



The Bible, Translating, Editing, & Printing of Greek Text

Errors in the Text (Greek and Hebrew)

Unintentional errors

Errors of the Eye include; repetitions where a line is copied twice, omissions where a word is left out, transposition of letters, syllables, or words, differences in spelling similarity of letters, mistaken abbreviations, insertions, wrong word divisions, and eye wandering.

Errors of the Ear include copying through dictation and missing sounds.

Errors of Speech involve incorrect pronunciation.

Errors of the Mind or Memory are where exact words are not recorded.

Errors of Judgment.

Errors of the Pen such as today's typographical error.

Errors of Carelessness or Ignorance such as leaving out the number of years a person was old.

Intentional Errors

Linguistic corrections: changing rare forms of words into usual forms.

Historical changes: made to correct supposed errors in history.

Influence of translations and versions known to the copyist.

Harmonistic changes: making the narratives in the Gospels, for example, to harmonize.

Substitutions of a more agreeable or inoffensive word for an indelicate one found in the text.

Changes to remove some real or apparent difficulty.

The context shows that some words are out of place.

Doctrinal corrections which are rare and some scholars question their existence at all. Heretics have been accused at times of tampering with the text to get their views across. Just like they do in the local church at times.

Liturgical changes where a few manuscripts were adapted for public reading by making a few changes.

Principles or Rules governing Textual Criticism

The Critic must be a trained scholar having a general knowledge of what must be looked for in order to make a choice of readings. Every kind of evidence, internal and external, concerning a manuscript must be considered concerning its intrinsic value.

The source of the text, its weight, not number must be classified. Quantity does not mean quality. The pure text must be determined on the basis of the history and genealogy of textual variations. The ancestry of a manuscript must be traced as far back as possible.

The text of the older manuscript is to be held generally over that of the younger. The text with the shorter reading is preferred over the text with the longer reading. The reason is that with longer texts,



more inclusions and insertions are possible. The more difficult reading is preferred to the more simple. A difficult reading might cause a copyist to be tempted to change the text to a simple reading.

A text reading that best explains other textual reading is preferred over that which may stand by itself. A text reading which agrees with the normal style of the author is preferred. A text reading which bears no suspicion is preferred over a reading bearing the scars of controversy. The agreement of ancient witnesses are preferred over the medieval copies – the oldest over younger principle. The Primary Uncials, the Sinaitic, Vatican, Ephraem and Alexandrian are preferred over all later authorities and outweigh them all. Presumably they give us the original text.