

Johnson, M. (Michael) David
Student ID 4058495
BS875
Assignment 3
2016/05/30

442 Michael Manor
Glenview, IL 60025-4636
847-998-1656 Home
708-476-6882 Cell
mdj@theologyfrombelow.org

**Analysis of
A History of the Textual Criticism of the
New Testament
By Marvin R. Vincent, DD
and of
An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the
New Testament
By Benjamin B. Warfield, DD**

Copyright © 2016 by
M. David Johnson

License

Having obtained a copy of this paper by whatever means, you are hereby licensed to make and distribute as many copies of this paper as you wish, free of charge, so long as:

1. You do not change this paper or its copies in any way.
 2. You do not use this paper or its copies in any way or for any purpose which would not glorify the Name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
-

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Inerrancy | 4 |
| The Witnesses | 12 |
| Divergence | 14 |
| Vincent: On the History | 15 |
| Warfield: On the Theory, Methods, and Praxis | 32 |
| Conclusions | 43 |
| References | 47 |

Introduction

In this paper I analyze and compare the two title works of Marvin R. Vincent and Benjamin B. Warfield on the subject of Textual Criticism.

Marvin Richardson Vincent was a Presbyterian minister, best known for his *Word Studies in the New Testament*. From 1888, he was professor of New Testament exegesis and criticism at Union Theological Seminary, New York City. He was born in 1834 and died in 1922. (Wikipedia01). His *A History of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* was published in 1899. (Vincent, 1899)

Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield was professor of theology at Princeton Seminary from 1887 to 1921. Some conservative Presbyterians consider him to be the last of the great Princeton theologians before the split in 1929 that formed Westminster Theological Seminary and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. He was born in 1851 and died in 1921. (Wikipedia02). His *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* was also published in 1899. (Warfield, 1899).

So, Vincent and Warfield were the ultimate contemporaries. They both lived during the same period. They were both conservative scholars whose life and works essentially predated the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy, begun by Harry Emerson Fosdick in 1922, and which led to the split of the seminary in 1929, and of the Presbyterian Church in 1936. (Wikipedia03). They were both also contemporaries of Brooke Foss Westcott (1825–1901) and Fenton John Anthony Hort (1828–1892) who produced the foundation document of modern textual criticism,

The New Testament in the Original Greek (1881). (Wikipedia04). And both Vincent and Warfield published their respective volumes on Textual Criticism in 1899.

Inerrancy

Vincent begins his book by defining Textual Criticism:

Textual Criticism is that process by which it is sought to determine the original text of a document or of a collection of documents, and to exhibit it, freed from all errors, corruptions, and variations which it may have accumulated in the course of its transmission by successive copyings.

(Vincent, 1899, p. 1).

And Warfield defines Textual Criticism as follows:

This is what is meant by “textual criticism” which may be defined as the careful, critical examination of a text, with a view to discovering its condition, in order that we may test its correctness on the one hand, and, on the other, emend its errors.... The art of textual criticism is thus seen to be the art of detecting and emending errors in documents. The science is the orderly discussion and systematization of the principles on which this art ought to proceed. (Warfield, 1899, pp. 4, 7).

Both Vincent and Warfield set as their goal the recovery of the original intended text of the author of the document being considered. Warfield states:

The text of a document is the *ipsissima verba* of that document, and it is to be had by simply looking at it; whatever stands actually written in it is its

text. The text of a work, again, is the *ipsissima verba* of that work, but it cannot be obtained by simply looking at it. We cannot look at the work, but only at the documents or “copies” that represent it; and what stands written in them, individually or even collectively, may not be the *ipsissima verba* of the work, - by exactly the amount, in each case, in which it is altered or corrupted from what the author intended to write, is not the *ipsissima verba* of the work. (Warfield, 1899, p. 3).

Vincent is even more explicit:

The text of a document, accurately speaking, is that which is contained in its autograph.

This is not to say that the autograph is without error. When we speak of the original text of a document, we mean only that it is what the author himself wrote, including whatever mistakes the author may have made. Every autograph is likely to contain such mistakes....

It is entirely possible that a careful transcription of a document by an intelligent and accurate scribe, a transcription in which the errors of the original were corrected, should have been really a better piece of work than the autograph itself, and, on the whole, more satisfactory to the author...

The New Testament is no exception to this rule. If the autographs of the Pauline Epistles, for instance, should be recovered, they would no

doubt be found to contain errors such as have been described. (Vincent, 1899, pp. 2-3).

With all due respect to Vincent and Warfield, both of whom I consider to be giants of Reformed Theology, I would contend that, first, the goal of reaching back to the intent of the author is an overreach of considerable import. With any document, to attempt to reach back beyond the original autograph, and into the mind of the author, would be an exercise in extreme subjectivism. Even Westcott and Hort were not so ambitious. They were intent only upon recovering the wording of the original autographs:

Again, textual criticism is always negative, because its final aim is virtually nothing more than the detection and rejection of error. Its progress consists not in the growing perfection of an ideal in the future, but in approximation towards complete ascertainment of definite facts of the past, that is, towards recovering an exact copy of what was actually written on parchment or papyrus by the author of the book or his amanuensis. Had all intervening transcriptions been perfectly accurate, there could be no error and no variation in existing documents. (Westcott and Hort, p. 3)

Attempting to reach back into the mind of the author goes beyond the transcriptional probability of internal evidence and ventures into the realm of conjectural emendation.

Internal evidence deals with the probabilities of what a scribe might have done, intentionally or unintentionally, that would have produced a different reading. External evidence deals with the MSS and other

witnesses to the text in order to decide which reading has the best support by these witnesses (Greenlee, p. 111).

Conversely:

If examining the available MSS (manuscripts) fails to indicate satisfactorily the original text of a certain word or phrase, a scholar may resort to an “educated guess” known as *conjectural emendation*. In the case of literature where there are only a few extant MSS this procedure may sometimes be necessary. When [a] large number of MSS are available, as in the case of the New Testament, conjecture is less often, if ever, necessary, and tends to become what Kenyon has called “a process precarious in the extreme, and seldom allowing anyone but the guesser to feel confidence in the truth of its results.” (Greenlee, p. 5).

Kenyon, himself, proceeds within the restricted bounds delimited by the original autographs:

The province of Textual Criticism is the ascertainment of the true form of a literary work, as originally composed and written down by its author....

The function of textual criticism, then, is to recover the true form of an author’s text from the various divergent copies that may be in existence.

(Kenyon, pp. 1-2).

And second, I would contend that treating the New Testament like any other document for the purposes of Textual Criticism is invalid on two counts. In the first place, the manuscripts of the New Testament which we have for comparison in the process of Textual Criticism

enormously exceed those available for other ancient documents, both as to number and also as to date.

There are over 5,400 manuscripts of New Testament passages and books.

By comparison there are relatively few manuscripts of other ancient writings, as noted below:

Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War (c. 460–400 B.C.) - Only 8 extant mss, the earliest being c. A.D. 900, plus a few fragments from the 1st century A.D.

Julius Caesar, Gallic War (composed 58–50 B.C.) - Several extant mss, but only 9 or 10 of good quality; the oldest is about 900 years after Julius Caesar.

Livy, Annals of the Roman People (59 B.C.–A.D. 17) - Only 35 of the original 142 books have survived; 20 extant mss; only 1 ms (containing fragments of books 3–6) is as old as the fourth century A.D.

