

being tempted, He is able also to succour them that are tempted.

ROBERT RAINY.

THE WESTCOTT-HORT "GENEALOGICAL
METHOD."¹

THE connexion of the Revised Version of the New Testament with the Greek text of Canon Westcott and Professor Hort may be said to be organic, whilst that text finds its scientific basis in the "method" on which I here venture a few criticisms. With the merits of the Revised Version itself I am not now concerned; nor, save as embodying in a concrete form the theory of the "method" aforesaid, and therefore furnishing its fullest illustration, with the Greek text which these distinguished scholars have edited. It may be useful, however, to extend my remarks to a few other collateral portions of the "Introduction" to that text; since there that method is propounded. Whilst the world has been torn with contention as to the "version" which is indirectly connected with the "method," I have seen no attempt to analyse and test the method itself.

But, although the even indirect connexion thus existing between the revision and the method has given the latter its greatest interest, as it has furnished its most important application, the method asserts its perfectly general scope as regards families of MSS. wherever they exist.

On this behalf, indeed, Professor Hort claims (Introduction, p. 73, Part III. § 96) that his—

"Principles of criticism hold good for all ancient texts preserved in a plurality of documents. In dealing with the text of the New Testament no new principle is needed or legitimate; but no other ancient

¹ *The Introduction and Appendix to the Westcott-Hort edition of the New Testament.* Cambridge and London: Macmillan & Co.

text admits of so full and extensive application of all the means of discriminating original from erroneous readings. . . . On the one hand the New Testament, as compared with the rest of ancient literature, needs peculiarly vigilant and patient handling, on account of the intricacy of evidence due to the unexampled amount and antiquity of mixture of different texts, from which few even of the better documents are free. On the other it has unique advantages in the abundance, the antiquity, and above all in the variety of documentary evidence, a *characteristic specially favourable to the tracing of genealogical order.*"

I italicize the last clause as showing the perfectly genuine way in which the theory grew out of the work of settling the text. So the work of adjusting and settling their alluvial plots in the Nile valley is said to have led the Egyptians to evolve the theory of geometry.

Families of MSS., then, exist in far greater copiousness and complication of textual conditions for the New Testament than for any other collection of ancient writings;¹ while the momentous issue of the investigation of these MSS. in the spiritual interests of humanity, adds to a theory first excogitated in relation to these an importance which it is not easy to exaggerate. I have therefore, both five years ago, when the theory fully formulated first appeared, and again lately, gone over carefully each step of the testing process which I now submit, and endeavoured to find, if possible, any flaw in it. This was indeed due to the high personal and literary character of the authors of the theory, as well as to the claims of truth, and to the sacred material in which the theory first found its application.

The literary style in which the theory is clothed is not one of the most lucid. Complicated phenomena, subtle distinctions, and intricate reasonings in which abstract terms

¹ Take for instance the perhaps most widely diffused and multiplied of any ancient Greek classic, the Homeric poems. There appear to exist of the Iliad alone 101 MSS., of the Iliad and Odyssey together 10, of the Odyssey alone 36, total 147. These include fragments and MSS. of sections only of either work. Of the New Testament the cursive MSS. alone are put by Dean Alford at over 900. See La Roche, *Homerische Textkritik*, pp. 439 foll.

take unavoidably the place of the actual *Thatsachen* which filled the author's mind as he wrote, all require a highly perspicuous presentment to make them intelligible. The abstruse forms into which the subject is necessarily cast might, I think, have benefited by a more transparent vesture of expression than they have mostly found. Sometimes it seems as if an attempt to attain greater clearness only resulted in cloudiness. Take the following as an instance, from p. 47.

"Wherever we find a considerable number of variations, in which two or more arrays of documents attesting the two or more variants are identical, we know that at least a considerable amount of the texts of the documents constituting each array must be descended from a common ancestor subsequent to the single universal original, *the limitation of ancestry being fixed by the dissent of the other array or arrays*. Each larger array may often in like manner be broken up into subordinate arrays, each of which separately is found repeatedly supporting a number of readings rejected by the other documents; and each such separate smaller array must have its own special ancestry. If the text is free from mixture, the larger arrays disclose the earlier divergences of transmission, the smaller arrays the later divergences; *in other words, wherever transmission has been independent, the immediate relations of existing documents are exhibited by those variations which isolate the most subordinate combinations of documents, the relationships of the ultimate ancestors of existing documents by those variations in which the combinations of documents are the most comprehensive; not necessarily the most numerous individually, but the most composite.*

If the portions here italicized in the above had been left out, the general idea conveyed would have been clearer. Let any reader try by skipping them.

