Tischendorf and the History of the Greek New Testament Text

by Armin J. Panning

When J. Harold Greenlee in his book *Introduction to New Testament Criticism* calls Tischendorf "perhaps the greatest name in New Testament textual criticism," our first reaction may well be to be on guard against Tischendorf. The very term *criticism* tends to make us cautious. Instead of welcoming Tischendorf as someone who has contributed to theology, we may possibly have visions of some scholar arbitrarily handling, or rather "manhandling," God's Word. Textual criticism may suggest an intellectual and a rational approach to God's Word which rules out faith in inspiration and the inerrancy of an infallible Word. There can be no doubt that many textual critics, and good ones at that, were not true believers, but that does not necessarily discredit textual criticism. Textual criticism, or "lower criticism" as it is also called, restricts itself to one objective, trying to establish the wording of the original text as the inspired writers penned it. Textual criticism does not include translation of the text, nor interpretation, nor application. That is the role of theology. Textual criticism certainly does not include that activity which is called "higher criticism" or "literary criticism." Higher criticism assumes that the text is established and now seeks to determine what underlies that text. Hence it's preoccupation with sources and redactors and editors and such things so often fatal to simple trust in the doctrine of inspiration.

Lower criticism or textual criticism, as we said, restricts itself to the one objective of trying to establish the wording of the original text. It will be apparent then that there is no conflict between textual criticism and theology. Rather, the two go hand in hand. As theologians we must have the correct reading of the text before us if we are properly to expound and apply it. As firm believers in the miracle of verbal inspiration we, more than anyone else, ought to be eager and zealous to establish the reading for every word of God's sacred Scripture. Hence it is fitting that in the centennial year of a man like Constantin Tischendorf we should take note of the problem to which he addressed himself and the contribution he made toward its solution.

What is the problem to which New Testament textual criticism addresses itself? Simply this: trying to establish the original reading of the New Testament from an examination of all the evidence available. The scope of this work will become apparent when we realize that as of the year 1967 there were catalogued 81 papyrus manuscripts, 267 uncial manuscripts, and 2,764 minuscule manuscripts containing all or part of the New Testament. In addition there were 2,143 lectionaries or manuscripts containing pericope selections of the New Testament. Add to that the translations of the Greek New Testament into some fifteen ancient languages, plus the countless quotations of the New Testament to be found in the writings of the Church Fathers, and you will get some idea of the mass of evidence which the textual critic must weigh. If there were uniformity and agreement among all these witnesses, the critic's task would be comparatively simple, but unfortunately no two of these manuscripts are exactly the same. The reason for this is, of course, that until the standardization made possible by the printing press, these manuscripts had to be perpetuated as a hand-written text. For almost fifteen centuries the people who copied the New Testament were scribes and monks, who exhibit all the weaknesses to which the flesh is heir. Not only were mistakes made in copying the original, subsequent copyists faithfully reproduced these mistakes, and each copyist compounded the problem by adding slips and variants of his own.

The basic premise of textual criticism is that the older the manuscript, that is, the closer it is to the original, the fewer variants it should contain. But how does the textual critic go about determining the age of a manuscript? There are several guidelines that help him. First of all, different writing materials reflect different ages. In countries that were in commercial contact with Egypt, papyrus was the common writing material from the very earliest times until about the fourth century after Christ. Greenlee says, "Earlier than the fourth century (manuscripts were) exclusively on papyrus." There may be those who wish to dispute that cut-off date, but it is historically established that during the fourth century A.D. there was a shift toward parchment and vellum, the writing material made from animal skins. In 331 A.D., for example, the Christian emperor Constantine ordered fifty parchment Bibles for the churches in Constantinople. In 350 A.D. the library at Caesarea was replacing worn payrus books with vellum copies. Parchment manuscripts remained the standard for about a thousand

years, from the fourth to the fourteenth centuries. The oldest extant paper manuscript dates to 1109 A.D. By the fourteenth century paper was rivaling parchment and in the fifteenth century, with the coming of the printing press, paper took over. Hence, writing material is one criterion of age.

Style of handwriting is another indication of age. The oldest literary hand is a system of stiff capital letters called "uncials," after the Latin word meaning, "inch high." Uncial manuscripts have no division between words, no accents or breathing marks, very little punctuation, and virtually no adornment of letters, which later became so popular. Uncial manuscripts are standard until about the tenth century A.D.

