

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for the *Journal of Theological Studies* (old series) can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jts-os_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[1st page of article]

JOHN WORDSWORTH, BISHOP OF SALISBURY, AND HIS WORK ON THE VULGATE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE death of John Wordsworth, Bishop of Salisbury, on the 16th of August last, deprived the English Church of one of its foremost theologians. Born in 1843, he was not yet old either in years or in mental activity, and his physique, which was stronger than the average, seemed to promise many more years of study and labour. But the heavy work which was habitual with him when he was well, and which he forced himself to do when he was ailing and weary, told on him at length; the early part of 1911 was marked by a long illness; and though he seemed to have recovered fairly well by the summer, he was still weak and easily tired; then there came a sudden heart-attack, and he was dead.

Other pens have borne witness to his greatness as a ruler in his diocese, and as a leader and counsellor in the Church; to the many-sided activities of his crowded life; to the earnestness and simplicity of his character, and to the affectionate disposition which made him, in spite of a somewhat cold and preoccupied manner, a man of many friends. In this JOURNAL it may not be amiss to call attention to the services he rendered to the study of Theology. The long list of books and pamphlets following his name in Crockford's Directory includes work in almost every department of that study, in apologetics, Church history, dogmatics, liturgica, and textual criticism; in every one of these he had made contributions of permanent value to the subject; it is sufficient, as proof of this, to mention his Bampton lectures, his Hale lectures on the Swedish Church, his *Ministry of Grace*, his addresses on the Holy Communion, his numerous pamphlets on Anglican orders and Ordination problems, his treatises on *The Ministry of Penitence* and on *Bishop Sarapion's Prayer Book*, and his share in the exhaustive report on *The Ornaments of the Church and its Ministers* which was published by a sub-committee of Convocation in 1908. But it was in the work of textual criticism that his talents especially lay, and it is by what he achieved here that he will be longest remembered. The name of John Wordsworth will always be connected with the series of Old-Latin Biblical Texts, and with the Oxford critical edition of the Vulgate; and it is in the hope that other scholars may wish to know something of what he did and of his methods in doing it that I have ventured to write the following account.

It was as long ago as 1877-8 that the Delegates of the Clarendon Press, acting upon the representation of several distinguished theologians, resolved to produce a critical edition of the Latin Vulgate New Testament, and entrusted the task to John Wordsworth, then tutor of Brasenose College.

He at once set to work to collect materials and to form a general plan for the edition, being greatly helped not only by the article 'Vulgate' in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, but by personal consultation with its author, Dr Westcott. The result of these preliminary studies appeared in an admirably concise and clear pamphlet, *The Oxford Critical Edition of the Vulgate New Testament*, published privately in 1882; and it is no small testimony to the thoroughness of his study and the soundness of his reasoning, that nearly thirty years of continued work have not seriously modified his conclusions. We may not now rate the critical worth of the Theodulfian recension or of the mediaeval *correctoria* quite so high as he was disposed to do, and Dr Burkitt's views as to the 'Italic' revision of the Old Latin are adopted by many leading scholars; but there is little else to alter. I venture to quote at length Dr Wordsworth's description of what he thought a critical edition should provide:—

'The first and main object of this edition is naturally to restore the text of St Jerome's version as far as possible, and to give students the means of controlling the editor's judgement by an exhibition of the variations of the best MSS. It is, however, difficult to draw a line sharply between Vulgate MSS and others of a mixed character. St Jerome's work in the New Testament was, it must be remembered, wholly one of revision, not of retranslation, and was work of rather an uncertain character. We know that he revised the Gospels at the request of Pope Damasus in A. D. 383, and he tells us something of the principles which guided him; but as to the other books, we can only infer the bare fact that he revised them from inscriptions in MSS and the language of his letters. . . . The use of the old versions went on for several centuries side by side with his revision, and even when they were nominally superseded, fragments of them, sometimes very numerous, found their way into probably all existing MSS. Sometimes we find a very pure Hieronymian text interspersed with such relics of earlier versions, notably in the British Isles. The history of these mixed texts and of their revisions is in itself very interesting. They often seem to represent local or provincial recensions, sometimes anonymous, sometimes published under the editorship of famous men. The two best known of these, those of Alcuin and Theodulfus in the ninth century, could hardly be neglected in any edition claiming comprehensiveness: and the less known of the two, that of Theodulfus, is of great critical value. Some notice also may naturally be expected of the *correctoria* of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, which shew a knowledge of Greek as well as of Latin MSS. . . .

