THE NEW ECLECTICISM
An essay in appreciation of the work of Professor George D. Kilpatrick
by
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It was a great privilege some years ago to study at Oxford under the guidance of Professor G.D. Kilpatrick. His recent death is a great loss to the community of biblical scholarship, and this essay is offered in appreciation of his work. Exercising characteristic independence of mind, Kilpatrick pioneered the eclectic method in New Testament textual criticism. He stressed the importance of giving full weight to internal criteria in judging the merits of variant readings in the New Testament text. His special emphasis on the style of the New Testament writers (in which he followed C.H. Turner) and his study of the influence of Atticism on the early transmission of the New Testament have made a vital contribution to our understanding of the text.

Five decades of careful attention to the text of the New Testament enabled Kilpatrick to lay the groundwork for a lively debate on method in New Testament textual criticism. In 1943 he published an eclectic study of the text of the Gospels and Acts, and the following year he offered a similar article of the text of the Epistles. He made a more thorough study of the text of Revelation and of Acts in his contributions to the Festschriften for Josef Schmid and R.P. Casey. His judgments on individual readings have been published in fascicules by the British and Foreign Bible Society entitled A Greek English Diglot for the Use of Translators. These volumes were issued “for private circulation only” over several years. They give an indication of how the New Testament looks when the principles of “rational eclecticism” are applied to the text.

Some scholars have been critical of Kilpatrick’s dependence on Atticism and other internal criteria for determining the original text. E.J. Epp, while asserting that “every encouragement should be given to exploring the eclectic approach now being pursued so ardently by Professor Kilpatrick,” cautioned that “external aspects and qualitative evaluations of MSS and text-type have perhaps been disregarded.” E.C. Colwell challenged the method in that it “relegates the manuscripts to the role of supplier of readings. The weight of the manuscript is ignored. Its place in the manuscript tradition is not considered.” Colwell criticizes Kilpatrick’s choice of a reading found only in one late Vulgate manuscript. G.D. Fee has also questioned

5 Mark (1958); Matthew (1959); John (1960); The General Letters (1961); Luke (1962); Romans and 1 and 2 Corinthians (1964); The Pastoral Letters and Hebrews (1963).
Kilpatrick’s work as representing a faulty theory of textual corruption and transmission and leaving “textual judgments to the whims of individual practitioners.”

Bruce Metzger has offered a detailed critique of Kilpatrick’s dependence on internal criteria for judging readings. Assessing A Greek-English Diglot for the Use of Translators, Metzger wrote of “his general disregard for the age and quality of external evidence,” and continues:

The extent to which Kilpatrick is prepared to go in adopting readings which have the most meagre external support, if he is convinced that internal considerations require it, may be illustrated by the following readings in the Greek-English Diglot:

Matt. xx. 30 ἔκραζον is supported by 118 209 Syr, Pali.
Matt. xxi. 1 omit ἔπειν with E Syr.
Matt. xxii. 7 ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐκεῖνος is supported by 33
Mark v. 11 τὰ ὅρη is supported by 372 485 Syr.
Mark ix. 17 ἀποκριθεὶς αὐτῷ is supported by C
Mark xiv. 6 εἰς ἐμὲ is supported by 517 579 /251 Syr, P Eth.
Mark xiv. 31 ἐλάλημεν μᾶλλον is supported by 574 and k.
Luke ix. 51 ἐστήριξεν is supported by 1241.
John xix. 35 ἀληθής is supported by Ν 124 Chr.
Jas. ii. 18 ἔργων τὴν πίστιν μου is supported by Syr.
1 Pet. ii. 11 ἀπέχεσθαι ὑμᾶς is supported by Vulg Cyp.
2 John, vs. 8 πλήρης is supported by L. Dam.

What Metzger has termed the “virtual neglect of external evidence” and Kurt Aland has called “a radical text based on an eclectic methodology” should rather be viewed as a pioneering effort in the direction toward which textual criticism of the New Testament is headed. Compared with the work of previous generations, textual criticism today takes a much more eclectic approach. More weight is being given generally to internal criteria, and no one rule of thumb dominates (e.g. lectio brevior potior). Most importantly, there seems to be less slavish dependence on one outstanding manuscript, as there was with Tischendorf’s understandable over-fondness for Sinaiticus, or Hort’s preference for Vaticanus. If anything, the older papyri (P 46, P 66, etc.) tend to rule the day, but their hegemony does not go unchallenged. Kilpatrick’s emphasis on internal criteria has served to redress the imbalance which gave almost exclusive right to external manuscript factors, and has helped to make the discipline more truly and properly scientific.