Tacitus, Histories and Annals (c. A.D. 100) - Only 4.5 of the original 14 books of Histories and 10 (with portions of 2 more) of the 16 books of Annals survived in 2 mss dating from the ninth and eleventh centuries A.D. (Wegner, p. 41).

By comparison, many of the extant manuscripts of the New Testament are much closer in time to its original autographs:

Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲛ, ca. AD 350), preserves the entire NT. (It also contains the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas.) The great Codex Vaticanus (B, ca. AD 325) includes everything except 1 Timothy to Philemon and Hebrews 9:14 through the Revelation of John. (Epp and Fee, p. 4).

And some smaller (shorter or fragmentary) manuscripts are even closer in time to the originals.

The earliest codices were written on papyrus leaves in uncial (capital letter) script, with no separation of words and little or no punctuation. Because papyrus is naturally perishable, few of the early copies have survived except in the dry sands of Egypt. So far, fragments or large sections of eighty-eight different papyrus MSS have been discovered. These range in date from approximately AD 125 (P⁵², a single small fragment of John 18:31–34, 37–38) to the eighth century (P⁴¹, P⁶¹), though the majority belong to the third and fourth centuries. Every NT book except 1 and 2 Timothy is represented in these MSS. Several of the papyri are well preserved and present the earliest significant witness to the NT text. For example, P⁴⁵ (ca. AD 250) has substantial sections of the Synoptic Gospels, P⁷⁵ (ca. AD 200) contains more than half of Luke and John, P⁶⁶ (ca. AD 200) about two-thirds of John, P⁴⁶ (ca. AD 225) substantial portions of Paul's letters, P⁷² (ca. AD 275?) large sections of Jude and 1 and 2 Peter, and P⁴⁷ (ca. AD 280) about one-half of the Revelation. (Epp and Fee, p.4).

And, in the second place, the suggestion, that the Author of the New Testament may have, Himself, made errors, is simply anathema. God is the Author of the entire Bible, of both the Old Testament and the New Testament, and of each of its several 66 books. God doesn't make mistakes or errors. Warfield himself writes:

The Church, then, has held from the beginning that the Bible is the Word of God in such a sense that its words, though written by men and bearing indelibly impressed upon them the marks of their human origin, were written, nevertheless, under such an influence of the Holy Ghost as to be also the words of God, the adequate expression of His mind and will. It has always recognized that this conception of co-authorship implies that the Spirit's superintendence extends to the choice of the words by the human authors (verbal inspiration), and preserves its product from everything inconsistent with a divine authorship—thus securing, among other things, that entire truthfulness which is everywhere presupposed in and asserted for Scripture by the Biblical writers (inerrancy). (Warfield, 2008, Vol. 1. P. 173).

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy provides:

1. God, who is Himself truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.

2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.

3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.

4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.

5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the church. (Sproul, Vol. 2, pp. xv-xv1).

¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17, ESV).

²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:20-21, ESV).

A purely human author of a purely human book might indeed make the kind of “original” errors which Vincent has described. But, such was not possible for the human authors who were inspired by God in the writing of the Scriptures.

⁴God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. (Romans 3:4, KJV).

The Witnesses

Warfield explains:

The first duty of the student who is seeking the true text of the New Testament is obviously to collect and examine the witnesses to that text. Whatever professes to be the Greek New Testament is a witness to its text. (Warfield, 1899, p. 16).

Vincent concurs:

The evidence by which the New Testament text is examined and restored is gathered from three sources: Manuscripts, Versions, and Patristic Quotations. (Vincent, 1899, p. 8).

Elsewhere, Vincent also opines:

But let us now ask, *What is criticism?* since a misconception or partial conception of that word underlies much of the popular unrest concerning this subject.

Its fundamental idea is *separation*. It is derived from a Greek verb meaning “to separate.” If I have in a basket fifty sound apples and twenty

which are more or less rotted, and I put the sound apples into one pile and the rotten ones into another, that is criticism. But that process implies *judgment*, which pronounces an apple sound or unsound. Out of the primary meaning of the Greek word, “to separate,” grew the secondary meaning, “to judge,” since judgment always implies a separation of the true from the false; of the bad from the good; of reliable evidence from doubtful evidence. In so simple a matter as that of the apples, the process of judgment is easy. If one were called upon to decide as to the respective quality of a dozen diamonds, more knowledge and practised skill would be demanded; and the sifting of the evidence on which turns the life or the death of an accused man often requires the highest wisdom. (Vincent, 1894, pp. 11-12).

Within the discussions which I’ve here headed “The Witnesses”, Both Vincent and Warfield outline the features of the various documents upon which Textual Criticism of specifically the New Testament operates.

Manuscripts can appear on papyrus, on vellum, or on paper. They can be written in the form of a scroll or in the form of a codex (what we would now call a book). They may include all or much of the entire New Testament, or they may only include certain specific books, or they may only be tiny fragments. They may be truly ancient, dating to as early as the early part of the second century. Or, they may be relatively late, dating in the medieval period, or perhaps even later. They might be uncial (what we might say are all in capital letters), or they might be miniscules – also called cursives (what we might say are mostly all lower case letters).

They might be original Greek manuscripts in somewhat “normal” New Testament order (although the order of the books was rather flexible from place-to-place and time-to-time). They might be original Greek manuscripts as compiled into Lectionaries, i.e. following some scheme for periodical readings and combining passages from the Gospels, the Epistles, and the other books into one combined (daily or weekly) reading. They might be versions as translated into other languages, such as Latin, Syriac, Egyptian, Ethiopic, Armenian, or Gothic. They might be originals, or they might be Palimpsests (manuscripts where the original text has been scraped off and written over by a newer document).

Divergence

Following the material on the Witnesses, the two books diverge. Vincent spends the rest of his book outlining the history of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament, while Warfield spends the rest of his book discussing the theory, methods, and praxis of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament.

Vincent outlines the Textual Criticism of the early church, the Complutensian polyglot and Erasmus, the Textus Receptus, the beginnings of a critical method, movement toward the genealogical method, the transition from the Textus Receptus to the older uncial text, Griesbach and his successors, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Scrivener, Burgon, Westcott and Hort, and more recent contributors.

Warfield, on the other hand, discusses the methods of criticism, including internal evidence with reference to both authors and scribes and the types of unintentional corruptions, and then external evidence with reference to progressive corruption, weighting of documents, genealogical evidence, and Dr. Hort’s classifications. He also discussed the praxis of criticism,

i.e. the order of procedure beginning with external evidence to be followed by internal evidence. He then concludes with a short outline of the history of criticism, concentrating therefrom on the formulation of critical rules, both pre-Hort and according to Hort.

Vincent: On the History

Vincent begins Part II of his book by noting that textual variants and corruptions of the text appeared very early in the history of the New Testament documents, within a century after the original autographs were penned. He contends that the text was treated very arbitrarily at the time and was subject to additions and alterations introduced by heretical teachers. He cites three major authorities on this view:

Tischendorf says, “I have no doubt that in the very earliest ages after our Holy Scriptures were written, and before the authority of the church protected them, willful alterations, and especially additions, were made in them.” Scrivener says that the worst corruptions to which the New Testament has ever been subjected, originated within a hundred years after it was composed, and Hort agrees with him. (Vincent, 1899, p. 42).