Occasional ambiguities of terms or of construction not seldom throw a cloud over the sense. Thus the word "variations" should carry a single definite meaning throughout; but, if it did, no sense could be made of some of the passages where it occurs. In the passage cited above it seems to mean passages in which various readings are found. In a passage on p. 109, § 154, in which the "in-

structiveness of the variations" of the Pauline Epistles is noticed, it seems to bear its ordinary meaning of "various readings." But when we turn the page, we find in § 155, "the *variations* here mentioned between different parts of the New Testament are, it will be noticed, of two kinds." How the "various readings" could be thus simply classified as "of *two* kinds," is a startling question; but the context shows that no such thing is meant; but rather the various degrees in which certain types of text called "the Western," and "the Alexandrian," are found to prevail in different parts of the New Testament. So with regard to the word "distribution." We read on p. 104, § 146, "The distribution of documents is fairly typical," and see at once that their grouping in support of this or that reading of a passage quoted just before is meant. But on p. 109, § 154, "In the Catholic Epistles the Western Text is much obscured by . . . the limited *distribution* of some of the books in early times." Here what we mostly call "circulation" seems meant. On p. 132, § 184, "The most instructive *distributions*, as exhibiting distinctly the residual Pre-Syrian text, which is neither Western nor Alexandrian," seems again most easy to grasp as "groupings of MSS." in support of readings neither Western nor Alexandrian. On p. 198, § 270, we have the "*distribution* of Western and non-Western texts among versions" spoken of, where "the degrees in which such texts are *constituents* of the various versions," seems intended. As regards construction, take p. 40, § 49 (end). "The principle . . . is still too imperfectly understood to need no explanation"; where what is meant is, "The principle is still so imperfectly understood that it needs explanation." Again, what is to be made of the following? I will explain presently why I put the first word in brackets:—

"[Except] where some one particular corruption was so obvious and tempting that an unusual number of scribes might fall into it

independently, a few documents are not, by reason of their mere paucity, appreciably less likely to be right than a multitude opposed to them."

Now I submit with all deference that *without* the "except" this makes sense, but *with it*, nonsense. A particular corruption is what critics call a *proclive vitium*: scribe after scribe goes down the slope and into the hole. A few avoid the treacherous incline. The few are right and the many wrong. *Therefore* whenever any error is thus "obvious and tempting," the few who avoid are not less likely to be right than the many who accept; or, to put it more distinctly, the many who accept are less likely to be right than the few who avoid such error. The facility of error is the condition which includes the result; but by writing "except" it is made the condition which *excludes* it. The writer has admitted "mixture" among the negative clauses here floating in his mind. Just as when,

". . . Alderman Curtis told Alderman Brown,
'It seemed as if wonders had never *done ceasing*.'

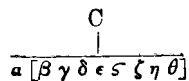
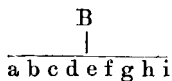
We shall see further that this "mixture" re-appears as a feature of the mental process.

Since logic was in its swaddling clothes, dichotomy has been among its simplest and oldest formulas. On p. 113, § 159, we find the writer dwelling, as on a most "striking phenomenon," on "the number of places in which the quotations exhibit *at least two* series of readings, Western and *what may be called* Non-Western." You might at first reading this suppose that you had stumbled on a misprint for "North-Western," but it appears again and again. What then? Is dichotomy intended? The words which I italicize show that nothing so simple and superficial was in the writer's mind. He does *not* mean to tell us as a "most striking phenomenon" that *all* readings may be classed as either "Western" or "Non-Western," which

would be like proclaiming, "In the name of the Prophet—figs!" As we look backward and forward we find other classes, to wit "Alexandrian" and "Syrian," claiming their places. If you should urge that these are equally "Non-Western" with *the* Non-Western, you would be trifling with a profound entity, which is transcendently "Non-Western"—in short is negative, and otherwise indescribable, perhaps unfathomable. When men write to be understood, they generally keep their nomenclature free from such conundrums as this.