Together with the uncial or capital-letter script that served for literary works there was always used also a cursive or running-hand, employing small connected letters for such things as personal correspondence, business transactions, and legal papers. About the ninth century this cursive script was modified slightly and came to be accepted as a literary hand for books and manuscripts. As noted above, by the tenth century this easier and faster "minuscule" writing, as it is called, had crowded out the older and more cumbersome uncials. After the tenth century A.D. all the New Testament manuscripts are minuscules. Minuscules comprise by far the largest group of manuscripts, totaling over 2,700, or about a ten to one ratio.

What does a study of manuscripts by age grouping tell the textual critic? Obviously this is not an exact science, but some generalization can be drawn. For one thing, many of the variants that occur in the manuscripts seem to have come in early—before 325 A.D. when Christianity became recognized as the religion of the empire with the conversion of Constantine. The time up to 325 A.D. has been called the "age of divergence" from the original text. There are a number of factors contributing to the variants that creep into the text up to that time. First of all, the church was a persecuted church. As such, its sacred writings were few and had to be kept undercover to avoid confiscation. Obviously copying the Scriptures could not be farmed out to professional scribes, as was done with classical literature. If a Christian wanted a New Testament, he either had to copy it himself or engage some other non-professional to do it for him. The quality in either case would not be very good. Furthermore, Christians who expected the early return of their Master made these manuscripts. The care and patience they extended therefore was not that which one would bestow on a literary work that he knew would be studied critically two thousand years later. The result is that minor variants, such as spelling, word order, substitution of synonyms, etc. seemed of no great moment to the early copyists.

There is a fringe benefit in these variants, however. Perhaps about seventy-five percent of the text of all manuscripts is in agreement with all other manuscripts and thus shows nothing distinctive about itself. It is in the *variants* where a manuscript shows characteristics of its own. Textual critics soon noticed that variants of distinctive type tended to recur in manuscripts. Thus, by grouping together manuscripts with the same type of variants, they could assemble manuscripts into families; all apparently copies from the same parent manuscript or at least copied in the same general area. Next, by comparing with the variants found in the New Testament quotations of the Church Fathers, the locale of whose work was known, it could be established with some degree of accuracy where the manuscript or family of manuscripts originated.

It is in this age of divergence up to 325 A.D. that local texts developed in such centers as Alexandria, Caesarea, Rome, North Africa, etc. After 325 these distinctive local texts tend to merge into a standardized text. That perhaps is a very natural trend when you keep in mind that after 325 the *Christian* emperor Constantine administered the Roman Empire. One of the first things he did was to order fifty new copies of the Bible for churches in Constantinople. The text he ordered was of course the local text of Constantinople. These fifty volumes were copied by professional scribes and carefully checked by a corrector. No doubt a high degree of conformity to the Byzantine text was thus achieved. Since it was the official Bible of the emperor, this edition very likely served as the exemplar from which new manuscripts throughout the empire were copied. Hence there was a distinct convergence of text—all texts tending to resemble the official local text used at Constantinople. Undoubtedly distinctive readings and variants maintained themselves for some time, but by the eighth century the text was almost entirely standardized. Witness to that is the fact that ninety-five percent of the extant New Testament manuscripts are eighth century or later and very few of them differ to any marked degree from this standardized Byzantine text.

Thus by what might humanly seem to be a quirk of fortune rather than any inherent superiority, the Byzantine text gained the dominant position over the other local texts. We shall now see how by another set of circumstances this Byzantine text became so firmly entrenched as to be virtually untouchable until about a hundred years ago, that is, until the time of Tischendorf. We refer of course to the introduction of printing. Printing made it possible to produce large editions, every volume of which was an exact duplicate of the original plate. The original plate, however, was made up using the minuscule manuscripts reflecting the late Byzantine readings. What thus became standardized in print was not a critical edition, which concerned itself with the question, "Does this text reproduce the original wording?" but was rather a tacit acceptance of the late manuscripts that happened to be ready at hand when the first printed edition of the New Testament was prepared.

It is no doubt fitting that the first major production using Gutenberg's invention of movable type should be the Bible, printed in 1456. But it was not the Greek New Testament that was first printed. It was the Vulgate. The Greek New Testament waited for publication for over fifty years. During this time there were numerous translations printed, Bohemian, French, Italian, and German. These printed vernaculars offered no challenge to the accepted Vulgate. The Greek New Testament did, for the scholar armed with knowledge of Greek and the Greek New Testament could easily challenge the Vulgate on many a reading. Hence the church was not keen about having the Greek New Testament available to all.