'Considering, then, the historical interest of these different types of text, and the extreme difficulty of finding MSS wholly and purely Hieronymian, it has seemed desirable not only to attempt to restore St Jerome's own revision, but to give specimens of these later recensions and corrections from selected and characteristic MSS. . . .

‘In order further to assist the historical study of the subject a collation or text will be given, when possible, of at least one specimen MS, of the ‘Italic’ revision, such as St Jerome may be supposed to have had before him, as well as the readings of a late MS of the current corrupted text,¹ and of the four most prominent types of the printed Vulgate, that of R. Stephens (1540), the Hentenian (first published at Louvain in 1547), the Sixtine (1590), and the Clementine (1592). . . .

‘Use will also be made of the collections of Bentley and his assistants, John Walker, who worked in Paris in 1719–20, and David Casley, who collated Oxford MSS in 1721.’

The pamphlet closed with a list of the MSS to be used, and a tentative classification of them into families.

Meanwhile he was hard at work collating Vulgate MSS. He had several copies of the Codex Amiatinus, in Tischendorf’s edition, interleaved and bound, the blank pages being divided perpendicularly into three columns, each destined to receive the variant readings of a MS in coloured ink; blue, red, and black were regularly employed, and sometimes when it was desirable to include the readings of a fourth or fifth MS, green and brown ink were also used; this, however, was not often done, partly because the pages became too crowded with collations, and partly from the danger of confusing the colours on a dull day or by artificial light. Indeed it soon became evident that work at the edition must be prosecuted only by daylight, to which restriction probably the editors owed it that after years of application their eyesight was not appreciably weakened.

Dr Wordsworth planned his collating tours with considerable foresight. When he visited libraries far away, at Naples, Rome, or Madrid, he collated their MSS right through the New Testament, so as to render a second visit unnecessary; MSS nearer home were collated for the Gospels only, so as to get as many done as possible, and expedite the preparation of the first volume. In all these journeys he was much helped by Mrs Wordsworth, who would share in the actual collating, or sometimes succeed in persuading jealous librarians to allow her husband fuller opportunities of examining their treasures.

He always collated in Latin; a practice I have continued, as I find that it is clearer and more concise than English. He certainly combined the two principal virtues of a collator—accuracy and rapidity; I have hardly ever detected him in a mistake, and very rarely in an omission; the only criticism I can pass upon his work is that in his desire for rapidity and brevity he occasionally made his notes too short, or abbreviated his words almost as much as a mediaeval scribe.

¹ The MS selected, on the suggestion of Dr Westcott, was the thirteenth-century Latin Bible written by Wm. de Hales, ‘magister Scholarum Sarum’, numbered Reg. 1. B. XII in the British Museum, and cited in the edition as W.

A collator should remember that private signs or compendia which are intelligible to him when he composes them may not be equally clear to him—still less to others—a dozen years later; it is better to be too full than not full enough.

But the visits to foreign libraries brought him into touch with their librarians, and never did scholar more rapidly gather round him a band of valuable friends; Léopold Delisle, Henri Omont, Dr Bollig, Dr Ceriani, most of all Samuel Berger—these are but a few of the Continental scholars who were as ready to help him as he was to help them. It is a pleasant task to repeat the acknowledgements he so frequently made of the consistent kindness and generosity shewn to him by scholars belonging to the Roman Church; in the Vatican he was even allowed to go to the book-shelves and inspect the MSS one after another: the Benedictines of Monte Cassino transcribed for him large portions of the Codex Cavensis, when it was reposing for a time in their library; a presentation copy of the first fasciculus of the critical edition was sent to Pope Leo XIII, and was acknowledged by him in a letter so gracious that it aroused the alarm of some of the more Protestant Church newspapers.

