

p. 13

The question whether the last sixteen verses of the Gospel of Mark were original or not is of no real importance, though I am very sure that Mark did not end with the statement "and they were afraid." There must have been an original ending, whether by these words or by others. These verses contain hardly anything that is not already present in the parallel passage in Luke. About the only thing in them that is unique is the statement that "they will take up serpents and not be hurt," and properly interpreted this gives no basis for making public displays or taking foolish risks. It was spoken to the disciples and was literally fulfilled at Malta when Paul accidentally took up the viper and suffered no injury from it, though the bystanders expected him to die.

In both Testaments textual criticism is a very interesting study, but for interpretation its importance is minimal, though the exegete should be aware of textual problems in order that he may avoid building any conclusion on a verse in which there is a serious textual problem. Every important idea in Scripture is clearly presented in verses on which there is no such problem.

When a textual difference causes real uncertainty the exegete should see what the two renderings have in common and stop there. The purpose of Scripture is to give us the thoughts God wishes us to have, and I believe we have ample material for discovering them.

B. Historical Criticism (p.13)

Under this head Dr. Waltke has made some excellent statements about the dangers of illegitimate historical criticism and then has