Vincent continues:

These writings were not originally regarded as Holy Scripture. Copies of the writings of the Apostles were made for the use of individual communities, and with no thought of placing them on the same level with the Old Testament. Accordingly, there would be little effort at punctilious accuracy, and little scruple in making alterations. (Vincent, 1899, p. 43).

The main problem that I see with this line of reasoning is that neither Vincent, Tischendorf, Scrivener, nor Hort had sufficient evidence for such pronouncements. In 1899, when Vincent wrote this book, the most ancient New Testament manuscripts available were Codex Sinaiticus (ca. 350-375 A.D.) and Codex Vaticanus (ca. 350). Comfort indicates that Vaticanus was not published (photographically) until 1904-1907, but transcriptions had been available since 1868 (Warfield, 1899, p. 218). Codex Washingtonianus (ca. 400) was not published until 1912. 0162 (P. Oxy. 847 – early fourth century) was not published until 1909. And 0189 (Papyrus Berlin 11765 – late second or early third century – the earliest parchment manuscript of the New Testament) was not published until 1927. All of the other uncials, regardless of when published, were dated fifth century or later. Of the papyri, only P¹ (early third century) and P⁴ (middle to late second century) were extant at the time of Vincent's writing. (Comfort, 2005, pp. 59-90).

Vincent cites Irenaeus (Against Heresies III, 12) as declaring, “the others (besides Marcion), though they acknowledge the Scriptures, pervert their interpretation.” (Vincent, 1899, p. 43). My copy of Irenaeus reads:

Wherefore also Marcion and his followers have betaken themselves to mutilating the Scriptures, not acknowledging some books at all; and, curtailing the Gospel according to Luke and the Epistles of Paul, they assert that these are alone authentic, which they have themselves thus shortened. In another work, however, I shall, God granting [me strength], refute them out of these which they still retain. But all the rest, inflated with the false name of “knowledge,” do certainly recognize the Scriptures;

but they pervert the interpretations, as I have shown in the first book.

(Coxe, 1985, pp. 434-435).

But Irenaeus lived from 120-202 A.D. and most probably wrote *Against Heresies* during the period 174-189 A.D. Marcion lived from ca. 85 A.D. to ca. 160 A.D. and developed his ditheistic system of belief around 144 A.D.

Most of the books of the Bible were most likely written between 50 A.D. and 68 A.D. with the Gospel of John (85 A.D.) and his epistles (90-95 A.D.) a bit later. (cf. www.biblestudytools.com).

I would hesitate to group Marcion with those who might reasonably be accused of “adjusting” the Scriptures to fit their own theological beliefs. Where they “adjusted”, Marcion excised. Where they may have changed a few words, Marcion simply deleted major portions of the New Testament. Where they attempted to twist the Scriptures to fit their own mold, Marcion shredded the Scriptures through a meat-grinder. Where they might have cut a word here or there, Marcion took an axe and decimated the Scriptures. In short, Marcion (and his followers) were in a class by themselves.

And, it appears that Irenaeus also put Marcion in a separate class. Irenaeus said that Marcion mutilated the scriptures, but that others recognized the Scriptures but perverted the interpretations.

I would suggest that the existence of one mutilator (Marcion) does not establish a case for widespread corruption of the Biblical text.

I would also suggest that perverting interpretations is something different from actually corrupting the Scriptures themselves.

If I look at John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”, and then I say that the phrase “shall not perish” simply means “shall not be annihilated”, that is indeed a perverted interpretation. But that is not the same thing as trying to affirm that John 3:16 actually reads “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not be annihilated, but have everlasting life.”

Therefore, I would propose that Vincent’s citing of Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* III, 12) does NOT adequately support his contention that “the text was treated very arbitrarily at the time and was subject to additions and alterations introduced by heretical teachers.”

Vincent then cites Tertullian (*De Praesc. Haer.* XXXVIII) as saying that “Marcion and Valentinus change the sense by their exposition. ‘Marcion,’ he continues, ‘has used a sword, not a pen; while Valentinus has both added and taken away.’” (Vincent, 1899, p. 43).

But, here again, Vincent is placing Valentinus in the same class as Marcion, while, in fact, Tertullian clarifies their difference. My copy of Tertullian (*On Prescription Against Heretics*, XXXVIII) reads:

One man perverts the Scriptures with his hand, another their meaning by his exposition. For although Valentinus seems to use the entire volume [integro instrumento], he has none the less laid violent hands on the truth only with a more cunning mind and skill [callidior ingenio] than Marcion. Marcion expressly and openly used the knife, not the pen, since he made such an excision of the Scriptures as suited his own subject-matter. Valentinus, however, abstained from such excision, because he did not invent Scriptures to square with his own subject-matter, but adapted

his matter to the Scriptures; and yet he took away more, and added more, by removing the proper meaning of every particular word, and adding fantastic arrangements of things which have no real existence [non comparentium rerum]. (Coxe, 1986, p. 262).

Here, Tertullian also is placing Marcion and Valentinus in separate categories: Marcion again as a mutilator of the Scriptures, while he indicates that Valentinus is another who is perpetrating perverted interpretations.

Tertullian, by the way, lived from ca. 155 A.D. to ca. 240 A.D. He probably wrote “On prescription Against Heretics” about 208 A.D. Valentinus lived from 110-160 A.D. and probably began his gnostic teachings around 136 A.D.

So, Vincent’s citing of Tertullian (De Praesc. Haer. XXXVIII) also does NOT adequately support his contention that “the text was treated very arbitrarily at the time and was subject to additions and alterations introduced by heretical teachers.”

The presence of perverted interpretations is not as serious a problem as the supposed corruption of the text itself. Faced with a perverted interpretation, we have recourse to the text itself, as well as to its greater context (the whole of Scripture) in order to refute the perverted interpretation. On the other hand, a corruption of the text itself, unless it is isolated and minor, does not as easily yield to such refutation, because there is then no clearly obvious standard against which to compare the corruption.

I hold that there is NO adequate evidence to support Vincent’s claim that “the text was treated very arbitrarily at the time and was subject to additions and alterations introduced by heretical teachers.” He has NOT proved his case on this point.

Sturz argues strongly that such early arbitrary treatment of the text did not occur. He instead argues that, during the early period great care was taken with the Scripture texts.

The Byzantine text may be unedited in the WH (Westcott-Hort) sense because its users appear conservative in their view of Scripture as compared with some of those who used the Alexandrian and Western texts. A conservative attitude toward the handling of the sacred text existed very early among the Fathers generally. The attitude of the Antiochians toward Scripture seems to suggest that they were jealous in the care of it. It will be remembered that the school of Antioch was the school of “literal” interpretation, while the school of Alexandria championed the allegorical method. This is not to imply that the Alexandrian Christians had a low opinion of Scripture. Antioch, however, had a much narrower and more conservative view of the canon than Alexandria, if the views of Africanus and Origen in their exchange of letters can be taken as criteria of their respective schools. It will be recalled that Africanus took Origen to task for citing parts of the apocryphal books of the LXX as Scripture, and that Origen responded by defending the use of the LXX over against the Hebrew. (Sturz, 1984, p. 115).