With Samuel Berger a life-long friendship was formed; he stayed more than once with the Bishop at Salisbury, was in constant correspondence with him on Vulgate matters, and was always ready with advice and information; there was a regular interchange of collations, notes, and proof-sheets; and if the materials collected by the Bishop and myself were of use to M. Berger in his great book on the history of the Vulgate,¹ that book in turn has been of the utmost value to us throughout our work at the critical edition. I have dealt more at length on Berger's work and personality in an earlier number of the JOURNAL,² and I will only say here that the friendship of two such men as the Bishop of Salisbury and Samuel Berger has been to me one of the happiest experiences of a very happy life.

My own introduction to Dr Wordsworth was made across the examination table of the Theology School in 1883; in the following year Dr Sanday, with his constant care for the welfare of younger students at Oxford, suggested to him that I might be of use as a collator; and a second and less formal introduction settled for me my principal work in life. I began collating Vulgate MSS in the British Museum, and also assisted in the preparation of the second volume of the Old-Latin Biblical texts, Dr Wordsworth having become convinced that a fuller knowledge of the pre-Hieronymian Latin texts would be necessary

¹ *Histoire de la Vulgate pendant les premiers siècles du moyen âge*: par Samuel Berger. Hachette, Paris, 1893.

² *J. T. S.* vol. ii (1901) p. 262 f.

to a proper understanding of the Vulgate. He published the Gospel of St Matthew from the Codex Sangermanensis (*g*₁) in 1883, and the MSS known as *k*, *n*, *o*, *p*, *a*₂, *s*, and *t*, in 1886; the series has been continued by myself, and later by Mr E. S. Buchanan, whose excellent edition of *b* appeared only last year; and we hope he may in time be permitted to give as trustworthy editions of *a* and *f*.

By the summer of 1884 enough Vulgate material had been collected to make a beginning, and I joined Dr Wordsworth at Rochester, where we completed the early chapters of St Matthew. Progress was stopped the next year by his acceptance of the Bishopric of Salisbury; but in 1886 I joined him at Salisbury as his chaplain and assistant editor, and the happy literary partnership began which lasted on in unbroken sunshine till his death in August last.

A division of labour was soon decided on. Any one who has consulted the critical edition will see that in the majority of cases there is practically no doubt as to the reading, and that the business of the editors is to give the authorities for each variation as clearly and briefly as possible, with any references that may throw light on the subject or vindicate the reading adopted. This part of the work has always been the more laborious, and often a long morning would hardly suffice to collect and arrange the authorities for a single verse; students alone realize the amount of research that lies behind '*Augustinus (semper)*' placed after a reading. But the collection of data was the easier, the more mechanical, and the less responsible part of the work; far harder was the task of deciding on the right reading where the authorities were evenly balanced, or where the vast majority of the MSS favoured a piece of impossible Latinity. From the first then I became responsible for the collection of the material, the Bishop for the readings adopted. Yet the division was not absolute; constantly his eye for literary neatness and his sound scholarship would suggest a better arrangement in the note or give just the one reference to a classical author that would make it complete; while he would always listen with patience and attention to my views on questions of reading and the general arrangement of the work. Throughout our long association he was always absolutely frank, whether in pointing out mistakes, and mistakes which I ought not to have made, or in giving credit for anything good in what I did.¹

¹ When I had finished my article on 'the Vulgate' for Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, I submitted it to his inspection. He went over it with the utmost care, suggested several corrections and improvements, and returned it with the characteristic criticism, 'I think you have written a very useful article; but it will be of more use to you than to any one else.'

Most of the *Praefatio* and of the *Epilogus* to the Gospels was written by the Bishop, or more strictly speaking, dictated. In Latin composition he would sometimes dictate as rapidly as I could write it down, at other times he would hesitate for long until he got exactly the right word or expression ; and he never despised the use of an English-Latin Dictionary, if it would save him time.

The Gospel of St Matthew was published in 1889 ; St Mark in 1891 ; St Luke in 1893 ; St John in 1895 ; the *Epilogus*, completing the first volume, in 1898 ; the Acts in 1905. It was inevitable that the work should grow as it proceeded ; the footnotes became longer and longer, mainly by the inclusion of the Old-Latin readings. I think, though I am not certain, that this was one of the cases in which the Bishop gave in to my pleading, and that he would himself have preferred a less exhaustive *apparatus criticus* ; and there is no doubt that the edition would have progressed more rapidly had the other Gospels been treated on the same scale as St Matthew.