Kilpatrick has chosen the readings in the above list, despite slender support, because of over-riding reasons of style and usage. It is important to note that he has not been alone in this regard. The text presented by U.B.S. and Nestle shows a surprising number of instances where the selected reading is not supported by any of the “best manuscripts”. In the very selective presentation of U.B.S., the result of the work of the international, ecumenical committee (Kurt

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10 Ibid., 179.
Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger and Allen Wikgren) I have counted 38 instances in which the chosen reading lacks support in both the papyri and the great uncialis (01ABD). Those entries ending with // indicate where all the witnesses supporting the reading, as cited by U.B.S. 3, have been given.

Relevant witnesses

| (01 B) | Matt. 3:16 | αὐτῷ 01b C D Supp K L P W Δ |
| (01 B) | Matt. 6:33 | τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ K L W |
| (01 B) | Matt. 7:14 | τί 01c 1 B7 τί δὲ C K L W X thrd Α Θ Π f1 f2 28 |
| (01 B) | Matt. 7:18 | τοιεῖν...τοιεῖν 01 C K L W X Δ |
| (01 B) | Matt. 8:9 | ύπυρ έξουσίαν C K L W |
| (01 B) | Matt. 8:21 | τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ C K L W |
| (01 BD) | Matt. 15:14 | τυφλοὶ εἰσίν ὁ δήγοι τυφλῶν 01a L Θ f13 33 |
| (01 BD) | Matt. 15:31 | ἀλαοῦντας, κυλλοῦς υψαῖς C K L P W |
| (01 BD) | Matt. 16:21 | ὁ Ἰησοῦς 01b C Β7 Δ omit Ο K L W N Δ Θ |
| (P30 01 BD) | Matt. 20:30 | ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, κύριε 15 rd C K W X Γ |
| (01 BD) | Matt. 23:26 | τὸ ποτηρίου...τὸ ἐκτὸς αὐτοῦ Θ f1 700 ita, a syr a geo 1, A // |
| (01 ABD) | Matt. 27:16 | Ἰησοῦν Βαραββᾶν Θ f1 700* syr2 palms arm geo 2 Origen // |
| (01 ABD) | Matt. 27:17 | Ἰησοῦν τὸν Βαραββᾶν (Θ 700* omit τὸν f1 syr3 pal arm geo 2 Origenpt // |
| (01 ABD) | Mark 4:20 | Λευιν Α (01c B L W Λευείν) f1 700 |
| (01 ABD) | Mark 4:20 | ἐν...ἐν...ἐν (Λ ἐν...ἐν...ἐν) Θ Lct itaur, (b),c,d,e,l,ff2,i,q,t1 vg cop sa,bo goth geo // |
| (01 ABD) | Mark 12:23 | ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει ὅταν ἀναστάσει X 1010 1195 1242 |
| (01 ABD) | Mark 14:72 | ὅτι πρὶν ἄλλητορα φανήσας δι’ τρίς με ἄπαρνῆσῃ C2vid L Ψ |
| (P30 01 AB) | Luke 11:14 | καὶ αὐτῷ ἕν Α6 C K W X Δ Θ Π Ψ f13 28 |
| (P30 01 ABD) | John 13:2 | Ἰουδας Σιμωνος Ἰσκαριώτου L Ψ 0124 1241 vg ι arm Origen // |
| (P30 01 ABD) | John 13:32 | ἐν αὐτῷ 2148 l84 i85 syr p,h,palms Origen // |
| (01 ABD) | John 16:13 | ὁ δὴ γῆς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πάση (01a omit πάση) 01a L W |
| (01 ABD) | Rom. 5:1 | ἐξομείν 01a B3 G Gr Ρ Ψ 0220 vid 88 |
| (01 ABD) | Rom. 7:25 | χῆρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ 01a Ψ 33 81 88 104 436 2127 cop bo arm |
| (P30 01 ABD) | 1 Cor. 5:13 | κρίνει B3 33 81 88 104 181 326 436 614 630 1739 1877 1881 |
| (01 ABD) | Phil. 3:21 | αὐτῷ B3 K 33 88 330 |
| (P30 01 ABD) | Col. 1:7 | ύμῶν 01c C D Δ K Ρ Ψ 33 81 88 |
| (P30 01 ABD) | Heb. 5:12 | πίνα Ψ 81 cop vams Euthalius Ps-Oecumenius comm // |
| (01 AB) | Jas. 3:3 | ei δὲ B3 Λ Ψ 049 33 104 181 |
| (01 A) | Jas. 4:14 | ἀτμίς γάρ ἔστε ἥ 81 104 614 2412 2492 syr h |
| (01 A) | 1 John 5:18 | αὐτῶν 330 451 614 1505 2412 2495 it ar,c,ded,div,p,q,r vg syr h cop bo Chromatius Jerome // |
| (P3 01 A) | Rev. 9:13 | ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων κερατών Ρ 046 1 1006 1828 1854 1859 2020 |
| (P7 01 A) | Rev. 15:6 | λίθον Γ 051 1 1006 1611 1815 1859 2020ext 2042 2065 |
| (01 A) | Rev. 18:3 | πέποκαν 1828 // |
| (01 A) | Rev. 18:8 | κύριος ὁ θεός 01c C Ρ 046 051 1 94 1611 1828 1854 2065 2073 2081 |
| (01 A) | Rev. 19:6 | κύριος ὁ θεός ήμῶν 01b Ρ 046 94 1611 1854 1859 2020 2042 |
We are indebted to the U.B.S. committee, and especially to Bruce Metzger for giving us not only their judgments on readings, and relative certainty of those decisions, but also providing their reasons for the decisions. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* offers the following instances where internal criteria were given much weight:

