged by the "academic community," and known for "scholastic excellence," etc., need to ask themselves about the presuppositions that lie behind such recognition.

We are not decrying true scholarship. We are challenging conservatives to make sure that their definition of scholarship comes from the Holy Spirit, not from the world. Were this implemented, there would be a dramatic shift in the conservative Christian world with reference to the practice of N.T. textual criticism and to the identity of the true N.T. text.

What difference does it all make? Not only do we have the confusion caused by two rather different competing forms of the Greek text, but one of them (the eclectic text) incorporates errors and contradictions that undermine the doctrine of inspiration and invalidate the doctrine of inerrancy. The other (the Traditional majority Text) does not. The first is based on subjective criteria, applied by liberal critics; the second is based on the consensus of the manuscript tradition and actual usage by the true followers (the real Church) down through the centuries.

Because the conservative evangelical schools and churches have generally embraced the theory (and therefore the presuppositions) that underlies the eclectic text (UBS³ - Nestle²⁶), there has been ongoing compromise or defection within the evangelical camp with reference to the doctrines of Biblical inspiration and especially inerrancy. The authority of Scripture has been greatly undermined; no longer does it command immediate and

unquestioned obedience. Consequently, there is a generalized softening of our basic commitment to Christ and His Kingdom. Equally dismaying, through our missionaries we have exported all of this to the emerging churches in the "third world". Alas! Truly, the ancient landmark is being removed (Prov.22:28)!

What then shall we do, throw up our hands in despair? Indeed no! With God's help let the people of God work to undo the damage. We must start by consciously making certain that all our presuppositions, our working assumptions, are consistent with God's Word. If we approach the evidence – the Greek MSS, patristic citations, ancient versions and most especially, God's many promises to preserve His Word – if we acknowledge the fact that the faithful have used the *Textus Receptus* as their N.T. down through the years as retained to this day by the Greek Church; we will have a credible, demonstrable basis for proclaiming and defending both the inspiration as well as the inerrancy of the New Testament text. We **have** a compelling basis for total commitment to God and His Word. The trumpet has been clearly sounded (I Cor.14:8). Whom will you believe? What will you do?

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"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." ([Revelation 3:11](#))

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