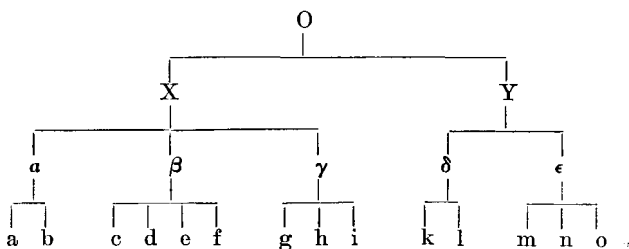
But these are only surface-flaws, however they may spoil that luminousness which is the charm of style. Let us now look a little deeper into the grain and texture of the block. The nucleus of the whole theory goes in effect into a very small compass, being contained between p. 40 and p. 57, and from this I will therefore make a few pertinent extracts. Let me premise that *a* genealogy all MSS. necessarily have, and that to get at the laws which underlie it, by a true method, is ever the root of the whole matter. The only question now raised is whether the method stated is the true key.

On p. 43, § 54, after supposing in § 52 nine MSS. which have one original and a tenth independent, which has of course a distinct original, and showing that by introducing the factor of genealogy "the nine sink jointly to a numerical authority not greater than that of the one," the argument proceeds without taking any account of the genealogical source of the independent tenth MS. Let us exhibit the case symbolically as follows :



These *two* parent MSS. are shown, B and C, each with its offspring; but the nine of B all survive, while of C one only, *a*, survives. B and C also perish. The flaw here

appears to me to be the failure to notice that, since the object is to work back through B and C to some higher link, the attesting value of the nine surviving MSS. derived from B must be ninefold that of the attesting value of the *one* surviving from C. That is, the chances of ascribing to C merely adventitious errors are as nine to one compared with B. As far as facts show, "mixture" may predominate in *a* and blemish the virtues of ancestry, whatever they may be. This tabulation is mine, introduced to clear the subject merely. The next is the writer's own, and it is most important, for it seems to exhibit the key to his "genealogical method." It is, I believe, the only one in the volume, and is on p. 54, § 68. I could wish he had been less sparing of such illustrative machinery. It tends to keep the thread of expression clear, and by so doing to prevent entanglement of thought. For lack of this, I am free to confess that I may have sometimes failed to grasp the writer's meaning. But I think I have shown in the foregoing some slender presumption that, if this be so, it is not wholly the fault of the critic.



The lowest line of fourteen letters represents as many extant MSS. of the same literary work in five groups, each containing a variable number of copies. They are derived through links represented by *a beta gamma delta epsilon* in the line next above, and these again through X and Y from the common ancestor O of all; and all the links between O and a b c, etc., together with O itself, are supposed to have perished. We

are further to "suppose also that no cross-distributions implying mutual or internal mixture can be detected." We are then told that "the proportion of 9 to 5" (that of X's descendants to those of Y) "tells us nothing." But surely it gives us the larger array of evidence for expelling adventitious error, and therefore for confirming the residuum of truth; and this, where *all* the links of descent are supposed lost and retraceable only by inference, seems no unimportant fact. Let this pass, however. Of course X and Y are opposed in certain readings, and represent O so far only as they agree. Similarly the groups under X are opposed to those under Y. But the case is then supposed—

"Where the descendants of either X or Y are divided, so that the representatives of (say) γ join those of δ and ϵ against those of a and β , and the question arises whether the reading of X is truly represented by $a\beta$ or by γ , the decision must be given for that of γ , because mixture and accidental coincidence apart, in no other way can γ have become at once separated from $a\beta$ and joined to $\delta\epsilon$; in other words, the change must have been not on the part of γ but of $a\beta$, or rather an intermediate common ancestor of theirs."

Observe here that "mixture and accidental coincidence" are supposed to be shut out; and must we not also therefore say "accidental *divergency*"? since there can be no presumption in favour of excluding one of these without a corresponding presumption in favour of the other being excluded. But how, save by some influence, thus excluded, an "intermediate common ancestor" can have gone astray, is not clear, and is not suggested in the text. Assuming, however, that $a\beta$ or their "intermediate" may have gone astray from representing X, then may just as probably $\delta\epsilon$ have gone astray, or their "intermediate," from representing Y. There is no element of likelihood on the one side which is not present on the other, and the new position of γ , so far from settling the question, "by which group is X now represented?" is in fact the phenomenon which raises

it. Further, X and Y have a common element by which they represent O, and which they transmit in various degrees to their posterity, and in respect of this common element all the ultimate descendants show resemblances and agree so far already; therefore the novel agreement of γ with δ and ϵ cannot represent any part of this element. If then $\gamma \delta \epsilon$ are found grouped against $\alpha \beta$, the grouping is merely split between β and γ , instead of between γ and δ as before. But wherever it is split, the corresponding adverse groups, whether now larger or smaller, must represent the same elements as before, *viz.* those in respect of which X and Y *differ*. And, it may be added, if $\delta \epsilon$ still represent Y as against X, which the text leads us to suppose them to do, then γ by joining them cannot represent X as against Y, as Professor Hort in the above extract decides it to do.

