

PREFACE

THE debate, of which the following pages contain a report, was the result of an offer courteously made by the Rev. Dr. Sanday, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, when I asked him whether those who are devoted to the study of Theology in Oxford would be ready to hear an explanation from me of the system of Textual Criticism advocated by the late Dean Burgon and myself, in order to the removal of misconceptions of it.

The speeches made in the debate have been referred both in manuscript and in type to the several speakers for their approval and corrections.

In compliance with a thoughtful suggestion, the ensuing descriptions of the two present systems have been prefixed to the Report of the discussion, for the purpose of reference in the case of readers who have not a familiar acquaintance with them ready for use. And it is hoped that, taken together with the debate, they may form an easy means to many students of the Bible of learning some of the chief points in a very important study and controversy. The former of these two descriptions, according to Dr. Sanday's suggestion, has been taken with the kind leave of the author from *Our Bible and the Ancient Monuments*, by Frederick G. Kenyon, M.A., D.Litt., of the British Museum.

Dr. Kenyon's description has received special praise from Mr. Hort in the *Life* of his illustrious father. The second I have prepared especially for this little book.

I. DR. HORT'S SYSTEM.

'Westcott and Hort's Theory.

'One critic of earlier days, Griesbach by name, at the end of the last century, essayed the task of grouping, and two distinguished Cambridge scholars of our own day, Bishop Westcott and the late Professor Hort, have renewed the attempt with much greater success. They believe that by far the larger number of our extant MSS. can be shown to contain a revised (and less original) text; that a comparatively small group has texts derived from manuscripts which escaped, or were previous to, this revision; and that, consequently, the evidence of this small group is almost always to be preferred to that of the great mass of MSS. and versions. It is this theory, which has been set out with conspicuous learning and conviction by Dr. Hort, that we propose now to sketch in brief; for it appears to mark an epoch in the history of New Testament criticism.

'Groups of MSS. in New Testament.

'An examination of passages in which two or more different readings exist shows that one small group of authorities, consisting of the uncial manuscripts B, N, L, a few cursives such as Evan. 33, Act. 61, and the Memphitic and Thebaic versions, is generally found in agreement; another equally clearly marked group consists of D, the Old Latin and Old Syriac versions, and cursives 13, 69, 81 of the Gospels, 44, 137, and 180 of the Acts, and Evst. 39, with a few others more intermittently; while A, C (generally), the later uncials, and the great mass of cursives and

the later versions form another group, numerically overwhelming. Sometimes each of these groups will have a distinct reading of its own; sometimes two of them will be combined against the third; sometimes an authority which usually supports one group will be found with one of the others. But the general division into groups remains constant and is the basis of the present theory.

'Combined or "Conflate" Readings.

'Next, it is possible to distinguish the origins and relative priority of the groups. In the first place, many passages occur in which the first group described above has one reading, the second has another, and the third combines the two. Thus in the last words of St. Luke's Gospel (as the *Variorum Bible* shows), \aleph , B, C, L, with the Memphitic and one Syriac version, have "blessing God"; D and the Old Latin have "praising God"; but A and twelve other uncials, all the cursives, the Vulgate and other versions, have "praising and blessing God." Instances like this occur, not once nor twice, but repeatedly. Now it is in itself more probable that the combined reading in such cases is later than, and is the result of, two separate readings. It is more likely that a copyist, finding two different words in two or more manuscripts before him, would put down both in his copy, than that two scribes, finding a combined phrase in their originals, would each select one part of it alone to copy, and would each select a different one. The motive for combining would be praiseworthy—the desire to make sure of keeping the right word by retaining both; but the motive for separating would be vicious, since it involves the deliberate rejection of some words of the sacred text. Moreover we know that such combination was actually practised; for, as has been stated above, it is a marked characteristic of Lucian's edition of the Septuagint.

'Localisation of Groups by aid of the Fathers.

'At this point the evidence of the Fathers becomes important as to both the time and the place of origin of these combined (or as Dr. Hort technically calls them "conflate") readings. They are found to be characteristic of the Scripture quotations in the works of Chrysostom, who was bishop of Antioch in Syria at the end of the fourth century, and of other writers in or about Antioch at the same time; and thenceforward it is the predominant text in manuscripts, versions, and quotations. Hence this type of text, the text of our later uncials, cursives, early printed editions, and Authorised Version, is believed to have taken its rise in or near Antioch, and is known as the "Syrian" text. The type found in the second of the groups above described, that headed by D, the Old Latin and Old Syriac, is called the "Western" text, as being especially found in Latin manuscripts and in those which (like D) have both Greek and Latin texts, though it is certain that it had its origin in the East, probably in or near Asia Minor. There is another small group, earlier than the Syrian, but not represented continuously by any one MS. (mainly by C in the Gospels, A, C, in Acts and Epistles, with certain cursives and occasionally N and L), to which Dr. Hort gives the name of "Alexandrian." The remaining group, headed by B, may be best described as the "Neutral" text.

'The "Syrian" Readings latest.

'Now among all the Fathers whose writings are left to us from before the middle of the third century (notably Irenæus, Hippolytus, Clement, Origen, Tertullian, and Cyprian), we find readings belonging to the groups described as Western, Alexandrian, and Neutral, but *no distinctly Syrian readings*¹. On the other hand, we have

¹ The italics are Mr. Kenyon's.