Clement of Alexandria lived from ca. 150 A.D. to ca. 215 A.D. and his major works were written between ca. 195 A.D. and ca. 203 A.D. Origen lived from 185-254 A.D. Origen was a very prolific writer and he championed the allegorical school of Biblical interpretation. It’s clear that by Origen’s day, textual variants did indeed exist. Vincent writes:

Origen (Comm on Matthew) remarks on the diversity of copies arising either from the negligence of scribes or the presumption of correctors. He frequently discusses various readings, and comments upon the comparative value of manuscripts and the weight of numerical testimony.... Again, minute care was not exercised in the preparation of manuscripts. In some cases they appear to have issued from a kind of factory, where the work of transcribing was carried on on a large scale. (Vincent, 1899, p. 44).

But Sturz has a very different viewpoint and presents clearly conflicting evidence to support his points:

Near the end of the second century Clement of Alexandria... complained of those who tamper with (or metaphrase) the Gospels for their own sinister ends.... Clement's complaint is primarily concerned with the Gospels as transcribed records. As is well known, he himself does not customarily use precise (sic) or literal citation when he quotes or alludes to Scripture. But this is far different from the thing which he is condemning, namely tampering with the transcribed text! The point to be especially noted here, however, is that Clement who lived in Alexandria has knowledge of such liberties being taken with the text, which Alexandrian scribes were supposed to be transcribing unchanged....

Origen seems to assign variants to one or another of three principal causes: 1) the negligence of some scribes, 2) correction with evil intent (i.e., to promote heresy), or 3) correction with a view to improving the text's

grammar or content on the basis of conjectural additions or omissions (“what they think fit.”)....

The main point in this chapter, however, is that these early Fathers (from the last half of the second century on) are voicing strong disapproval of any tampering with the text of Scripture. (Sturz, 1984, pp. 117-120).

So, it seems prudent to conclude that: 1) there is insufficient evidence to support the idea that widespread variants proliferated during the first century following the writing of the original autographs, 2) there IS sufficient evidence to suggest that variants were proliferating from the last half of the second century and thereafter, but 3) the early Fathers of the church took steps to combat and correct that proliferation of variants.

And so, contra Vincent, I would suggest that far from the lackadaisical and arbitrary handling of the texts posited by Vincent, there was actually great care exercised in the transcription of Biblical texts during this early period. That errors and other variants crept in anyway is just the normal consequence of our imperfect human condition.

Vincent continues:

The history of the printed text of the New Testament and of the accompanying development of textual criticism falls into three periods: (1) The period of the reign of the Textus Receptus, 1516-1770; (2) The transition period from the Textus Receptus to the older uncial text, 1770-1830; (3) The period of the dethronement of the Textus Receptus, and the effort to restore the oldest and purest text by the application of the genealogical method, 1830 to the present time. (Vincent, 1899, p. 47).

Vincent relates that at the beginning of the first period, Erasmus published the first Greek New Testament which was followed six years later by the Complutensian Polyglot which presented the Old Testament in Hebrew, Greek (LXX), and Latin (Vulgate). The New Testament was presented in Greek and Latin (Vulgate). Vincent writes, “Erasmus’s first edition was based on a very few manuscripts. Only one of these had any special value (Codex 1, Evang, Act.1, P.1, tenth century)”. (Vincent, 1899, p. 52). Erasmus later published four other editions. Colinaeus published an edition in 1534 in Paris.

During this first period, i.e. the reign of the Textus Receptus (TR), editions were published by Robert Stephen (Estienne) and Theodore de Beza, followed by the Geneva Bible in 1560 and the Authorized (King James) version in 1611, which Vincent indicates passed through about 160 editions. Vincent also mentions the Antwerp Polyglot and various other editions, noting that “We now begin to see attention called to the value of patristic quotations in determining the text.” (Vincent, 1899, p. 59). He then mentions the seven editions of Elzevir. He notes that Elzevir’s second edition was “notable in the history of textual criticism as containing the announcement: ‘Textum ergo habes nunc AB OMNIBUS RECEPTUM in quo nihil immutatum aut corruptum damus.’ This is the origin of the familiar phrase Textus Receptus.” (Vincent, 1899, p. 61).

But, then, Vincent breaks from his comparatively dispassionate and academic description of the development of the text, to reveal an emotional and almost pathological hatred for the TR:

To this text an almost idolatrous reverence has attached nearly down to the present time. The history of textual criticism of the New Testament is, largely, the story of the gradual emancipation from the tyranny of the Textus Receptus. (Vincent, 1899, p. 61).

In making such a pronouncement, Vincent was following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Fenton John Anthony Hort, who wrote:

I had no idea till the last few weeks of the importance of texts, having read so little Greek Testament, and dragged on with the villainous *Textus Receptus*.... Think of that vile *Textus Receptus* leaning entirely on late MSS.; it is a blessing there are such early ones. (Hort & Hort, 1896, p. 211).

To argue, even forcefully, in favor of one's position on the comparative accuracy of various texts is one thing. To openly call any version of God's Word "villainous", "vile", "almost idolatrous", and "tyrannical", however, is something else entirely. That our Lord has used even very flawed versions of the Bible to draw sinners to Himself and to save them, should give us great pause before we exercise the temerity to proceed on any endeavor to so excoriate any given version.

Even J. Harold Greenlee, one of the foremost proponents of "modern" textual criticism, writes, "The TR is not a 'bad' or misleading text, either theologically or practically. Technically, however, it is far from the original text." (Greenlee, 1995, p. 65).

I don't agree with Dr. Greenlee's assessment that the TR is "far" from the original text. I suspect it's a lot closer to the original text than modern textual critics contend. And, since my definition of the "original text" is somewhat different than theirs, I would contend that the TR is quite likely closer to the original text than some modern translations such as the NIV. However, I would not hesitate to paraphrase Dr. Greenlee's comment: The NIV is not a "bad" or misleading text, either theologically or practically.

Even so, "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." (John 17:17, NIV).

Vincent goes on to outline the beginnings of the text critical methods towards the end of the first period, including Walton's Polyglot of 1657, Cursellaeus' edition of 1658 which provided many various readings, Fell's Greek Testament of 1675, and John Mill's Greek Testament of 1707 which marks the foundation of textual criticism. In 1720, Richard Bentley proposed the first framework for what was to later become known as the genealogical method. William Mace's Greek and English Diglott of 1729 continued this process.

In 1734, Johann Bengel announced the principle of classifying documents by families, thus leading to the concept of weighing the comparative value of manuscripts rather than simply counting them. John Wetstein argued against Bengel's proposal, but Johann Semler took it up and expanded it into the establishment of three recensions in 1767: 1) Alexandrian, 2) Oriental, and 3) Western.

The second period, the Transition from the Textus Receptus to the Older Uncial Text (1770-1830) really began with John Jacob Griesbach, who built on the work of several other early transitionalists, produced a two volume critical edition in 1796 and 1806, using the Textus Receptus as its base text. He laid down five rules (or canons) for textual criticism:

- (1) No reading must be considered preferable, unless it has the support of at least some ancient testimonies.
- (2) All criticism of the text turns on the study of recensions or classes of documents. Not single documents but recensions are to be counted in determining readings.
- (3) The shorter reading is to be preferred to the longer....
- (4) The more difficult reading is to be preferred to the easier....

(5) The reading which, at first sight, appears to convey a false sense, is to be preferred to other readings.

