

Contemporary questions

Wilbur N. Pickering, ThM PhD

Unfortunately, people without knowledge of the facts have been repeating unfounded statements. For the sake of truth, I offer some clarifications.

1) The defense of Family 35 arrived only recently. I started working with it in 2002. The first edition of *The Greek New Testament according to Family 35* was published in early 2014. I spent the twelve years in between collating MSS and preparing the Greek Text (with an extensive and detailed critical apparatus), without worrying about the academic world. The first edition of my translation of this Text into English (with 4,000 footnotes) was published a few months earlier. So then, Family 35 has been on the market for only seven years. Even so, the Greek Text is already in the third edition, the English translation is already in the second, and the complete NT in Portuguese (with 5,000 footnotes and an appendix containing 56 topics) is about to be published. For the past seven years, I was too busy to worry about the academic world (without mentioning my old age). So then, would not making fun of Family 35 for lack of academic recognition be an unfair procedure?

2) I will now comment on the academic world. I have earned two master's degrees and a doctorate, in addition to a bachelor's degree. So, I am well acquainted with that world. It is full of party lines, ideological packages, personal ambitions, feuds, intrigues and perversities of all kinds. It is a world dominated by Satan. Why should I want the recognition of that world?¹ Sovereign Jesus himself set the example. The demons insisted on recognizing Him: "You are the Son of God!"—pure truth. But Jesus did not want that recognition; He kept telling them to shut up. Even Brazilian politics provides an example. Each election will have some candidate saying that he does not accept the support of John Doe, or that he rejects the support of Joe Blow. What is the problem? They do not want to be identified with what that other person represents. Precisely. That is why I dispense with the recognition of people in the service of Satan. I will deal with the spiritual factor in full in another video.

3) The question of presupposition is of paramount importance. In any discussion involving the interpretation of evidence, three things need to be clearly distinguished: evidence, interpretation and presupposition. The real evidence, the objective reality, must be the same for everyone. However, the interpretation that different people give to this evidence can vary considerably. Those different interpretations derive from different sets of presuppositions. Since it is impossible to work without presuppositions, nobody should be criticized for having them. That said, however, since the presupposition controls, or at least strongly influences, the interpretation, any honest participant in a discussion of evidence should

¹ In the past, academia could bar the publication of something it did not want, but with modern technology this is no longer possible. Anyone has access to the internet.

understand his own presuppositions and state them openly and clearly. Failure to state the person's presuppositions is dishonest and reprehensible. Someone who does not state his presuppositions and criticizes another person who does is simply perverse; it is a despicable proceeding.

Any discussion involving the interpretation of the evidence should begin with a statement of presuppositions. I here declare the presuppositions that I bring to my task: 1) the Sovereign Creator exists; 2) He addressed a written Revelation to our race; 3) He has preserved **it** intact to the present day in such a way that we can know what it is (both the content and the wording), based on objective criteria.

Evangelicals who defend the eclectic text now in vogue will agree with the first two, presumably. The dispute arises with the third. I would say that those evangelicals are guilty of ideological fraud: they say that they believe in the inspiration of the NT, but their position is based on a theory that denies that inspiration, whereas they never openly acknowledge that presupposition. Now then, textual criticism only exists for wording that is considered to be lost. Nobody does textual criticism on the King James version of 1611, because a copy of it still exists. Eclectic textual criticism is based on the following falsehoods: 1) the writings that make up our NT were not inspired; 2) contemporary Christians did not recognize those writings as inspired; 3) in the beginning nobody was concerned with the protection and preservation of those writings; 4) as a result, the original wording was lost, in the sense that no one still knew what it would have been; 5) that is why it is impossible to restore the original wording by objective means; 6) the transmission of the text was not normal from the beginning; among others.

Those evangelicals ignore the historical evidence that: 1) the apostles knew they were writing Scripture; 2) the apostles knew that colleagues were writing Scripture; 3) contemporary Christians immediately recognized that those writings were Scripture; 4) therefore, they were concerned with their protection and preservation; 5) the proliferation of well-made copies started right away; 6) there was a normal transmission of those writings from the beginning and through the centuries; 7) it follows that the original wording was never lost.

Other videos will address other issues.