Naturally, this literary partnership was a most valuable education for the junior partner ; the Bishop introduced me to such books as Goelzer's *Latinité de saint Jérôme*, Draeger's *Historische Syntax der lateinischen Sprache*, Neue's *Formenlehre der lateinischen Sprache*, and Hand's *Tursellinus* ; these, with Roby's *Latin Grammar*, and the special works of Kaulen and Roensch on the Latinity of the Vulgate, were the books he most frequently consulted, and he taught me how to use them too. As years went on and his time was more and more taken up with other duties, I found myself gradually able to undertake a larger proportion of the work, and he would trust me not only with the preparation of the *apparatus criticus* but with the decision on most of the cases of variant reading. This became still more the case when I left Salisbury for Oxford in 1895 ; thenceforward anything like continuous work in common at the Vulgate had to be confined to the Long Vacations. I used to spend about two months in Salisbury at the Church House, and he would come round there whenever he could escape from Diocesan business, examine what I had prepared, decide on any important case of reading, and very often re-write an entire note. His power of mental abstraction was extraordinary ; he could quit a subject at a moment's notice, plunge into something completely different, and then resume the first again exactly where he left it off ; I have known him leave the Vulgate room at Salisbury with a sentence half finished on his lips, and come back the next day finishing it. Equally extraordinary was his power of always knowing what was the right book to consult on any point, how far a footnote ought to be followed up, and when a reference could be trusted ; only once do I remember him to have been caught napping, and that was during the discussion on the

date of the *Codex Amiatinus* in 1887. It may be remembered that the last piece of evidence connecting that MS with the abbot Ceolfrid was supplied by Dr Hort, from the *Anonymous Life of Ceolfrid*¹ edited first by Stevenson, and subsequently by Giles; the Bishop was delighted at Hort's discovery, but still not a little vexed to realize that he had had the book in his own library all the time, and had never thought of looking at it.

All the time that I was at Oxford, and afterwards in London, I worked on at the Vulgate by myself and sent him the copy, or the proof-sheets, of the different chapters by post; and however busy he was, he rarely let many days pass without returning the sheets carefully annotated and corrected; he especially loved exercising his ingenuity on correcting the proofs and on packing a new note into a page with the minimum of disturbance to the type.

During the preparation of the Acts, we had valuable assistance from the Rev. G. M. Youngman, Vicar of Porton, near Salisbury. Mr Youngman had collated and transcribed several MSS for the Bishop in early days, and during the busy years of parish work in Greenwich had never remitted his Vulgate studies; the comparative leisure of a country parish gave him more time for literary work, and the Epistle to the Romans, now almost ready for publication, owes very much to his supervision and advice. I am glad to be able to state that he is placing his wide knowledge of Vulgate MSS at the service of the edition and that he will co-operate with me in bringing out the future parts of the work.

A word or two remains to be said as to the hand edition, which is to appear with the beginning of this year. More than two years ago the British and Foreign Bible Society opened negotiations with the Bishop and with the Clarendon Press for the issue of a small Vulgate New Testament, the text of which was to be that of the Oxford critical edition, and finally it was agreed that the editors should bring out such a work. As our text, however, was not definitely settled beyond the Epistle to the Romans, we were compelled to determine the text for the remaining books by a rather summary induction from the MSS which experience has shewn us to be of the highest value. We have therefore selected codices *Amiatinus* (A), *Cavensis* (C), *Armachanus* (D), *Fuldensis* (F), *Sangermanensis* (G), *Hubertianus* (H), *Valllicellanus* (V) of the whole New Testament, and in addition *Mediolanensis* (M) and *Harleianus* (Z) of the Gospels; and we have added the variant readings of the Sixtine and Clementine editions throughout. The preparation of this edition (which has caused the delay in the appearance of the Romans fasciculus) has lain almost entirely in my hands; but the

¹ See *Studia Biblica et Ecclesiastica* vol. ii p. 283 f.

Bishop was regularly consulted on the difficult passages. He also read the proof-sheets carefully, and expressed his opinion, with all his wonted decision, on every unnecessary comma or capital letter. He had promised to write the Latin preface; but the material for this was returned to me by his chaplain on the morning of August the 16th, with a note to say that the Bishop was too tired to undertake the task; and before the note was delivered in London I had received a telegram with the news of his death.

H. J. WHITE.