

our merchant sailors look for such sacred ordinances as by inheritance are necessarily provided for their brethren on shore. This is what renders the existence of a Society for Missions to Seamen desirable for the conversion and continual sustenance of souls at sea. With such a claim on the support of a Christian people and of a great maritime nation, we cordially commend the object of Missions to Seamen to the thoughtful consideration of all thoughtful people.

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(Admiral).

ART. II.—THE TEXT OF THE REVISED NEW
TESTAMENT.

1. *The New Testament in the Original Greek.* The Text revised by BROOKE FOSS WESTCOTT, D.D., and FENTON JOHN ANTHONY HORT, D.D. Text. Cambridge and London: Macmillan & Co. 1881.
2. *The New Testament in the Original Greek.* Edited by F. H. A. SCRIVENER, D.C.L., LL.D. Cambridge: At the University Press. 1881.
3. *The Greek Testament.* Oxford: At the Clarendon Press. 1881.

THE object of this Paper is to indicate: first, the character and importance of the work undertaken and accomplished by the Revisers, in reference to the Greek Text of the New Testament; and, secondly, the principles and method of their procedure. Textual criticism is too often regarded as a matter lying altogether beyond the province of ordinary students and readers of the Bible, and even of those who are able to read it in the original languages. Now the mere fact of the existence of the Revised Version, based on a reconstructed text, should do much to dissipate this kind of mistake. As soon as it had been determined that the "Authorized Version" should be revised, the question of the text to be adopted became one of indispensable necessity. The discovery of ancient manuscripts, and of other important documents, which were not accessible to the scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, rendered it impossible to adhere to their text. And, in truth, the object of the Revision being to determine, with reverence and devotion, and as closely as possible, what is really the Word of God in Holy Scripture, the determination of the Greek text was as indispensable an act of reverent devotion as the determination of its true meaning in English. In short, one most important test of the value of the

Revision is to be found in the readings which have been adopted. If this part of their work had been inadequately accomplished, it is hardly too much to say that the labours of the Revisers would have been wholly thrown away.

This part of their work being of vital importance, we are bound to form a true estimate of its character and principles. Happily, there are ample materials at hand for determining these points.

I. As to the character of the work, their own preface answers the question; for the fourth rule laid down for their guidance, and accepted by them, prescribed "that the text to be adopted be that for which the evidence is decidedly preponderating; and that, when the text so adopted deviates from that from which the Authorized Version was made, the alteration be indicated in the margin." They say, therefore: "a revision of the Greek text was the necessary foundation of our work; but it did not fall within our province to construct a continuous and complete Greek text:—

In many cases the English rendering was considered to represent correctly either of the two competing readings in the Greek, and then the question of the text was usually not raised. A sufficiently laborious task remained in deciding between the rival claims of various readings which might properly affect the translation. When these were adjusted, our deviations from the text presumed to underlie the Authorized Version, had next to be indicated in accordance with the fourth rule. But it proved inconvenient to record them in the margin.

They therefore communicated to the University Presses a full and carefully-corrected list of the readings adopted which are at variance with the "Authorized Version:" and in accordance with this list the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press published as a text that which exhibits the point of departure necessarily adopted by the Revisers (namely, the text which may be presumed to underlie the Authorized Version); indicating in the foot-notes the various changes which, under Rules 4 and 5, they were ultimately bound to introduce; and along with these changes indicating also the alternative readings which they had admitted into the margin of their version. The unrevised parts of this text contain, of course, "many differences of order and grammatical form, expressive of shades and modifications of meaning, which no careful reader would neglect in studying the Greek original"; but which did not affect the proper work of the Revisers.¹

The delegates of the Oxford Press have adopted a different method. They have printed, as a continuous text, that which

¹ It must be remembered that this Cambridge Greek text is only a conjectural approximation to that which the Translators of 1611 adopted.

may be taken as *underlying* the Revised Version. The unrevised parts of this text stand as they did in the edition of Stephanus. The foot-notes contain those readings of the "Authorized Version" which have been replaced by new readings in the Revised Version, and also the alternative readings which are recorded in its margin. This text, therefore, like the Cambridge text, is one for which no individual reviser is responsible. It is a revised text, the limits of the Greek revision being the actual requirements of the English revision.