It remained for Cardinal Ximenes of Toledo, Spain, to be the first to publish the original Greek, but even here it was not the Greek alone but an inclusion in a polyglot edition. The Old Testament was printed in parallel columns in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, with the Latin in the middle, as the editor proudly asserts, "Just as Jesus hung on the cross between two thieves." In the New Testament also the Latin Vulgate overshadowed the original Greek. Work was begun in 1502 and the New Testament portion was ready by 1514, but actual production was held up until the completion of the Old Testament in 1517. Then it took three years to get official approval from Rome and for some strange reason the edition, known as the Complutensian Polyglot, was not marketed for another two years, that is, until 1522.

Meanwhile the enterprising Swiss publisher Johann Froben was quicker to see an opportunity. Realizing the interest in printed Scriptures, he tried to steal a march on Cardinal Ximenes by publishing a Greek-Latin New Testament. In April of 1515 he asked the scholar Erasmus as quickly as possible to prepare a copy of the New Testament for publication. Erasmus accepted, hoping for the Greek portion to find one complete manuscript that he could work up for the edition. He was somewhat irritated to find that he couldn't obtain a manuscript containing the whole New Testament and hence had to settle for the prospect of piecing together six incomplete manuscripts that happened to be available. Of these six, only one had any antiquity (Codex 1) and he seems not to have used that one much. The other five were all late Byzantine manuscripts, mostly twelfth century. Printing began in October, six months after the contact had been made in April, and the edition was finished in the incredibly short time of five months. When we realize that the resultant volume was a book of a thousand pages, it will not surprise us that the edition contained hundreds of typographical errors.

The edition of Erasmus, however, became popular and easily surpassed the Complutensian Polyglot. For one thing, it was earlier by a number of years and scholars had become used to it. Also it was cheaper and certainly more convenient than the cumbersome Polyglot. But by no stretch of the imagination was it a better text than its competitor. It has never been determined exactly which manuscripts were used in preparing the Polyglot, but textual critics today are agreed that in many readings the Polyglot text was closer to the original than was the text of Erasmus. Certainly it was more carefully prepared than Erasmus' text with *twelve years* of preparation as compared with *six or seven months* by Erasmus. Even Erasmus says of his edition that it was "precipitated rather than edited," a statement that may mean more to us if we examine just one instance of his hasty and inaccurate method. Of the six manuscripts that Erasmus had at hand, only one contained anything of the book of Revelation, and that one was mutilated in some passages and the last six verses of the closing chapter were missing entirely. Instead of looking around for another manuscript that contained the missing verses, Erasmus proceeded to translate them into Greek from the Latin Vulgate. It will hardly surprise us that the result was a text that has not been supported by manuscript evidence anywhere. And yet, this is the text that

formed the basis for almost all printed New Testaments for the next three hundred years, including Luther's text and the text for the King James' Version.

One of many printers who followed the text of Erasmus was Robert Stephanus. Between the years of 1546 and 1551 he produced four editions of the New Testament. The third edition gave the text of Erasmus but included in notes the variant readings from the Complutensian Polyglot and fifteen other independent manuscripts. The fourth edition in 1551 had the same text, but it featured an innovation, the verse divisions which have remained virtually unchanged to our day. The chapter divisions were much earlier, dating to the eleventh century and were the work of Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury.

It was, however, the printing house of Elzevir in Leyden, Holland, which made the text of Erasmus what it came to be called, the *textus receptus*. Between the years of 1624 to 1678 the two ambitious Elzevir brothers produced seven editions of the New Testament. Their interest was commercial rather than critical, so they were perfectly satisfied to reproduce with very few changes the text of Erasmus as it had been passed on in the editions of Stephanus. Their second edition in 1663 became the standard for all of continental Europe. It was what we might call an "advertising blurb" from this second edition that coined the term, the *received text*, for its preface stated somewhat optimistically, "You have therefore the text now received by all, in which we give nothing altered or corrupt." It was indeed "received by all" for the next two centuries, but one could hardly say that it was a critical text dedicated to the principle of avoiding anything altered from the original.