Matthew 6:33 The majority of the Committee was impressed by the prevailing usage of Matthew, who almost never employs βασιλεία without a modifier (the instances in 8.12; 13.38; 24.7, 14 were regarded as special exceptions), and explained the absence of a modifier in several witnesses as due to accidental scribal omission.

Luke 11:14 On the one hand, the expression καὶ υἱόν κωφόν appears to be a Semitism in the Lukan style. On the other hand, the external evidence in support of the shorter reading is exceedingly weighty. In order to reflect these conflicting considerations, the Committee decided to include the words in the text, but to enclose them within square brackets.

Romans 5:1 Although the subjunctive ἔχωμεν has far better external support than the indicative ἔχομεν (א B 3 G 0220 88 326 330 629 1241 1739 Byz Led it S vg syr pal bo), a majority of the Committee judged that internal evidence must here take precedence.

Revelation 18:3 On the one hand, the most strongly supported readings, πέπτωκαν (A C 69 2031) and πεπτώκασιν (א 046 about 50 minuscules including 1006 vid 1611 cop sa bt), are scarcely suitable in the context. It is clear then, that Kilpatrick has not been alone in his dependence upon internal criteria for determining the original text of the New Testament. He has been, perhaps, more rigorous than others, but all have been increasingly compelled to go in this direction. This has been especially true with regard to the text of the Acts of the Apostles where two strong rival text traditions are to be found. Metzger reported that in this case the committee proceeded in an eclectic fashion, holding that neither the Alexandrian nor the Western group of witnesses always preserves the original text, but that in order to attain the earliest text one must compare the two divergent traditions point by point and in each case select the reading which commends itself in the light of transcriptional and intrinsic probabilities.

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13 Ibid., 272.
What Metzger writes of Acts is true of other modern editions of the New Testament as a whole. For example R.V.G. Tasker reported with regard to the New Testament text behind the New English Bible:

‘Eclecticism’, in the context of New Testament textual criticism, means (in the words of Léon Vaganay) that there must be ‘no shutting up of the different branches of the science into watertight compartments’, and it implies that ‘verbal criticism, external and internal criticism, all have their part to play and must give each other mutual support’. The fluid state of textual criticism today makes the adoption of the eclectic method not only desirable but all but inevitable.14

Still earlier, in 1956, Kenneth Clark recognized the need for an eclectic method for dealing with the text of the New Testament:

It is the only procedure available to us at this stage, but it is very important to recognize that it is a secondary and tentative method. It is not a new method nor a permanent one. The eclectic method cannot by itself create a text to displace Westcott-Hort and its off-spring. It is suitable only for exploration and experimentation.... The eclectic method, by its very nature, belongs to an age like ours in which we know only that the traditional theory of the text is faulty but cannot yet see clearly to correct the fault.15

Whether, therefore we refine the terms and take Gordon Fee’s distinction between “reasoned” and “rigorous” eclecticism,16 or whether we proceed with Kurt Aland’s “local-genealogical method”, we are left with some sort of eclectic approach. To quote Aland, who rejects the term “eclectic” because it suggests false associations,

