

Dillard: . . . many people, I think, looking at their footnotes in the Bible and they find some ancient MS says, etc. and that is upsetting, and if for yourself you find that is a periodic pastoral problem.

Aldrich: . . . things like the end of the Gospel of Mark, or . . . in the Gospel of John, etc.

Dillard: Basically, in doing textual criticism we try to reconstruct what we think was the original text using a variety of principles. One of the ways we do that is we try to choose the text which best explains the variants. That is if there is one text that would give variety (?) to others it is likely the correct one. It's also the case that scribes in copying the MS would tend to simplify difficult passages, so it may sound preverse but we usually try to choose the more difficult reading!

Aldrich: That's a little bit contrary to what Dr. MacRae was saying. He said the reading that seems to correspond to the whole of Scriptures. You're saying that the odd-ball reading is the one that is the more likely! Or am I reading you differently?

Dillard: Yes, I'm saying that is the case. Now these that the text critics use have to be applied with a great deal of discretion. Often the evidence is 50-50 or 55-45. More often it is 80-20 or something like that. We are reasonably certain but in many cases it is pretty much of a toss-up, and we're only going on instinct. It's not all that clear a judgment.

MacRae: And you take a question like the end of the Gospel of Mark. We can know that the Gospel of Mark did not end with the words "and they were afraid." There must have been an ending. The ending that we have, everything it says except one statement is found in Luke. So whether it was actually in Mark or not, it's true. It's in Luke. And that one statement which is only in Mark is that they shall take up serpents.

Aldrich: I've heard all sorts of wild - -

MacRae: - but shouldn't because it was fulfilled by Paul at Malta. So it was simply a prediction of how God would protect His people. So it's an interesting question, What was the original? But as far as the truth is concerned it doesn't affect our understanding.

Dillard: I think what Dr. MacRae is saying there is reinforced when you think that any thing that is crucial ~~xxxxxx~~ to the teaching of the OT and NT is not affected. It is repeated (?) / The real warp and woof of either testament, the real crux, of neither testament is jeopardized by matters that are text critical. And there is a great deal of - - continuity (?)