Before going any farther it might be well to sound a word of caution, lest the foregoing criticism be misunderstood. The *received text* was not a "bad" text or a "heretical" one. The alterations and changes from the original that it perpetuated did not tend toward false doctrine. Quite the opposite! Most of the variants were in the nature of additions to the text, explanations that were added for clarity or statements intended to strengthen orthodox doctrines. In short, the variants were "improvements" on the original. Realizing that point will help us to understand the fierce opposition from orthodox theologians against the work of early text critics. When the text critic on the basis of older manuscripts maintained that the *textus receptus* was an altered text, the reading that he proposed as the original was almost always a shorter reading. Hence it seemed to orthodox theologians that the text critic was cutting back Scripture, or that he was subtracting from God's Word.

In spite of such opposition, however, the next two centuries (1633–1830) were an age in which scholars were busy collecting and studying every available manuscript in support of their contention that a text could be constructed which was closer to the original than was the *received text*.

A leader in this movement of gathering evidence against the *received text* was the Englishman John Mill. In 1707 he published his monumental edition of the New Testament. The text was substantially that of Stephanus' third edition, i.e., the *received text,* but Mill's edition included what may fairly be called the first critical apparatus. On the bottom of each page he listed the variants that he found in comparing seventy-eight manuscripts, a number of ancient versions or translations, and a considerable number of quotations from the Church Fathers. The claim made for this apparatus was that it listed over thirty thousand variants from the *received text*. However, the printed text had to remain the traditional one. The public would accept no other. Mill, in fact, was violently attacked even for indicating in footnotes which variants he preferred.

One of the people genuinely disturbed by Mill's thirty thousand variants was Johann Bengel, then a student at Tuebigen. He set out to check the evidence in the hope of reducing that number of variants. One of the very important discoveries he made was that variants tend to recur in distinct patterns in certain manuscripts. By grouping together those manuscripts that contained similar variants he was able to construct several families of manuscripts, notably the "African family," as he called one, and the "Asiatic family," as he designated the other. When in 1734 he published his edition of the New Testament, he published the *received text,* but in his critical apparatus he listed the variants of the individual manuscripts not as independent witnesses but grouped them by families and considered the family as one witness. Thus he decreased significantly Mill's total of thirty thousand variants. What Bengel had done was to take New Testament text study a long step toward uncovering the families of local texts, which, as we noted above, tended to disappear through the standardization brought about by Constantine after 325 A.D.

One of the names that dare not be omitted from any survey of men who contributed evidence against the *received text* is that of Johann Griesbach. In his three editions of the New Testament, published between 1774 and 1806, he followed Bengel's lead of grouping variants by families. In fact, he enlarged the system to include three families, the Alexandrian texts, the Western texts, and the Byzantine texts. His great contribution is that he recognized that the Byzantine texts, represented almost exclusively by the minuscule manuscripts, were late and inferior. If there was to be any hope of moving closer toward the original wording of the New Testament, it would have to be on the basis of readings drawn from the older *uncial* manuscripts. This was, of course, a frontal attack on the *received text,* based as it was almost entirely on the minuscules. But Griesbach in his own editions dared not print any text other than the traditional *received text*. Any hardy soul who actually elevated a variant to the main body of the text was either condemned or ignored. We might thus characterize the years from 1633 to 1830 as a time of gathering an enormous amount of textual evidence, very little of which supported the traditional text, but it was nevertheless the *received text* that continued to be printed and early readings were relegated to the footnotes.

With the coming of Lachmann we have the first attempt at a true critical text, that is, a text not using the *textus receptus* as its starting point, but beginning from a study of the ancient manuscripts. In this way Lachmann constructed an entirely independent text, but he made a bad psychological blunder when he published his first edition in 1831. Instead of explaining fully the textual principles he had used for setting up his text, he merely referred his readers to an article he had written in a theological journal some time before. Lacking a proper understanding of Lachmann's principles, reader reaction was immediate and violent. In a second edition, prepared in the years 1842 to 1850, he sought to undo his former mistake by including a full explanation of his critical principles, but the damage had been done.