II. The method and the principles of this limited, but adequate, revision of the Greek text, are briefly stated in their own Preface, and may be abundantly illustrated from other quasi-authoritative sources. In page 10 they say, "The fourth rule was in effect an instruction to follow the authority of documentary evidence, without deference to any printed text of modern times; and, therefore, to employ the best resources of criticism for estimating the value of evidence." Now, it is well-known that the Revision Company contained among its members scholars of the highest repute; whose ability as textual critics places them in the foremost rank of this, as of other departments of scholarship. They speak with authority when they say:—

Textual criticism, as applied to the Greek New Testament, forms a special study of much intricacy and difficulty, and even now leaves room for considerable variety of opinion among competent critics. Different schools of criticism have been represented among us, and have together contributed to the final result. In the early part of the work every various reading requiring consideration was discussed and voted on by the Company. After a short time the precedents thus established enabled the process to be safely shortened; but it was still at the option of every one to raise a full discussion on any particular reading, and the option was freely used.

Lastly, we are to observe that the marginal record of alternative readings preserves the trace of discussions and differences of opinion; and we know that in every case in which the old reading remains in the text, it must have commanded, at the least, a bare majority in its favour; while every case in which a new reading displaces the old, the change must have obtained the assent of two-thirds of the members present.¹

The foregoing statement would enable us to classify conjecturally the deviations from the text of the "Authorized Version" which have been adopted by the Revisers, under three heads. First. Those which needed no special "consideration," obviously

¹ It is to be observed that the *ancient authorities* mentioned in the margin of the work, comprise "not only Greek manuscripts, some of which were written in Centuries IV. and V., but versions of still earlier date in different languages, and also quotations by Christian writers of the Second and following Centuries."

because they are accepted unanimously, or almost unanimously, by all "competent critics." Secondly. Those which naturally fall into groups, so that the determination of a few typical cases would establish a precedent, and "enable the process to be shortened in all similar cases." Thirdly. Individual cases, which admitted special discussion upon their own specific grounds, because they did not come directly under one of the precedents already established, or because the general question was reopened, in the particular case, in compliance with the wish of some one or more members of the Company. For the most part one would infer that these are represented by alternative marginal readings.

A classification of this kind, if complete, would enable us to determine, with a considerable degree of accuracy, the principles which have generally been accepted by the Revisers in their settlement of the text.¹ But we are not left entirely to conjectures or inferences of this kind. For, while the work was in progress, and long before the result was given to the world, Dr. Scrivener (in his "Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament," 2nd edition) stated that the text of the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Catholic Epistles, with a preface by Drs. Westcott and Hort, had been placed confidentially before the Revision Committee, with such "brief remarks prefixed as might suffice to explain its nature and distinctive purpose." This work had at that time (1874) been in preparation for twenty years. Of this work Dr. Scrivener was able to make use by selecting a number of striking or typical instances which should illustrate the principles of the learned Editors. And upon these typical instances he makes his comments from a different point of view, and from a different method of applying the principles of comparative criticism. Moreover, we have now the advantage of possessing the complete text of the Greek Testament by those eminent scholars, together with a short explanatory statement of their principles and their method. This volume is an invaluable aid in testing the work done by the Revisers; an aid which will be very largely increased when the promised Preface and Appendix are given to the world.