(Vincent, 1899, pp. 102-103).

In 1808, J. L. Hug proposed a new series of recensions to supersede those of Bengel and Griesbach. In 1823 and following years, John Scholz built upon Hug's work. But, their approach did not gain much ground.

The third period, the dethronement of the Textus Receptus, and the effort to restore the oldest and purest text by the application of the genealogical method (1830-now) began when Carl Lachmann produced a new critical edition with an eclectic text as its base text, i.e. a text constructed directly from the ancient manuscripts and with no reference to the Textus Receptus. Vincent notes that Lachmann was a philologist rather than a theologian. He set six rules for estimating the weight of readings:

- (1) Nothing is better attested than that in which all authorities agree.
- (2) The agreement has less weight if part of the authorities are silent or in any way defective.
- (3) The evidence for a reading, when it is that of witnesses of different regions, is greater than that of the witnesses of some particular place, differing either from negligence or from set purpose.
- (4) The testimonies are to be regarded as doubtfully balanced when witnesses from widely separated regions stand opposed to others equally wide apart.
- (5) Readings are uncertain which occur habitually in different forms in different regions.

(6) Readings are of weak authority which are not uniformly attested in the same region.

(Vincent, 1899, p. 112).

From 1844 through 1859, Constantine Tischendorf made three trips to the Mount Sinai Convent of St. Catherine where he discovered, and later published (1862) what is now known as Codex Sinaiticus, a codex of the entire New Testament, which Tischendorf dated to the middle of the fourth century (i.e. 350 A.D.). Although Codex B (Vaticanus) was not actually published until 1904-1907, it is clear from his discussion here, that Vincent was aware of it and had at least a working knowledge of its contents and of many of its readings.

In 1871 and 1883, J. W. Burgon, Dean of Chichester, disputed Tischendorf's conclusions about Sinaiticus and its relationship to Vaticanus. Dr. Ezra Abbot responded to Dean Burgon's arguments in 1872, and so did Dr. Sanday in 1882. Canon F. C. Cook argued in the same vein as Dean Burgon in 1882.

Vincent says that between 1841 and 1873, Tischendorf published 24 editions of the Greek New Testament. He built upon Lachmann's principles. Tischendorf, himself, laid down the following rules:

1. The text is only to be sought from ancient evidence, and especially from Greek manuscripts, but without neglecting the testimonies of Versions and Fathers....
2. A reading altogether peculiar to one or another ancient document is suspicious, as also is any, even if supported by a class of documents which seems to show that it has originated in the revision of a learned man....

3. Readings, however well supported by evidence, are to be rejected when it appears that they have proceeded from errors of copyists....

4. In parallel passages, whether of the New or Old Testament, especially in the synoptical Gospels, those testimonies are to be preferred in which there is not precise accordance of such parallel passages, unless there are important reasons to the contrary....

5. In discrepant readings, that reading should be preferred which may have given occasion to the rest, or which appears to comprise the elements of the others....

6. Those readings must be maintained which accord with New Testament Greek, or with the peculiar style of each individual writer.

(Vincent, 1899, pp. 125-128).

Vincent, however, remarks: “The real value of Codex \aleph and his enthusiastic delight in its discovery may have led him sometimes to attach undue weight to its testimony.” (Vincent, 1899, p. 129).

Tischendorf’s contemporary, Samuel Tregelles published numerous collations and guides to textual criticism. Tregelles maintained, “The antiquity of documents is to be preferred to their number as a basis of testimony.” (Vincent, 1899, p. 133).

Henry Alford published a Greek Testament, in four volumes, from 1849 to 1861.

Both Dean Burgon and Dr. Frederick Scrivener, Prebendary of Exeter and Vicar of Hendon, opposed Tregelles’ positions and publications. Scrivener promulgated four practical rules:

(1) That the true readings of the Greek New Testament cannot safely be derived from any one set of authorities, whether manuscripts, Versions, or Fathers, but ought to be the result of a patient comparison and careful estimate of the evidence supplied by them all.

(2) That where there is a real agreement between all documents containing the Gospels up to the sixth century, and in the other parts of the New Testament up to the ninth, the testimony of later manuscripts and Versions, though not to be rejected unheard, must be regarded with great suspicion, and unless upheld by strong internal evidence, can hardly be adopted.

(3) That where the more ancient documents are at variance with each other, the later uncial and cursive copies, especially those of approved merit, are of real importance as being the surviving representatives of other codices, very probably as early, perhaps even earlier, than any now extant.

(4) That in weighing conflicting evidence we must assign the highest value, not to those readings which are attested by the greatest number of witnesses, but to those which come to us from several remote and independent sources, and which bear the least likeness to each other in respect to genius and general character.

(Vincent, 1899, pp. 141-142).

Burgon's approach appears to be more polemical, although no less combative in its effect, than Scriveners:

Burgon's work is dominated by the conviction that every word of the Scriptures was dictated by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; that it is inconceivable that the Author of such a gift would allow it to become unavailing, and would not providentially interfere to guard it from being corrupted or lost; that we may therefore rightly believe that He guided His church through the course of ages to eliminate the errors which the frailty of man had introduced, and consequently that the text which had been used by the church for centuries must be accepted as at least substantially correct....

According to Burgon, the antiquity of the most ancient manuscripts is due to their badness. They were known to be so bad that they were little used, and consequently remained untouched, and therefore have survived when better manuscripts have perished. (Vincent, 1899, pp. 142-143).

Finally, we come to 1881 and *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, in two volumes, by Brooks Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort. They did not collect any new material for this work, but instead concentrated on editing the text itself to fit the mass of existing data as they saw it. Their primary object was to arrange the manuscripts and other authorities into groups which they contended had descended from common ancestors. "This process grows out of the principle that identity of reading implies identity of origin." (Vincent, 1899, p. 146). Dr. Hort identified four types of text: 1) Western, 2) Alexandrian or Egyptian, 3) Syrian, and 4) Neutral or pre-Syrian. This fourth category, he said, represented by B and **ℵ**, comes nearest to the Apostolic originals.

The work was severely attacked by the conservative critics, notably by Dr. Scrivener and Dean Burgon. Perhaps the most vulnerable point was the very cornerstone of the textual theory – the authoritative recension at Antioch of the Greek text, about the middle of the third century, which in its turn, became the standard for a similar revision of the Syrian text, representing the transmutation of the Curetonian into the Peshitto, while the Greek recension itself underwent a second revision. Dr. Scrivener says: “Of this twofold authoritative revision of the Greek text, of this formal transmutation of the Curetonian Syriac into the Peshitto, although they must have been, of necessity, public acts of great churches in ages abounding in councils, general or provincial, not one trace remains in the history of Christian antiquity. (Vincent, 1899, p. 152).

Let me repeat and emphasize that last: Of the very cornerstone of Westcott and Hort’s textual theory, **NOT ONE TRACE REMAINS IN THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN ANTIQUITY.**

Nonetheless, Westcott and Hort’s Greek text was the basis for the 1881 Revised Version, and, subject to various refinements over the years in the Nestle-Aland series and the UBS series of Greek texts, still forms the basis for almost every modern translation since that time.

Following this overview of the history of textual criticism down to Vincent’s day, he closes out his book with a brief summary of “recent” contributions subsequent to the work of Westcott and Hort, most notably Dr. Bernhard Weiss’ studies of Codex Bezae.