Due to the constant change of relationships among manuscripts, each New Testament text requires its own individual treatment with a fresh consideration of not only the external but of the internal factors as well.17

Whatever shade of meaning we bring to the term, “eclectic,” we are faced with the task recently outlined by E J. Epp:

We must devote our best and most serious efforts to refining the eclectic method in any and all appropriate ways, for it is likely to be our only guide for some time to come.18

In the words of Krister Stendahl, written in 1954, “the eclectic method is inevitable.”19

What we are headed toward in New Testament textual criticism is a new eclecticism, a method that considers both external and internal criteria as of equal importance in determining the original text. This is a method in which stylistic considerations are taken not just as a last resort, when the external evidence is ambiguous or inconclusive, but as integral to the decision-

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16 “Rigorous or Reasoned Eclecticism—Which?”, 177-197.
making process on the text. If we ask, at what point is it appropriate to consider the style, usage and theology of an author, the answer is that we must keep them in mind throughout our investigation of the question. As a matter of procedure it is right to begin by assessing the data of attestation in manuscripts, versions, Patristic citations, etc. But no textual question can be properly treated without a careful review of the style and theology of the writer, and its bearing on the issue in debate. Often the internal criteria, together with the transcriptional probabilities, will outweigh the external considerations. In general, they should be given more weight than is usually allowed. Let me offer some examples where greater emphasis on style is needed in determining the text. One is from the work of C.H. Turner, two from G.D. Kilpatrick and the others from my own researches.

C.H. Turner made a careful study of the Marcan peculiarity of writing the preposition εἰς where ἐν is expected. Turner wrote of this phenomenon:

The two other synoptists, and Matthew more consistently than Luke, dislike the confusion of the two prepositions and generally alter Mark’s phraseology: and the volume of evidence for εἰς = ἐν as a favorite usage of Mark is sufficient to turn the scale where the witnesses happen to be divided, some giving an εἰς = ἐν reading and others either having ἐν in place of εἰς (2:1, 10:10) or more often introducing into the context a verb of motion (1:21, 1:39, 8:26).20

With regard to Codex Vaticanus Turner makes the observation that even this manuscript, generally of excellent character, could from time to time fall prey to such a temptation:

The scholar who produced the Β text, wherever he found εἰς without any idea of motion expressed, systematically put matters right from a grammatical point of view by inserting the verb ἔρχομαι (εἰςέρχομαι).21

At Mark 1:39 Nestle reads Καὶ ἤλθεν κηρύσσων εἰς τὰς συναγωγὰς with other modern editions, following 01 BLΘ. However ἤν ... εἰς is read by ACDW etc. On the plausible theory of Marcan priority Turner observes,

With regard to the prepositions, Matthew changes εἰς both times into ἐν, ἐν δὲ τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ διδάσκων ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν: Luke retains εἰς on the first occasion, but by combining the two phrases into εἰς τὰς συναγωγὰς τῆς Γαλιλαίας [Ἰουδαίας] avoids the second. With regard to the verb, Matthew changes to περιῆγεν ‘went about’, Luke has ἤν. It is much more likely that Luke repeated ἤν κηρύσσων εἰς from Mark than that he altered ἤλθεν εἰς into ἤν εἰς.

It is further much more likely that scribes or editors of Mark should have substituted ἤλθεν εἰς for ἤν εἰς than vice versa. I cannot doubt that Β represent here an intentional correction of a non-literary usage of St Mark.22

I believe that editors should follow Turner here, and in other places where the question turns on this peculiarity of Marcan style.

Similarly, G.D. Kilpatrick has pointed to the importance of stylistic considerations for determining the original text. In his contribution to the Festschrift for R.P. Casey, for example,
he notes some interesting features of Lucan style and applies them to textual question in the Acts of the Apostles.

Luke is relatively insensitive to repetition. In this he differs from Mark who is much more careful to avoid repeating the same word or form of word in the context. Thus in 1:10-11 our printed texts give four examples of εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν: It is not surprising that the second example of εἰς οὐρανὸν in verse 11 is omitted by DE 69* 242 gt* vg(3) Aug. Scribes were sensitive to language and style and in the early period would seek to remove or mitigate faults in their text.