Lachmann's new text, however, had broken the ice and it proved to be a springboard for the work of Tischendorf, culminating in his monumental eighth major edition of the New Testament. Of the biographical details of Tischendorf's life (1815–1874) we perhaps need to give very little. It is his *work* that is important. A brilliant student at Leipzig between the years 1834 and 1838, he came under the influence of Johann Winer, the famous Greek grammarian. Winer instilled in Tischendorf the burning desire to reconstruct the purest possible form of the Greek New Testament on the basis of the oldest manuscripts. How thoroughly he got the point across to his pupil is reflected in one of Tischendorf's letters to his fiancée. Instead of writing sweet nothings to her, he declared, "I am confronted with a secret task, the struggle to regain the original form of the New Testament." There can be no doubt that Tischendorf was first, last, and always a textual critic. When he was only twenty-four years old, he set about publishing his first New Testament, a critical hand-edition. At the age of twenty-five he went to Paris, where he succeeded in doing what no one else had been able to accomplish. He deciphered the palimpsest Ephraemi. This manuscript is a filth century parchment of the Bible, which in the twelfth century was erased and written over with a series of essays on asceticism by one St. Ephraem. With the aid of chemicals and infinite patience, Tischendorf was able to read virtually all of the erased fifth century text. Spurred on by this success, Tischendorf traveled all over Europe searching for and examining manuscripts both new and old. He traveled to Holland, London, Cambridge, Oxford, back to Paris, Basel, and Rome where he spent a whole year in the Vatican library.

In 1844 he set out on a journey to examine manuscripts in the Near East. On this journey he made a discovery that affected his whole life and work. While staying at the monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai, he happened to see a wastebasket full of parchment leaves intended for starting the fire in the monastery's oven. With his keen eye for manuscripts Tischendorf noticed almost at once that these were pages from the Septuagint. As he was in the process of retrieving some forty-three of these pages, he was casually informed by a monk that two basket loads of such parchment had already been burned. Tischendorf excitedly warned the monk that such papers were far too valuable to be burned, an estimate that proved to be absolutely true. A study of the forty-three pages, which Tischendorf was allowed to keep, proved them to be portions of Chronicles, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, and Esther.

In 1853 Tischendorf returned to the monastery of St. Catherine, prepared to buy the beautiful uncial manuscript of which he had gained only a small portion, but his previous conduct had tipped the monks off as to the value of their codex, and he could learn nothing more of its whereabouts.

In 1859 Tischendorf again traveled to St. Catherine's on Mt. Sinai, hoping to learn something of the precious manuscript housed there, but again he was stymied—until the day before he was scheduled to leave. As he was presenting to the steward of the monastery a handsome copy of the Septuagint recently printed in Leipzig, the steward remarked about another Septuagint that he had. He then proceeded to show Tischendorf the manuscript that he had so long been looking for. This time concealing his feelings, Tischendorf casually asked to be allowed to look at the manuscript at his leisure that evening. He took it to his room and stayed up all night reading it. In his diary, which he kept in Latin, he stated, *Quippe dormire nefas videbatur* (It really seemed a sacrilege to go to sleep). Tischendorf soon realized that he had before him more than he could have hoped for. This ancient manuscript contained most of the Old Testament, all of the New Testament, plus the Epistle of Barnabas and most of the Shepherd of Hermas. The next morning Tischendorf tried to buy the manuscript but was unsuccessful and had to leave without it. By working through a monastery of St. Catherine in Cairo, however, he gained a working agreement with the Mt. Sinai monastery whereby they loaned him a quire (eight pages) at a time so he could copy it. In Cairo Tischendorf contacted two Germans who knew some Greek, a druggist and a bookseller. These two copied and Tischendorf carefully checked their work. In two months they transcribed over 110,000 lines of text. In this way Tischendorf acquired what has to be considered perhaps the most valuable manuscript for New Testament criticism. Its only competitior is Codex B, also known as Vaticanus.

Armed with the text of Codex Sinaiticus, or א as it is designated, plus many lesser manuscripts, Tischendorf returned to Leipzig and incorporated this wealth of new information into successive editions of his New Testament. His greatest accomplishment is his *Eighth Major Edition of the New Testament* published in eleven parts between 1864 and 1872. Perhaps its text relies a bit too much on his prized manuscript Sinaiticus, but its critical apparatus constitutes a veritable gold mine of information and evidence. To form some idea of current opinion about Tischendorf's work we might quote some modern scholars. Greenlee, for example, writing in 1964, says, "His eighth major edition contains a critical apparatus which has never been equaled in comprehensiveness of citation of Greek manuscripts, versions, and patristic evidence. A century later it is still indispensable for serious work in the text of the New Testament."

Of his writings in general, and they are voluminous, totaling over one hundred and fifty books and scholarly articles, Bruce Metzger in his *The Text of the New Testament* writes, "The man to whom modern textual critics of the New Testament owe most is without doubt Constantin Tischendorf who sought out and published more manuscripts and produced more critical editions of the Greek Bible than any other single scholar."