We may add to our list Dr. Tregelles's "History of the Printed Text of the Greek Testament," Dr. Westcott's article in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," Dr. Hort's collection of introductory and prefatory matter for Dr. Tregelles's Greek Testament, and an important passage in Bishop Ellicott's preface to his "Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians." To these authorities we may add Dr. Scrivener's elaborate discussions and critical remarks in

¹ Such a classification may be attempted in a second article in the following number of *THE CHURCHMAN*.

his "Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament." The careful study of these works, with the help of Dr. Tregelles's "Apparatus Criticus," will enable the student to determine the principles, and to estimate the value of the readings adopted by the Revisers in disputed cases. All these possess a quasi-authoritative character in any examination of the text which underlies the Revised Version, because their authors are not only distinguished scholars, but also active members of the Revision Company.

We turn first to Bishop Ellicott's remarks ("Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians," p. xxi.). He speaks of the danger and the presumption of any attempt to construct an original text without eminent qualifications; of the "years of patient labour," "the unflagging industry," "the persistent sagacity," without which the labour would "be worse than useless." "Those who have not these qualifications must rely on the experts, but reserving the right and duty of scrutinizing and testing (and of dissenting from) the results arrived at by those whom they follow." Upon the relative weight of internal and documentary evidence, he implies that the "former is important, where the latter is uncertain." He adds:—

Still, I regard with the greatest jealousy and suspicion any opposition to the nearly coincident testimony of the uncial MSS., unless the internal evidence be of a most strong and decisive character. I have always endeavoured, first, to ascertain the exact nature of the diplomatic evidence; secondly, the apparent probabilities of erroneous transcription, permutation of letters, italicisms, and so forth; thirdly, and lastly, the internal evidence, whether resting on apparent deviations from the *usus scribendi* of the sacred author, or the *propensio*, be it *critica dogmatica*, or *exegetica*, on the part of the copyist.

The weight which may be given to internal evidence by its more moderate but zealous advocates can be learned from Dr. Scrivener himself. He lays down the decided rule on the one side, that, in the case of the New Testament, "conjectural emendation must never be resorted to, even in passages of acknowledged difficulty." But, on the other hand, he says that, "whether we will or not, we unconsciously and almost instinctively adopt that one of two opposite statements, *in themselves pretty equally attested to*, which we judge the better suited to recognized phenomena, and to the common course of things:—

I know of no person who has affected to construct a text of the New Testament on diplomatic grounds exclusively, without paying some regard to the character of the sense produced.

Dr. Tregelles says, "It is difficult not to indulge in subjectiveness, at least in some measure;" and Dr. Scrivener's argument is that this is one of those difficulties which a sane man would

not wish to overcome. He admits internal evidence only where external evidence is not unevenly balanced. But the application of "canons of subjective criticism" cannot be reduced to rule; it must always remain "a searching test of the tact, the sagacity, and the judicial acumen of all who handle it."

It is unnecessary to record here the recognized canons of internal evidence. We can only feel confident that they were fully recognized in the Revision Company, and we may expect to find some traces of their influence stamped on the resulting text.

We have already seen that Rule 4 prescribed that the text adopted should be that for which the documentary evidence was decidedly preponderating. We have, therefore, to ascertain on what principles the relative weight of the several documents [or groups of documents] was determined by the Revisers. Two different determinations of this question are advocated by the scholars and critics whose works are now before us. Speaking generally, the one would give decidedly and almost overwhelmingly preponderating weight to the best and earliest of the uncial MSS., and to the documents which agree generally with these; while the others would take some account of numerical majority, and would attach considerable importance to the consentient testimony of any large number of the later cursives.

Our examination of the Revisers' readings has led to the conclusion that they have, for the most part, but not exclusively, adopted the former of those two principles of criticism.