At 7:18 εἰς Ἁγιοῦσαν is absent from P45vd DEHPS g. In verses 9-18 εἰς Ἁγιοῦσαν and similar phrases occur six times and immediately before our words at the end of verse 18 comes εἰς Ἁγιοῦσαν. We may notice that B omits εἰς Ἁγιοῦσαν in verse 15. εἰς ὁραματὶ 9:12 is left out by B24 g A pc p r sah boh(pm). The expression has just been used in verse 10. εὑργον in the last line of the quotation from Hab. 1:5 at 13:41 is omitted by DELPS g p syrpeh. It is not in the LXX and repeats εὑργον which occurs in the preceding line.23

In a more recent study of the Acts of the Apostles Kilpatrick offered detailed notes on the variant readings in the quotation from Joel at Acts 2:16-21. With regard to a New Testament writer’s use of the Old Testament he offered the rule of thumb, ‘Other things being equal, the reading which departs from the LXX is more likely to be right than the reading that agrees with it.’24

On the reading καὶ προφητεύσουσιν at Acts 2:18, which appears in our printed texts, but is omitted in Codex D he added, ‘There is no reason for thinking that D and the LXX are right when they agree, however rarely this happens.’25 In other words, Kilpatrick refused to follow any rule slavishly, but kept his eyes open to all factors that affected textual change. This is especially important with regard to textual variations in Old Testament quotations in the New Testament, where a wider range of material and influences must be considered. It was precisely in this area of research that Kilpatrick gave me much encouragement and guidance.

In the study of clear stylistic features it is necessary to be on guard against misunderstanding their significance for exegesis. For example, A. C. Clark pointed to the recurrent use of τε in the Acts of the Apostles, and counted 158 instances in Acts as opposed to only 8 in Luke. On the basis of these figures on this particle, a feature of the older language, Clark concludes that either Luke is “nineteen times more scholarly in Acts than in Lk.” or that it tells against the Lucan authorship of Acts.26 But he has failed to take into account the difference in the source material that Luke is dealing with in the two volumes, and this may have a major bearing on the question.

Now let us turn to a feature of style in the Gospel of Matthew and its bearing on the text. A notable characteristic of Matthew’s gospel is his formula for introducing Old Testament quotations:

ἲνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥήθεν…

25 Ibid., 97.
This prevailing usage of Matthew invites re-consideration of the quotation from Psalm 22:18 at Matt. 27:35. The addition ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥήθην ύπο (διὰ) τοῦ προφήτου· διεμέρισαν τά ἱμάτια μου ἑαυτοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν ἴματισμόν μου ἔβαλον κλήρον is supported by Λ Θ Φ 1 131 209.\textsuperscript{a} The addition is supported by ΛΘΦ 1131 209 abchqr\textsuperscript{b} vg'sy\textsuperscript{c} h1 arm Eus Tat. K. Aland writes concerning this variant, “The support is so weak that no discussion is necessary.”\textsuperscript{27} However, I believe that this feature of the formula and the factor of homoeoteleuton (similar line ending), as well as other internal criteria, tell in its favor, and I hope soon to publish my reasons in full for arguing that it belongs in the text. For now I simply note that the external support is no weaker than for a number of other readings which U.B.S.\textsuperscript{3} and Nestle\textsuperscript{26} have accepted on internal grounds.

This kind of attention to clear stylistic features can teach us much about the text of the New Testament. We can also gain clues to the original reading, where the manuscript tradition is divided, from the theological outlook of the author. So, for example, can Luke’s concern for the innocence of Jesus in his passion narrative supply a motive for his re-arrangement of Mark’s material, including Mark 15:28? Another case where the theology of a document can play an important role in indicating the original text is at Romans 9:28. Some manuscripts including D (Claromontanus) follow the LXX and include συντέμνων ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ, ὅτι λόγον συντετμημένον in the quotation from Isaiah 10:22-23. Since δικαιοσύνη is one of the key theological words in Romans, it seems to me highly improbable that Paul would leave the reference to it out of a quotation from the Old Testament in the epistle. This key theological term tells in favor of the longer text in this place.

These last examples are from textual variants within quotations from the Old Testament, and I believe that this particular class of variants offers an especially fruitful avenue of research. Advances in our understanding of the use of the Old Testament in the New offer us fresh material for the study of the text in these places.

These and other variant readings deserve re-consideration in the practice of the New Eclecticism. G.D. Kilpatrick has placed us permanently in his debt through his careful attention to the text, his insistence on considering each reading on its own merits, and his emphasis on internal criteria for judging textual questions.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{27} The Text of the New Testament, 302.
\textsuperscript{29} A collection of G. D. Kilpatrick’s articles has recently been published under the title The Principles and Practice of New Testament Textual Criticism, edited by J. K. Elliott (BETL 96, Leuven, 1990).
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