But yet further, the assumption which excludes "mixture and external coincidence" appears to be unduly made. For, be it remembered, all primaries and intermediates in the genealogy are lost alike and only knowable so far as their descendants $a b c . . . o$ represent them. The phenomena of $a b c . . . o$ are our sole data, and no presumption as regards any special feature of any lost link can be stronger (although this obviously understates the argument) than a presumption arising from those phenomena. If therefore the novel combination $\gamma \delta \epsilon$, or rather, strictly, $g h i k l m n o$, (for $\gamma \delta \epsilon$ are lost), suggests the presence of such a disturbing agency as "mixture," etc., then that suggestion will balance or outweigh any imagined warranty for assuming such agency excluded.

It seems then to me that Professor Hort, by slipping in an assumption here and arbitrarily ruling a "decision" there, in effect forges links for his theory which ought to be found in the facts, but are not. And this leads me to fear that there is a loose stone in the very foundation of his

structure, which is built upon throughout as if it were firm. I distrust not "genealogical method" as a principle, but the particular one which he has formulated, which is a permanent and continuous factor in his entire system, and with the insecurity of which, confidence in the entire system is shaken. He is very thorough and persistent in his application, and seems to find in the same "method" a key to the distribution of the "Western" and other texts, as well as to the discernment of the value of documents.

A little lower down, p. 56, § 71, where he supposes the existence of "mixture from without," and proceeds to trace its consequences in the same group as before considered, we read—

"Again, it is possible that the reading of $\alpha\beta$ is itself due to mixture with a text independent of O: and if so, though rightly rejected from the determination of the reading of O, it may possibly be of use in determining the reading of an ancestor of O, or even of the autograph itself."

But if the text from which "mixture" has been derived is external to O, we ought to have some ground for supposing that it is more nearly connected with the ancestry of O; and, if it were more nearly connected, it is not easy to see how to the descendant O of that ancestry it should be purely external. Or put the case thus:—it contains elements common to the ancestry of O with others wholly foreign. So far as the former are contained in O, we know them already. So far as they are not, we have no test to discern them from those purely foreign. This, however, is a bye-point merely, and only adduced to show the lack of cogency in the logical structure at one more point. Our professor adds further, pp. 56-7:—

"When O has come to mean the autograph, we have in reaching the earliest known divergence, arrived at the point where genealogical method finally ceases to be applicable. . . . Whatever variations survive at this ultimate divergence must still stand as undecided variations."

When we have reached "the autograph" (of course as represented in the results of investigation) what further room for "divergence" there is, is not clear. One would have thought that by the fact of reaching the autograph all lines would *converge* so far as they have been conducting us thither. That they stop short of coincidence, and present us with a dual, or possibly in some cases a multiple, result, as readings of that autograph, is a distinct fact; but to speak of the lines which thus terminate as being "at this ultimate *divergency*," seems a use of phrase the inverse of that which represents the thought. One may just pause to notice by the way, that those who have examined carefully the variants of the New Testament in a well furnished register, such as Tischendorf's last edition, must have noticed here and there the fact of duality, as suggested above. The close balance of testimony in MSS. may be sometimes relieved by Versions or Fathers turning the scale. But there occurs occasionally a concurrence of equilibrium in all the elements of attestation *pro* and *con*, which reduces us to a critical dead-lock, and makes us suspect an original double recension in the first age of some of the New Testament documents. Indeed, we can without much difficulty account for this. Given the presence of Apostolic men in nearly all existing Churches at the end of the first century—to say nothing of the, at any rate, one then surviving Apostle—we see how modifications of the text under their authority might easily arise. Thus Timothy or Epaphroditus, or even perhaps Tertius the scribe, might from personal knowledge alter a Pauline MS., with complete approval and reception, whilst earlier duplicates might retain the first-hand reading. When we remember the practice of St. Paul in favour of amanuenses, which probably was not, among the original authors of the New Testament, confined to him alone; and make allowances for circumstances of pressure and distraction disturbing the even flow of sentences alike from the lip