Warfield: On the Theory, Methods, and Praxis

It has been already pointed out that there are but two kinds of evidence to which we can appeal in prosecuting the work of criticizing a text, - external and internal evidence. (Warfield, 1899, p. 82).

Within the category of internal evidence, intrinsic evidence points to how likely it is that a particular reading was actually written by the author. Such evidence includes matters of the author's usual style, the rhetorical flow of the wording, and the appropriateness of the wording within its context.

It is easy to become an improver instead of remaining an editor; and it is often very difficult not to make an author speak our thoughts, if not even our language. (Warfield, 1899, p. 85).

Also within the category of internal evidence, is the sub-category of transcriptional evidence. This evidence seeks to show us the original author's text behind the variants produced by different scribes during the copying process.

[In] the text of the New Testament – we are dealing with a writing which has had not one but many scribes successively engaged upon it, and that, therefore, we are to deal with a complex of tendencies which may have been engaged in progressively corrupting a text, and that in even exactly opposite directions. The greatest difficulty of the process is found in experience to reside less, however, in inability to arrange any given series of readings in an order which may well have been, on known tendencies of scribes, the order of their origination, than in inability to decide which of

several orders, in which they seem equally capable of being arranged, is the actual order of their origination. (Warfield, 1899, p. 91).

If we're facing a reading which seems clearly satisfactory to us, we need to ask ourselves if perhaps the original was less satisfactory, or more confusing, and if, therefore, some scribe has altered that original to appear more satisfactory. Easy readings are thus more often a cause for suspicion than a cause for relaxation. Warfield holds that the only solution to this kind of problem is to become more and more familiar with the entire collection of manuscripts and with the collection's individual members as well.

This seems a reasonable (if far from trivial) approach. When new U.S. Treasury Department employees are training to detect counterfeit currency, they don't study the counterfeits. Instead they spend hours upon hours minutely inspecting genuine currency. Then, when someone finally hands them an actual counterfeit note, the discrepancies are immediately glaringly obvious.

To aid us in our preparation for the text-critical task, we can note that variant readings consist of additions, omissions, substitutions, or some combination thereof. They can also be classified as either intentional or unintentional. Warfield notes that these latter can be further classified as:

I. Intentional corruptions:

1. Linguistic and rhetorical corrections.
2. Historical corrections.
3. Harmonistic corrections.
4. Doctrinal corruptions.
5. Liturgical corruptions.

II. Unintentional corruptions:

1. Errors of the eye.
2. Errors of the memory.
3. Errors of the judgment.
4. Errors of the pen.
5. Errors of the speech.

(Warfield, 1899, p. 94).

Intentional corruptions are most often made in a good-faith effort to correct something that looked wrong or unclear to the scribe. Errors of the eye include homoioteleuton (“like-ending” words may be skipped over during copying), mistaking one letter for another, misreading abbreviations (e.g. *Nomina Sacra*), and so forth. Errors of memory often arise from trying to hold too long a phrase in the memory when copying, resulting in inadvertent substitution of synonyms or the reordering of words within the phrase.

As an example of judgment errors, the margins of manuscripts were often used for both corrections and for glosses (i.e., explanatory notes). So, it would be sometimes difficult for a scribe to know what to do with any given marginal entry.

Errors of the pen include simple transpositions, repetitions, omissions of letters, etc. Errors of speech include mispronunciation of the reader in a scriptorium (where one reads and many write down what is read – thus producing many copies of a manuscript at once).

Warfield discusses many examples of these various kinds of errors, pointing the propensity of specific manuscripts for particular types of errors. For example, he states that Sinaiticus very often substitutes *i* for *ei* while Vaticanus, conversely, is prone to substituting *ei* for *i*. And, Codex A is well-populated with synonyms.

Warfield says that:

All “canons of criticism” are only general averages, and operate like a probability based on calculations of chances....

If we use them only as general guides, and expect to find exceptions to them continually turning up, the following three rules are valuable: -

1. The more difficult reading is to be preferred: founded on the observed tendency of scribes to render the sense smooth by correction or unconscious tinkering.
2. The shorter reading is to be preferred: founded on the observed habit of scribes to enlarge rather than shorten the text.
3. The more characteristic reading is to be preferred: founded on the observed tendency of scribes to reduce all they touch to their own level, and so gradually eliminate everything especially characteristic of an author.

Not co-ordinate with these, but above them and inclusive of them, stands the one great rule that embodies the soul of transcriptional evidence: that reading is to be preferred from which the origin of all the others can most safely be derived. (Warfield, 1899, pp. 107-108).

External evidence involves comparing manuscripts at a given passage and attempting to determine which of the variant readings is most likely the closest to the original autograph. One method of making such a determination would be to simply count the number of manuscripts and choose the reading which appears in the largest number of manuscripts. This method has significant weaknesses. For example, if there are two distinct readings, one of which is attested

in 205 manuscripts, and the other of which is attested in 206 manuscripts, it would seem dangerous to exclude the possibility of the one simply because of the tiny excess of the other. Or, as another example, suppose you have twenty-three manuscripts where the first three (#1, #2, and #3) agree on one reading while the remaining twenty (#4 to #23) agree on a second reading. Do you choose the twenty over the three? What if you know that #1, #2, and #3 are all independent of each other, but that #5 through #23 were all copied from #4?

A common misconception is that the older a manuscript, the more likely it is to be close to the wording of the original autographs. Even Westcott and Hort, among others, repeatedly perpetuate this misconception. For example, they make reference to:

the two (or possibly three) oldest extant Greek MSS, B, **Ⲛ**, and A

(Westcott & Hort, 1882, p. 92).

and:

The documents attesting α are four uncials (two of them our two oldest), three cursives, and at least three versions in different languages

(Westcott & Hort, 1882, p. 96).

and:

It now becomes necessary to scrutinise (sic) more closely the trustworthiness of the propositions laid down above respecting the preeminent excellence of the Vatican and Sinaitic MSS, which happen likewise to be the oldest extant Greek MSS of the New Testament.

(Westcott & Hort, 1882, p. 212).

and:

It is indeed usually taken for granted that the chief uncials of the New Testament were written at Alexandria. This floating impression appears to be founded on vague associations derived from two undoubted facts; (1) that the translations of the Old Testament which form the LXX were made at Alexandria, while the chief uncials of the New Testament agree in some prominent points of orthography and grammatical form (by no means in all) with the chief uncials of the LXX, the four oldest being moreover parts of the same manuscript Bibles, and (2) that A was at some unknown time, not necessarily earlier than the eleventh century, preserved at Alexandria, and is hence called the *Codex Alexandrinus*.
(Westcott & Hort, 1882, p. 264).

and:

A question might here be raised whether there is sufficient ground for assuming that the spellings found in the oldest MSS of the New Testament were also, generally speaking, the spellings of the autographs; whether in short the oldest extant orthography may not have been introduced in the fourth or some earlier century. (Westcott & Hort, 1882, p. 305).

Others also, whether intentionally or unintentionally, perpetuate this misconception. For example:

Pap.¹ Matthew 1:1–9, 12, 14–20. One leaf of a book. Third century.

Found at Oxyrhynchus in Egypt in 1896, and published by Messrs.

