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A Reply to Mr. Bradnock

BY C. E. B. CRANFIELD

I VERY much appreciate the charitable tone of Mr. Bradnock's reply to my article, and his obvious sincerity and intention to be fair. But I do not think that he has really answered my main points.

I do not follow him when he maintains that the 'without note or comment' rule, now transferred from the Charter to the Bye-Laws, 'retains all its mandatory character', and then goes on to say: 'What may appear to be new is the apparently qualifying clause "other than such aids for readers as shall have previously been approved by the General Committee"'. How can it be true that the mandatory character of the note and comment rule has not been lessened by the change, and what is the force of 'apparently qualifying'? Surely this clause does in fact qualify the note and comment rule. Is not the position now that the General Committee has liberty to approve of other 'readers' aids' quite different from the present list of eight, and that the note and comment rule has been made subject to the discretion of the General Committee? And, while I am quite ready to believe that the present Committee has no intention of going beyond the list of eight aids, what guarantee is there that the Committee in twenty, forty, sixty years' time will be equally responsible? To what extent a change in the Society's practice is involved Mr. Bradnock is clearly in a better position to determine than I am; but that the legal and moral obligations of the Society have been altered substantially surely cannot be denied.

I pass straight on to Mr. Bradnock's section on 'Prefaces, Introductions and Section Headings'. With regard to prefaces, it must be said that to appeal to the fact that it is perfectly possible to produce a preface to which exception could not reasonably be taken does not in any way answer my contention that it is undesirable that the BFBS should be free to include prefaces in its editions of the Bible, because of the considerable danger of abuse. I was actually thinking of particularly 'prefaces to individual books' (cf. p. 295).

With regard to section headings Mr. Bradnock writes at some length, rightly recognising that I am specially worried about them. His first paragraph on the subject begins from a misunderstanding of what I said. He quotes me as saying, 'The exact demarcation of sections is quite often a controversial matter', and proceeds to ask, 'Does this imply that each book of the Bible is to be presented to the reader as a solid piece, without sections or divisions of any kind?' But, if he looks again at p. 295, he will see that what I was saying was that it is a further point against the inclusion of section headings, that these have 'the effect of emphasising the demarcation of the sections', which is itself quite often controversial. I never suggested that the text should not be divided into sections. It would, of course, be

intolerable to present the reader with the text of a whole book of the Bible printed without any indication of paragraphs. My point was simply that sometimes the exact demarcation of these divisions is uncertain, and that it is therefore better not to give to them the additional emphasis which they get, when they are given headings. Mr. Bradnock's next paragraph makes the point that section headings are useful when one is trying to find a particular passage. Certainly they are! But the question remains whether there are not here serious dangers which outweigh the undoubted advantages. Mr. Bradnock then brushes aside my criticisms of some examples of headings in the U.B.S. Greek Testament as not very weighty. Perhaps I might be allowed to refer him for a fuller discussion of Rom. 13: 1-7 to 'Some Observations on Romans 13: 1-7', in *New Testament Studies* VI (1959-60), pp. 241ff; 'The Christian's Political Responsibility according to the New Testament', in *Scottish Journal of Theology* XV (1962) pp. 176ff; and *A Commentary on Romans 12-13* (*Scottish Journal of Theology* Occasional Paper 12). My point about 'brotherly love' was that this term seems in the New Testament to denote specially love within the Church, and that it is not at all clear that Paul was referring to love only within the Church in Rom. 13: 8-10. I do not think that my criticisms can be brushed off so lightly. Mr. Bradnock's further point here that Mark 12: 26 provides scriptural warrant for section headings is surely unsound. The verse shows that passages of Scripture were referred to by an indication of their subject matter; but this is quite a different thing from the incorporation of such titles in the text. On the subject of section headings I do not feel that the seriousness of my worry has been recognised. And the examples I gave were only examples; the BFBS list of section headings provides a number of others to which exception may be taken. To take examples from one short epistle, the headings for Gal. 2: 15ff, 3: 1ff, 5: 2ff, are all open to objection as being partisan, for they assume the truth of one particular view of Paul's attitude to the law, a view not shared by John Calvin and not shared by quite a number of reputable New Testament scholars today. Against the heading, 'The failure of the Law . . .', it may be said that Paul did not teach that God's law had failed, but that legalists had disastrously misunderstood and misused it; against 'Faith not Law . . .', that Paul opposes faith not to law but to the works of the law, i.e. to the illusion that one can so adequately fulfil God's law as to put him in one's debt; against 'Choose between Christ and the Law', that this is a quite un-Pauline dilemma, since for Paul Christ is the goal and meaning of the law, and the law was all along, and still is, bearing witness to Him. (Reference may be made to the instructive chapter on the Lutheran and Reformed views of the relation of Gospel and Law in W. Niesel's *Reformed Symbolics* (Edinburgh, 1962), pp. 211ff; and to Markus Barth, 'The Kerygma of Galatians', in *Interpretation* XXI(1967), pp. 131ff; and an article on Paul and the Law in *Scottish Journal of Theology* XVII(1964), pp. 43ff.) And, even if non-controversial headings can be arrived at, it seems to me that their presence is still liable to hinder the reader from letting the text speak to him afresh. Moreover—and this seems to me particularly important—of the various sorts of additional material

it is section headings which are most liable to be mistaken for an integral part of the text by the uninstructed. Even the highly intelligent reader is likely to be to some extent conditioned by them.

I turn now to Mr. Bradnock's last section. I do not think he has got my point here. His opening reference to my 'fears of the consequences of the revival of Roman Catholic interest in the Bible' suggests that he is on the wrong track altogether. And his complaint that my 'terminology becomes vague and general' is perhaps as much due to his own having read me carelessly as to my lack of lucidity. The point of my reference to the Roman Church was simply that if the BFBS is able to cooperate with the Roman Church (and I hope it will be able to do so), one result of this will be that any additional matter included in its editions of the Bible may well seem to carry an even greater authority than such material can have so long as the BFBS is regarded as simply a Protestant institution. The conclusion I draw is not at all that there should not be cooperation between the BFBS and the Roman Church, but rather that the fact that what it publishes is going to seem more authoritative ought to make it all the more hesitant about publishing additional matter of the kinds I have objected to. So, for example, the section heading for Romans 13: 1-7 which I have criticised, and which I believe to be thoroughly misleading on a matter of very great importance in relation to the Christian's obedience to God, would be even more disastrous if it appeared in a Bible used equally widely by Protestants and Catholics and Orthodox, the section headings of which were regarded by them all as carrying something like the imprimatur of their respective Churches.

Mr. Bradnock's claim that the eight categories of aids proposed by the Society 'in every instance concern matters of unquestioned and unquestionable fact and, with the minor exceptions referred to above under sectional headings, are not subjects for personal conjectures' seems to contain a contradiction. If he is admitting that there is an element of personal conjecture in some section headings, then it cannot be true that the eight categories in every instance only concern matters of unquestioned fact, since these headings are included in the eight categories. In any case, his reference to 'unquestioned and unquestionable fact' suggests a dangerous over-confidence.

Mr. Bradnock's penultimate paragraph is unworthy of him, and requires no answer.

While I appreciate the friendly tone of almost all his reply, I can only say that I am unconvinced by it, and cannot help feeling that he has not faced the real theological issues involved.