As both quotations show, Tischendorf's chief claim to fame rests on his industry in assembling textual evidence. Constructing a text that would be universally accepted by the scholarly public was not to be one of his accomplishments. That remained for two Cambridge scholars, Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort. After twenty-eight years of joint labor Westcott and Hort in 1882 published their edition, *The New Testament in Original Greek*. Actually, it came out without a critical apparatus, since it relied so heavily on Tischendorf's foregoing work. It was readily accepted because the editors carefully and convincingly laid out the principles whereby they had arrived at their text; principles that incidentally still stand and are universally applied today. Another factor favorable to the acceptance of the Westcott and Hort text was the fact that it served substantially as the text that underlay the new translation into English, *The Revised Version of the New Testament*, prepared between 1881 and 1885.

With the work of Westcott and Hort we enter into the age of the modern critical text. The Westcott and Hort text is still sold as one of the standard editions. In addition there have been quite a number of other modern critical texts published. There is, e.g., Von Soden's expensive and disappointing edition in 1913, Souter's text in 1910, Hoskier's text of Revelation in 1929, and three Catholic texts by Vogels, Merk, and Bover.

Two texts, however, deserve a bit of comment. Since 1898 there have been twenty-five editions of the series begun by Eberhard Nestle. This text is constructed by taking the majority reading of Tischendorf, Westcott and Hort, and Weiss. It has a critical apparatus that is concise but helpful. Recent editions are under the supervision of Professor Kurt Aland of Muenster University. Hence it has been entitled *The Nestle-Aland Text*.

Closely connected with the name of Kurt Aland is the other edition of which we wish to speak briefly, namely *The Greek New Testament* published by the United Bible Society. In 1955 American, British, Scottish, Wuerttemberg, and Dutch Bible Societies began work on this joint project. Using the Westcott and Hort text simply as a starting point, they attempted to set up a new text using the best twentieth century scholarship. The editorial committee consisted of four men. Two were from Europe, Kurt Aland of Muenster, Germany, and Matthew Black of St. Andrews, Scotland. From the United States there were Bruce Metzger of Princeton and Allen Wikgren of the University of Chicago. The edition that resulted from their work and which first appeared in May of 1966 was described by Kurt Aland in a recent article of the *Journal of Biblical Literature* as a "translator's text" rather than a scientific text for the specialist.

The difference between a "translator's text" and a "scientific text" shows itself primarily in the critical apparatus. Whereas the Nestle-Aland edition cites on the average twenty variants per page, the United Bible Society text averages only 1.6 variant per page. It restricts itself to only the most significant variants, about eight thousand in the New Testament. It attempts, however, to document these more fully than Nestle-Aland does. It gives the evidence both for and against the reading adopted in the text rather than using Nestle-Aland's method of citing only the main manuscripts that disagree with the adopted reading, thereby implying that all other manuscripts favor the reading of the text.

In 1968 a second edition of the United Bible Society text was brought out. The two most important changes appear immediately on the title page. One is the addition of a fifth name to the editorial staff, that of Dr. Carlo M. Martini, S.J. Dr. Martini is a professor at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. Hence Catholic scholarship, so long a bitter foe of the Bible Societies, has now entered in on the joint venture.

The other change is the information that the editorial committee of this second edition worked under the direction of the Institute for New Testament Textual Research located at Muenster. Professor Aland is a prominent member of this Institute. As was noted above, Professor Aland serves both as an editor for the Nestle-Aland text and on the editorial committee of the United Bible Society text. It will therefore surprise no one that the stated goal of the Institute is to bring the text of these two editions into conformity. The text of the third edition of the United Bible Society text is to conform to the text of the twenty-sixth edition of Nestle-Aland, both to come out in 1970. The differing purpose of the two editions will be maintained, however. The United Bible Society text is to be a "translator's text." The Nestle-Aland text is to remain the scholar's tool. Professor Aland in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* says of it, "In comparison with earlier editions, the new Nestle-Aland will have a considerably higher standard, its aim being to provide the specialist working on the New Testament text with all the material he might need."

Whether we choose the Nestle-Aland edition or the new United Bible Society text, we cannot but be impressed by the tremendous amount of work that has gone into their preparation and we need to thank God for the work of dedicated men who have brought to us the text in a form that we can be confident conforms closely to the original. The material for solid New Testament study is before us. It remains for us only to be faithful in using it.