writings, and has left us to draw our conclusions from his study of stylometry. We must acknowledge his acumen in perceiving that stylometry can be important and his industry in compiling so much detail.

G. D. Kilpatrick


This monograph is the first of a series, the primary purpose of which is to assist Bible students 'gain greater understanding of the New Testament in the original language and thought'. The volume, reproduced from typescript, falls into four parts: 1) an outline of the principles and history of textual criticism and a discussion of some textual variants in the Fourth Gospel; 2) a detailed analysis of the translation into English of four sections in John's gospel (1:1-18; 3:1-21; 10:1-18; 14:1-11, 16-23 (not 14:1-23 pace p. 30)); 3) some further examples outside these sections where Comfort argues that the translation and text of John could be improved; 4) a reconstruction of the text of John from early papyri.

The book's strength lies in the author's recognition that textual matters and translation are intertwined. Comfort is prepared to be flexible and innovative in tackling problems in both text and translation as may be seen in Part I chapter 2, Part II, and Part III chapter 9. In I 2 he discusses about 50 variation units: there is some overlap with B. M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament although Comfort often reaches different conclusions from Metzger. Such discussions alert readers to the issues involved when mss. are divided and provide them with a starting point for their own deliberations on the all-important but oft-neglected area of textual variation. In his section on the principles of textual criticism Comfort reveals his belief that all variants are aberrations of the original text and these had the effect of corrupting what had been a good text. He thereby ignores the probability that many deliberate changes, especially of a grammatical nature, were made by scribes as improvements to the text. Comfort assumes that only the autographs were divinely inspired, thereby suggesting providential negligence in the process of scribal activity! Doctrinal v.11 seem to be defined in black and white terms as the work of heretics perverting the orthodox faith. Comfort gives the incorrect impression (p. 20) that the Textus Receptus and the majority text are identical. He repeats with approval the argument that variation began earlier than our earliest extant ms. and this makes us question his need to concentrate on the text of early papyri.

In II and III 9, where translation is the dominant issue, Comfort passes judgement on five modern English versions (RSV, NASB, NIV, NEB, TEV). Many of Comfort's insights are helpful, and are worthy of our attention. As in the textual section, the analysis of translations provides useful seminar fodder and opens up worthwhile discussion on the issues involved. This book is a teaching tool and not a reference work. We may use the discussions here as a springboard for further debate, and we may wish to add to the examples given. For instance at John 1:19-20 it is possible to argue on the basis of Johannine usage and style that the 5th clause should stand first in the sentence; if so, the punctuation of the text and the translation would differ from those normally found.

If the strength of the book is in the first three parts, its novelty and its weakness are found in section IV. Over 100 pages are given to a reconstruction of the text

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of John allegedly based on those witnesses that are dated before 300 A.D. Comfort ignores the readings of the second century P° (and also of the later P°) both of which are listed in Aland's Synopsis 13th edition. The text of the Catholic Epistles on papyrus by Grunewald and Junack in ANTF 6 shows us how such an enterprise should be set out: the present volume shows us how not to do it. It is by no means clear from the pages of text in Comfort's book just how many papyri are extant for any given verse: only when no papyri exist (and the text of B is given) is this information visual in that the text of B is underlined. Even when an early papyrus is extant he does not always print its reading as his text, e.g. despite the sub-title of the book, 21:4 prints the text of B and rejects the variant of P°. At 20:30 the reading ομιτ οτοί is secondary. It is not always clear the extent to which Comfort's reconstruction represents the text of at least one papyrus.

Variants from the text which have the support of at least one papyrus are usually shown in one of two ways: one is in a conventional albeit limited apparatus, the other is to give the reading of the allegedly aberrant papyrus in a side margin. The latter device is said (on p. 234) to be used when such a reading has little support from other witnesses, but this seems not always to be the case if one consults a fuller apparatus elsewhere. For instance Ωωςι at 19:39 read by P° is supported by AW; οτοί in P° at 10:38 has the support of A. The use of the side margin in this way gives the reading an unintended and unnecessary prominence. It is also unclear how Comfort made his choice when his papyri divide over a reading; for instance at 4:51 Comfort's text prints the non-Johannine παξι against the more likely original υπαξι found in P°

It is said (p. 235) that all the variants discussed earlier in the book are identifiable in the critical apparatus with an asterisk. Editorial work has been slipshod in carrying this work out. Variants at 1:27 (discussed on p. 183) and at 8:57 (p. 55) for example are not asterisked. Conversely, some variants are asterisked but I can find no earlier discussion (e.g. 6:29; 6:69; 7:22) nor does the index to scripture passages help in locating them.

Other editorial matter seems to have been carelessly executed. a) There is a discrepancy between the two lists of verses of John absent from papyrus mss. (cf. pp. 11 and 233). b) Some material seems to have been accidentally deleted around p. 55 insofar as p. 30 promises a discussion of 9:4 that is not present, and p. 55 does not give a cross-reference to the discussions of 10:7, 16, 18, comparable to that on p. 63 for 14:4, even though p. 30 promises discussions of these verses in the present chapter as well as in the discussion later of 10. 1-18. c) The mss. used for the apparatus in part IV include "a few major uncials": the list of these on p. 234 includes Θ but this is absent from the table on p. 237. Conversely p. 237 includes 0162 absent from the list on p. 234. Papyrus 2, used in the apparatus (e.g. at 12:13), is absent from p. 237.

The pious tone throughout is irritating as too are expressions like "God-breathed words" (p. 19) and the misuse of par excellence (p. 181). Readers may also wince at appended (p. 16), "exegete" as a verb (pp. 83, 149), "refrain" used reflexively (p. 179). There is little excuse for such blemishes in a book that is expressly concerned with felicity of language and a happy turn of phrase in translations. There is no excuse for the regularly used term "principle manuscripts" (pp. 233ff.) or for archaeological "cites" (p. 17). The pre-Vulgate Latin is referred to (p. 233) rather oddly as Old Italia. Old Latin a should be Vercellensis (p. 238) and should be identified as a Latin ms. on p. 233. Some misspellings of proper names both in the Bibliography and elsewhere may be typing slips, but three differing versions of C. K. Barrett's name suggest carelessness. On p. 34 it is Ρ that reads ιοπαιο. Some Greek has inexplicably been left without accents.