Grenfell and Hunt in *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Part I. (1898). The variants of

this fragment are of small importance in themselves, but so far as they go

they tend to support the oldest vellum uncials, the Codex Vaticanus and the Codex Sinaiticus. (Kenyon, 1901, p. 36).

and:

His idea was to restore the text of the oldest manuscripts, that is the text of the fourth century, rather than the original text, but to make a definite start and to get away from the tyranny of the *Textus Receptus*.

(Robertson, 1925, p. 31).

and:

And this leads him to say a word upon the subject of the reformed *Greek text* adopted by the Revisers in deference to what are generally conceded to be the oldest MSS. extant, which were not accessible to the Translators of 1611. (Field, 1899, p. xv).

and:

This happens chiefly in cases when the *uncial* or capital letters in which the oldest manuscripts are written resemble each other, except in some fine stroke which may have decayed through age.

(Scrivener, 1894, p. 10).

But Warfield clarifies this misconception and points out that it is the oldest *text*, rather than the oldest *manuscript*, which is likely to be closest to the original autographs:

Shall we, then, say that not the most MSS. but the oldest shall rule? This certainly would be a far better canon. But it is met again, on the threshold of practical use, by a double difficulty, - theoretical and practical. After all, it is not the mere number of years that is behind any MS. that measures

its distance from the autograph, but the number of copyings. A MS. of the fourth century may have been copied from another but little older than itself, and this again from another but a little older than it, and so on through a very long genealogy; whereas a MS. of the eleventh century may have been copied from one of the third, and it from the autograph. It is not, then, the age of the document, but the age of the text in it, that is the true measure of antiquity; and who shall certify us that many of our later documents may not preserve earlier texts than our earliest MSS. themselves? – or, indeed, that all our later documents may not be of purer descent than our few old codices? With the frankest acceptance of the principle that the age of a document is presumptive evidence of the age of the text, it is clear that we can reach little certainty in criticism by simply agreeing to allow weight to documents in proportion to their age. And here the practical difficulty enters the problem: how much greater weight shall we allow to greater age? Certainly two fourth century documents cannot reduce all tenth-century documents to no value at all, simply by reason of their greater age (Warfield, 1899, pp. 110-111).

More recently, but via very similar reasoning, Sturz contends against Westcott and Hort for the usefulness of the Byzantine (WH – Syrian) text:

Westcott and Hort reasoned that the Byzantine text was made through an editorial process by using previously existing Western and Alexandrian texts. They argued that because the “Syrian” text was late, edited, and

therefore *secondary* in origin, it should not be used as evidence in textual criticism of the New Testament.

Burgon and Hills, on the other hand, sought to controvert the WH theory by maintaining that the Byzantine text was the providentially preserved text; for this reason the Byzantine text was not secondary but *primary*.

They referred to it as the “Traditional” text, the one which was descended in unbroken procession from the original because it was preserved by God’s special care. In their opinion, the peculiar evidence for the primacy of the Byzantine text is its overwhelming superiority in numbers. For Burgon and Hills, the Alexandrian and Western texts are corruptions of the “Traditional” text and are therefore untrustworthy for the recovery of the original.

The thesis that the Byzantine text is primary was examined and felt to be unacceptable because its main argument rests on what appears to be a misuse of the doctrine of God’s providence. It thus excludes from use other types of text which, in the providence of God, have also been preserved.

The thesis that the Byzantine text is late, textually mixed, and therefore wholly secondary in form, though it had been supported by the apparently imposing arguments of conflate readings, patristic silence, and an appeal to intrinsic character, is now inadequate to account for the data which have accumulated since the days of Westcott and Hort.

Contrary to what WH held, *distinctively Byzantine readings of every kind have been shown to be early*. They have been shown to be early by

evidence which is more certain than citation by early Fathers. The argument from conflation was found to be inadequate, not only because it is now known that such readings are early, but also because it is now realized that this type of reading is not confined to the Byzantine text. It is found in others also, including the Alexandrian. Finally, now that more is known about the language *milieu* of the New Testament, its Semitisms and Koine style are no longer evidences for editing as they seemed to be in the days of WH.

If the culminative force of the evidence presented sufficiently justifies the two affirmations: 1) the Byzantine readings are early, and 2) the Byzantine text is unedited in the WH sense, then the conclusion which follows logically is that while the Byzantine text is neither primary nor secondary, it is independent. That is to say, since it is not made from the Alexandrian and Western texts, it is not dependent upon them in its attestation of early readings. Therefore, it constitutes an additional, genealogically unrelated witness to second-century readings, along with the Western and Alexandrian text-types. Since it is not the only type of text whose testimony recedes into the obscurity of the second century, it cannot be treated as “primary.” However, if it is not “secondary” but “independent” in its attestation to early readings, it appears reasonable to conclude that the Byzantine text should be given equal weight, along with the Alexandrian and “Western” texts, in evaluating external evidence for readings. (Sturz, 1984, pp. 129-130).

And Warfield, from the century before Sturz, offers a similar conclusion:

It has not unjustly been made their reproach that because they had discovered that the better testimony was to be found in a certain body of witnesses, they arbitrarily treated all the rest as if they had no testimony to offer at all. (Warfield, 1899, p. 126).

From this point, Warfield discusses groupings of manuscripts and genealogical trees, dependencies, and cross-attestations and other mixtures, but concludes, “The application of genealogical evidence to the New Testament has proved to be exceptionally difficult” (Warfield, 1899, p. 156). He then discusses the usefulness of patristic quotations and other subjects.

Warfield then moves on to discuss the practice of textual criticism, setting forth his recommended procedures, beginning with his maxim: “It is safest to begin with the external evidence, and only when its bearing has been at least provisionally determined, to proceed to the internal evidence of readings.” (Warfield, 1899, p. 184). He then carries us through various examples, including the consideration of whether we should include or omit the pericope of the adulteress in John 7:53-8:11, or the last twelve verses of Mark.

Dr. Warfield finishes his book with a brief chapter on the History of Textual Criticism, which does not add anything beyond Dr. Vincent’s more extensive treatment thereof.

Conclusions

Both Vincent and Warfield published their respective books in 1899, 117 years ago. Much of what they wrote was timeless and is still valuable guidance for exercises in Textual Criticism today.

However, the numerous papyri and other manuscripts which have been discovered and published since 1899 have invalidated some of their conclusions, as well of those of Westcott and Hort and their predecessors.

For example, p⁴⁵ (Chester Beatty Papyrus 1) was first published in 1933 and 1934 and is dated to the early third century (ca. 200 A.D.). At Mark 7:31, according to (CNTTS, 2010, Mk 7:31) it reads:

κ[αι παλιν εξελθω]ν εκ των οριων τυρου και σειδωνος
ηλ.θ.ε[ν εις την θαλασσα]ν της γαλιλαιας ανα μεσον
των οριω.ν. .ε.[ις την δεκαπολιν]

where the dots indicate uncertainty about the letters between the dots, and brackets are used to indicate missing text.

Westcott and Hort (2009, Mk 7:31) show the following for Mark 7:31:

Καὶ πάλιν ἐξελθὼν ἐκ τῶν ὀρίων Τύρου ἦλθεν διὰ
Σιδῶνος εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἀνὰ μέσον
τῶν ὀρίων Δεκαπόλεως.