The general rules appear to have been: first, to disregard the numerical majorities in estimating the documentary evidence; secondly, that in the absence of manuscripts of an earlier date than the fourth century, the *convergence* of testimony to the early existence of any particular reading has been deemed of the highest value; thirdly, that in endeavouring to ascertain from existing testimony the probable character of the most ancient readings, it has been found that the earliest existing manuscripts do, almost certainly, give the best representation of the earliest (no longer extant) texts; fourthly, that by a similar process, the comparative value of the ancient versions (for purposes of textual criticism) has been determined; fifthly, that an ancient manuscript varies in value in different parts of it, and that this variation can be more or less approximately estimated; sixthly, that some of the later (cursive) manuscripts, evidently contain faithful representations of ancient texts, and are of great value in doubtful cases; seventhly, that the ancient documents can be approximately grouped in families, in each of which there is a prevailing type of character, but in each of which there are particular documents containing a text of a more or less mixed character; eighthly, that the great mass of the cursives belong

to one group, being transcripts of the Constantinopolitan, or Byzantine recension; and therefore represent an original text which is less reliable than the older manuscripts; ninthly, that in all cases a single reliable attestation will outweigh the evidence of a multitude of mutually discordant readings, which are divergent from it. When all these principles are fully recognized, there will still remain cases in which the disagreement of early authorities marks the existence of a corruption anterior to them all; and in some of which the Revisers have noted in their margin the fact that the Greek text is uncertain.

It is obvious that the principal rules of internal evidence have been fully recognized—namely, that the argument from internal evidence is always more or less precarious; that the more difficult reading is in doubtful cases preferable to the simpler; that the shorter reading is in a similar way preferable to the longer (the tendency of copyists being to add to the text rather than to diminish from it); and, above all, that of two probable or possible readings, that one is preferable which explains the others.

The process of determining the evidential value of an ancient document has been briefly described in the Appendix to the text constructed by Drs. Westcott and Hort. It is a complex process, involving a clear estimate of the various forms of decay or corruption, to which each of the three classes of ancient document (namely, manuscripts, versions, and quotations) is subject, and of the manner in which they deliver their testimony. When all these have been taken into account, the comparative date of the reading attested in such case can be determined by the critical tact and experience of competent critics. And the document which habitually exhibits the oldest readings will be accepted as being habitually the most trustworthy, and its evidence in all doubtful cases will have a high value.

Practically, the result of this examination has been to assign a very high and preponderating value to the Codex Vaticanus B, and, in a lower degree, to the Codex Sinaiticus \aleph ; and among versions, to the Old Latin, as represented by its best manuscripts; to the two Egyptian versions, especially the Memphitic (see Bishop Lightfoot's discussion in Dr. Scrivener's Introduction); and to the older Syriac version. The cursives of highest value are those which have been recognized by Dr. Tregelles and by Dr. Westcott.

At the same time, there are cases in which the testimony of these has been outweighed by other considerations, or in which differences between them have led to uncertain results or alternative readings.

A few instances of disputed readings, in which the history and the principles of textual criticism are illustrated, will

serve as examples of the Revisers' method of applying those principles.

St. Matthew xvi. 2, 3, will supply a very good example, because, as far as we are aware, no practical or doctrinal issue depends on the result. The words are omitted by **N**B, and later uncials, by some of the good cursives, by the Memphitic version according to Mill, and apparently by Origen. They are supported by C D and the majority of uncials, by the mass of later manuscripts, by the Memphitic version (according to some texts of that version) by the Latin and the Syriac (the Curetonian excepted).

Under this conflict of testimony Dr. Scrivener's comment represents one school of criticism. "It is impossible for any one possessed of the slightest tincture of critical instinct to read thus thoughtfully without feeling assured that the words were actually spoken by the Lord on the occasion related in the received text" (and more in the same strain). Drs. Westcott and Hort inclose them in double brackets. Dr. Tregelles, in his text (constructed before the discovery of **N**) retains them. The Revisers retain them in the text with the marginal note, "They are omitted by some of the most ancient and other important authorities." It would *seem*, therefore, that in this case internal evidence has been allowed to exercise considerable influence in the final decision; that is to say, that it was impossible to obtain a two-thirds majority for the reversed position of text and margin.