and from the pen, amidst "the care of all the Churches," it seems humanly almost certain that some primary aberrations from intended sense would occur, which would call for such subsequent correction wherever a competent source of it was at hand. Thus, as there were rival traditions concerning Easter, each with its alleged apostolic source, a longer and a shorter recension of the Lord's Prayer, a longer and shorter ultimate form of creed, due (roughly speaking) to East and West respectively; so duality may have its type in the ultimate authorities for the New Testament text, and the problem be found by the critic to resemble a quadratic equation with its two roots. The closing verses of St. Mark's Gospel, and the passage of the woman taken in adultery, are probably examples of similar secondary but genuine influences at work upon the text of the Gospels. We approach in short the ultimate condition of a binary text (or possibly in some cases a ternary or more, but it is best to keep within the narrowest margin reconcilable with the facts); and such may possibly be the account of the "Western" text of Professor Hort, so far as that text has a reality, and is a genuine deviation from a standard tradition, and not a mere erroneous result of wrong grouping of authorities under the influence of "method," or of subjectivity vitiating the application of it. We have not the worked out steps of this "method" before us, either as regards the codices of the New Testament, or the widely diffused types of "Western," etc., texts which they are believed to follow. Nor could such investigations be submitted within the compass of an "Introduction." But, put broadly, the result as regards codices is the exaltation of two of them into a position of practically ultimate authority, as superior, for instance, to a consensus of early versions and Fathers, where that may be found. The weight thus attributed to them perhaps reflects that of the Westcott-Hort duumvirate in the Revisers' Committee. But I should

think it unworthy of the sacred science to cavil even at this result, without showing, as I conceive has been shown above, a flaw in the theory which supports it. I note in conclusion, that there yet remains one further ground for demurring to the supremacy with which B and \aleph are invested. Each of these codices has an Old Testament portion. The character of each as a witness must be taken *as a whole*. The Old Testament portion of each is probably in bulk many times larger than its New Testament portion, when the *lacunæ* in either portion of either codex have been duly allowed for. I have seen no such rigorous examen of the LXX. portion, which presumably includes the Apocrypha, in each, as has been applied to the New Testament. Here then there remains a wide area of attestation to be searched. Who can say that the character of B and of \aleph for fidelity might not be greatly modified by a careful scrutiny of their Old Testament contents? To hoist them up into the position of ultimate arbiters, until this doubt has been settled, is to snatch a verdict on a mere fraction of the whole evidence, and to affect certainty while a wide margin of phenomena remains unexplored. Of course the merits or demerits of the Westcott-Hort "method" are wholly independent of this extra reason for demurring at its results, but it seems pertinent to put in this reminder when putting those results into the scale. I wished to have added some remarks on the "Internal Evidence of Groups" and on that of "documents," as forming important, although subsidiary, portions of the "method" before us; but I fear I must defer these through considerations of space. Nothing can deprive Canon Westcott and Professor Hort of the grateful appreciation due to a nearly life-long devotion of high gifts and conscientious efforts to the study of the Sacred Text in all its vastly ramified channels of evidence; nor of the right to speak with that authority, so closely akin to intuition, which is derived from the trained organs, the ripened

faculty and the appreciative sympathy, ever present in their work. If they had not given their reasons and let us into the secret of their "method," we might have taken its results upon trust. As they have taken the more manly and outspoken course, they invite us thereby to follow them in a similar and parallel effort of criticism.

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THE REVISED VERSION OF THE OLD
TESTAMENT.

THE BOOK OF JOB.—II.

IN the second circle of speeches, chaps. xv.—xxi., the changes made by the Revision are perhaps of less importance than those in the first circle. As before, the most difficult passages occur in the speeches of Job, particularly chaps. xvi., xvii., and xix., those of the other speakers being comparatively simple. The alterations made, however, will generally be found helpful to the understanding of the book as a whole.

In the speech of Eliphaz (chap. xv.) the following points may be noticed. In *v.* 4, "restrainest prayer before God" becomes "restrainest devotion." The charge of Eliphaz is that Job by his words and demeanour infringes upon the reverence due from men to God, a broader charge than that suggested by A.V. The change in *v.* 5 also adds to the force of the charge: "thine iniquity teacheth thy mouth," instead of the former, "thy mouth uttereth thine iniquity." It may remain a question whether the charge of Eliphaz be a general one, to the effect that Job's language was inspired by his evil mind, or particular, namely that his *guile* dictated his charges against God, which were only a pretext put forward to cloak his own conscious wrong-