Nestle-Aland 28th edition (2012, Mk 7:31) reads:

Καὶ πάλιν ἐξελθὼν ἐκ τῶν ὀρίων Τύρου ἦλθεν διὰ
Σιδῶνος εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἀνὰ μέσον
τῶν ὀρίων Δεκαπόλεως.

And the majority, i.e. Byzantine, text (Hodges, Farstad, & Dunkin, 1985, Mk 7:31) reads:

Καὶ πάλιν ἐξελθὼν ἐκ τῶν ὀρίων Τύρου καὶ Σιδῶνος
ἦλθε πρὸς τὴν θάλασσαν τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἀνὰ μέσον τῶν
ὀρίων Δεκαπόλεως.

Now, if we line these four up, word-by-word:

WH: Καὶ πάλιν ἐξελθὼν ἐκ τῶν ὀρίων

NA28: Καὶ πάλιν ἐξελθὼν ἐκ τῶν ὀρίων

P⁴⁵: κ[αι παλιν ἐξελθω]ν ἐκ τῶν ὀρίων

Byz: Καὶ πάλιν ἐξελθὼν ἐκ τῶν ὀρίων

WH: Τύρου ἦλθεν διὰ Σιδῶνος εἰς τὴν

NA28: Τύρου ἦλθεν διὰ Σιδῶνος εἰς τὴν

P⁴⁵: τυρου καὶ σειδωνος ἡλ.θ.ε[ν εἰς τὴν

Byz: Τύρου καὶ Σιδῶνος ἦλθε πρὸς τὴν

WH: θάλασσαν τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἀνὰ μέσον

NA28: θάλασσαν τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἀνὰ μέσον

P⁴⁵: θαλασσα]ν της γαλιλαιας ανα μεσον

Byz: θάλασσαν τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἀνὰ μέσον

WH: τῶν ὁρίων Δεκαπόλεως.

NA28: τῶν ὁρίων Δεκαπόλεως.

P⁴⁵: των οριω.ν. .ε.[ις την δεκαπολιν]

Byz: τῶν ὁρίων Δεκαπόλεως.

it becomes clear that P⁴⁵ bears a closer resemblance, at Mark 7:31, to the Byzantine than it does to either Westcott & Hort or to Nestle-Aland 28th edition.

Thus, significant opportunities still exist for further research in textual criticism, all to the glory and honor of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

References

Archer, G. L. and Chirichigno, G. C. (1983), *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament: A Complete Survey*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press.

Berkhof, L. (1941), *Systematic Theology*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: SESB (Stuttgarter Elektronische Studienbibel) Version. (2003). (electronic ed.). Stuttgart: German Bible Society.

Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (2000). *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems.

CNTTS: H. Milton Haggard Center for New Testament Textual Studies. (2010). *The Center for New Testament Textual Studies: NT Critical Apparatus*. New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Comfort, P. (2005). *Encountering the Manuscripts*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman.

Coxe, A. C. (1985). *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Coxe, A. C. (1986). *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Davidson, B. (1848), *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Eissfeldt, O. (1974), אֲדוֹנָי 'ādhôn; אֲדוֹנָי 'ādhōnāi. In G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (Eds.),

Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (TDOT), Volume I. Grand Rapids, MI:

Eerdmans.

Epp, E. J., & Fee, G. D. (1993). *Studies in the theory and method of New Testament textual*

Criticism. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Field, F. (1899). *Notes on the Translation of the New Testament: Being the Otium Norvicense*

(Pars Tertia). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gesenius, W., & Tregelles, S. P. (2003). *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee lexicon to the Old*

Testament Scriptures. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

Greenlee, J. (1995). *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism, Revised Edition*.

Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.

Grudem, W. (1994), *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids,

MI: Zondervan.

Hodges, Z. C., Farstad, A. L., & Dunkin, W. C. (1985). *The Greek New Testament according to*

the Majority Text (2nd ed., Mk 7:31). Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers.

Hort, A. F., & Hort, F. J. A. (1896). *Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort* (Vol. 1).

London: Macmillan and Co.

Kaiser, W. C. Jr. (1990), Exodus. In F. Gaebelein (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Volume 2. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Kelley, P.; Mynatt, D.; & Crawford, T. (1998), *The Masorah of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Keil, C. F. and Delitzsch, F. (1986), *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*, Volume I: The Pentateuch. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Kenyon, F. G. (1901). *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*. London; New York: Macmillan and Co.

Kittel, R. (Ed.) (1905), *Biblia Hebraica: Second Edition* (vol. 1). Lipsiae: J. C. Hinrichs.

Kleinknecht, H.; Quell, G.; Stauffer, E.; & Kuhn, K. G. (1965), θεός, θεότης, ἄθεος, θεοδίδακτος, θεῖος, θειότης. In G. Kittel (Ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (TDNT), Volume III. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M. E. J., & Stamm, J. J. (1999). *The Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill.

Holladay, W. L., & Köhler, L. (2000). *A concise Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: Brill.

Nestle, E., & Nestle, E. (2012). *Nestle-Aland: Novum Testamentum Graece*. (B. Aland, K.

Aland, J. Karavidopoulos, C. M. Martini, & B. M. Metzger, Eds.) (28. Revidierte Auflage). Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.

Quell, G. and Foerster, W. (1965), κύριος, κυρία, κυριακός, κυριότης, κυριεύω, κατακυριεύω.

In G. Kittel (Ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT)*, Volume III.

Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Robertson, A. T. (1925). *An introduction to the textual criticism of the New Testament*.

Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

Scrivener, F. H. A. (1894). *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*. (E.

Miller, Ed.) (Fourth Edition, Vol. 1). London: George Bell & Sons; Deighton Bell & Co.

Sproul, R. C. (2009). *Can I Trust the Bible?* Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing.

Sturz, H. A. (1984). *The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism*. Nashville,

TN: Thomas Nelson.

Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old*

Testament). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Vincent, M. R. (1894). *That Monster, the Higher Critic*. New York: Anson D. F. Randolph &

Company.

Vincent, M. R. (1899), *A History of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*.

Retrieved from: (

<https://books.google.com/books?id=ZvpW1QkTk1sC&printsec=titlepage&dq='textual+criticism'#v=onepage&q='textual criticism'&f=false>).

Warfield, B. B. (1899), *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 6th ed.

[First edition published 1886] - Retrieved from: (

https://books.google.com/books?id=ISOSAZ3uN44C&printsec=titlepage&dq='textual+criticism'&as_brr=1&hl=en#v=onepage&q='textual criticism'&f=false).

Warfield, B. B. (2008). *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Revelation and Inspiration*.

Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

Wegner, P. D. (2006). *A student's guide to textual criticism of the Bible: its history,*

methods & results. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Westcott, B. F., & Hort, F. J. A. (1882). *Introduction to the New Testament in the Original Greek*

New York: Harper and Brothers.

Westcott, B. F., & Hort, F. J. A. (2009). *The New Testament in the Original Greek*. Logos Bible

Software.

Wikipedia01. Retrieved from (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marvin_Vincent).

Wikipedia02. Retrieved from (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B._B._Warfield).

Wikipedia03. Retrieved from (

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fundamentalist%E2%80%93Modernist_Controversy

).

Wikipedia04. Retrieved from (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westcott-Hort>).