St. Matthew xix. 17 is a passage of very great interest, both for its own contents and for the critical principles involved in the decision. In favour of the reading, "Why callest thou me good?" the authorities are C, and very many later uncials, the Peshito-Syriac, the Thebaic. For the reading, "Why askest thou me concerning that which is good?" are **N** B D, some good cursives, the best texts of the old Latin, the Memphitic, and other good versions. The weight of external evidence, on the principles advocated by Drs. Westcott and Hort, is decisive for the second of these readings. Dr. Scrivener estimates this evidence differently; but in virtue of the internal evidence arising from the far greater difficulty of the latter, he accepts it. It is probable that the Revisers were influenced by the external evidence alone, or almost exclusively; for their marginal insertion of the reading of the Authorized Version is simply, "Some ancient authorities read," &c.; and a reference is made to the parallel passages in the other Gospels, as if to suggest that the marginal reading may have been introduced from those parallel passages.

In St. Mark v. 36, they have evidently adopted the word *παρακούσας* (giving an alternative translation in the margin), on

the authority of **N B** and other uncials, against **A C D** and the majority.

In St. Mark v. 22, the weight of documentary evidence (**N B D**, and other good uncials) has not prevailed with them to introduce the startling reading, "his daughter Herodias," except into the margin.

In St. Mark vi. 20, "was much perplexed" is supported by **N B**, and the Memphitic version, against **A C D**, the Latin and the Syriac. But, inasmuch as the internal evidence would lead to the same conclusion (see Scrivener) we are unable to decide whether the Revised reading is given simply on the ground of external evidence, or with regard also to the internal evidence.

In St. Mark vii. 31, they accept "through Sidon" on the authority of **N** and other good uncials, the Latin, the Memphitic, and other versions, against **A** and (apparently) the majority, and the Syriac. On the other hand, it has been pronounced on the ground of internal evidence, that while authority draws us one way, common sense draws us in another, in regard to "this astonishing reading." (Scrivener.)

The last twelve verses of St. Mark's Gospel are retained with a short marginal note, intimating that "the two oldest Greek MSS." (**N B**) and some other authorities, omit them. The weight of external evidence derived from **A, D**, and the other uncials, from the cursives 33, 69, from the Latin, Syriac, Memphitic, and other versions, has been (apparently) judged to preponderate over the testimony of the two venerable authorities.

In the Angels' Hymn, St. Luke ii. 14, the authority of **N A B** (according to Mai), and **D**, and the Latin and Gothic versions, has outweighed **A** (in the Morning Hymn) **B**, as corrected by a later hand, and other uncials, some good cursives, the Syriac, the Memphitic, and other versions. The subjective evidence, on the other side, is given by Dr. Scrivener, thus,— "The rhythmical arrangement is utterly marred, and the simple shepherds are sent away with a message, the diction of which no scholar has yet construed to his own mind." (But we have been told subjective evidence is precarious.) On this and the preceding instance we propose to enter much more fully in the next number.

In St. Luke vi. 1, the word *δευτεροπρώτη* disappears, in obedience to **N B, L, 1, 22, 33, 69**, and other cursives, one of the Latin texts, one Syriac, and the Memphitic version, while **A, C, D**, and other MSS., some Latin texts, and Syriac versions retain it. Dr. Scrivener says—"the very obscurity of the expression (which does not occur in the parables or elsewhere) attests its genuineness."

In the well-known words of our Lord to Martha, in St. Luke x. 42, the reading, "one thing is needful," is retained against the

authority of **Σ B**, 1, 33, the Memphitic and other versions, but supported by **A, C** (apparently), and later uncials, by the Syriac versions, and the great mass of cursives, while the Latin texts and **D** omit the sentence. Have the Revisers been influenced in this case by the subjective evidence? Dr. Scrivener, from the subjective point of view, says:—"We confess we had rather see this grand passage expunged altogether from the pages of the Gospel than diluted after the wretched fashion" adopted by **Σ B**.

In St. John, vii. 8, the reading, "I go not up yet," has been retained, in accordance with **B** and other uncials, good cursives, the Thebaic, Syriac, and other versions; and against **Σ D** and other uncials, the Latin, Memphitic, and other versions; and against the evidence of an important passage in St. Jerome; and also, in spite of the rule of internal evidence, that the more difficult of two doubtful readings is to be preferred. In the margin is placed the rejected reading—"I go not up" ("yet" omitted). The weight of the internal evidence for this difficult reading, arising from its difficulty and improbability, is urged by Dr. Scrivener with characteristic energy, as being absolutely conclusive against the word "yet." The Revisers have adhered to the documentary evidence.

The celebrated passage, St. John vii. 53 to viii. 1, is marked within brackets, with the marginal note that most of the ancient authorities omit it, and that those which contain it vary much from one another. The documentary evidence stand thus. It is omitted in **B**, and apparently in **A** and **C**, in many other uncials, in some good cursives, in some of the texts of the Latin version, in the Syriac, the Memphitic, Thebaic, and other versions, by Origen and Chrysostom; in fact, we are told there is no allusion to it in the most ancient writers. Many MSS. which retain it mark it with notes of doubt. It is found in **D** and other later uncials, in more than 300 cursives, in some MSS. of the Old Latin, in the Apostolic Constitutions. St. Jerome and St. Augustine knew it. Dr. Scrivener concedes that on all intelligent principles of mere criticism it must be abandoned, but argues strongly in its favour, principally on internal evidence.

The Revisers have recognized the doubtful position of the passage, and the difficulties, not to say the impossibility, of absolutely excluding it.

Our space does not allow us at present to pursue the examination further; but what has been said will suffice to shew that there are ample materials for carrying on the inquiry, within reach of every student who wishes to examine the text adopted by the Revisers. The subject is well worthy of careful elucidation, and will repay the honest efforts of a candid inquirer. It must

always be borne in mind that the decision in each case was that of a majority in a considerable body of scholars, and that in no case could a variation from the text of the Authorized Version be admitted without the consent of two-thirds of those who were present. It must also be borne in mind that, from the nature of the case, no authoritative explanation of the grounds of the actual decisions can be given, while, at the same time, the result will be exposed to the most searching criticism of all competent critics outside of the Revision Company.¹

But our examination, as illustrated in the instances which we have selected, will serve to shew that in every case the weight of the documentary evidence has been fully estimated, and that the arguments from internal evidence have been cautiously received; while it was in strict accordance with the rules originally laid down, that no unnecessary change should be made. Every variation, therefore, which is found either in the text or in the margin will suggest important questions and lines of inquiry. We cannot but express our hope that one result of this work will be (see Bishop Ellicott's Preface to his "Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians") to familiarize the uneducated eye with these perplexing, yet deeply interesting particulars, and to induce younger students to acquire, at least in outline, a knowledge of the history and details of sacred criticism." If this part of the labour of the Revisers serves to stimulate the reverent search for, and study of, the pure word of God, they will have accomplished a result hardly less important than the actual and immediate fruit of their labours.

J. F. FENN.



ART. III.—"COLONEL GORDON IN CENTRAL AFRICA."

Colonel Gordon in Central Africa, 1874-1879. With a Portrait, and Map of the Country prepared under Colonel Gordon's supervision. From Original Letters and Documents. Edited by GEORGE BIRKBECK HILL, D.C.L., Author of "The Life of Sir Rowland Hill, K.C.B.," &c. 450 pp. London: Thomas De la Rue & Co. 1881.

COLONEL GORDON is well known, and this book about his five years' work in Africa, written almost entirely by himself, has a peculiar interest, and is likely to be well read. From a brief Memoir, which serves as a Preface to the volume, we

¹ The publication of the Introduction and Appendix by Drs. Westcott and Hort will be of great value, and is indeed almost indispensable to this examination.