

The
Traditional
Text
of the Holy Gospels

Volume I



Dean John William Burgon

THE TRADITIONAL TEXT

OF THE

HOLY GOSPELS

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THE
TRADITIONAL TEXT
OF THE
HOLY GOSPELS

VINDICATED AND ESTABLISHED

BY THE LATE
JOHN WILLIAM BURGON, B.D.

DEAN OF CHICHESTER

ARRANGED, COMPLETED, AND EDITED

BY
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LATE RECTOR OF BUCKNELL, OXON; EDITOR OF THE FOURTH EDITION OF DR. SCRIVENER'S
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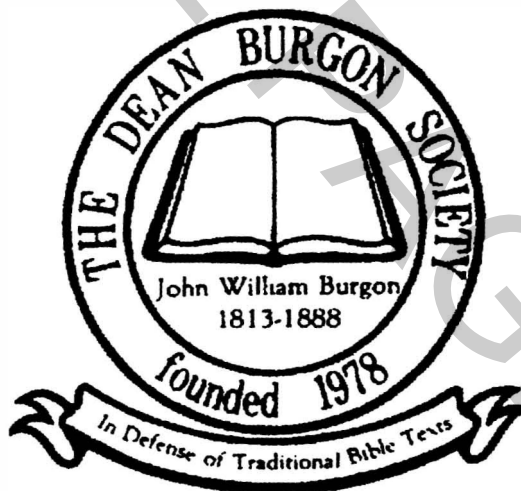
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Foreword

The Publishers. This book, *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels*, is published by the Dean Burgon Society, Incorporated (DBS). The Society takes its name from Dean John William Burgon (1813-1888), a conservative Anglican clergyman. The DBS is recognized by the I.R.S. as a non-profit, tax exempt organization. All contributions are tax deductible. The Society's main purpose is stated in its slogan, "IN DEFENSE OF TRADITIONAL BIBLE TEXTS." The DBS was founded in 1978, and, since then, has held its annual two-day conference in the United States and Canada. During this time, many excellent messages defending the King James Bible and its underlying Hebrew and Greek texts have been presented. The messages are available in three forms: (1) video cassettes; (2) audio cassettes, and (3) the printed message books. For information on receiving any of the above, plus a copy of the "THE ARTICLES OF FAITH, AND ORGANIZATION" of the Dean Burgon Society, please write or phone the office at 609-854-4452. You may use your CREDIT CARD if you wish, and send your order by FAX at 609-854-2464 or by E-Mail at DBSN@Juno.Com.

The Dean Burgon News. The Society has a paper called *The Dean Burgon News*. It comes out from time to time, as the Lord provides the time and the funds. Within its pages the *News* proclaims:

"The DEAN BURGON SOCIETY, INCORPORATED proudly takes its name in honor of John William Burgon (1813-1888), the Dean of Chichester in England, whose tireless and accurate scholarship and contribution in the area of New Testament Textual Criticism; whose defense of the Traditional Greek Text against its many enemies; and whose firm belief in the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, we believe, have all been unsurpassed either before or since his time!"

The Present Reprint. The DEAN BURGON SOCIETY, INCORPORATED is pleased to present, in this form, another of Dean John William Burgon's most convincing books, *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels*. This is the third reprint of one of Dean Burgon's books. The first book was *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark*, available as #1139 for a GIFT of \$15 + \$4 for postage and handling. The second book was *The Revision Revised*, available as #611 for a GIFT of \$25 + \$4 for postage and handling. This third book, *The Traditional Text*, is page for page like the original book written in 1896 by Dean Burgon, and edited after his death by Rev. Edward Miller. In the APPENDIX you will find a 34-page summarization of the main points brought out

in the book. It is fully indexed for easy reference. You might want to begin by reading the **APPENDIX** first.

The Importance of *The Traditional Text*. As these pages are being reprinted, there is a battle over the Bible that is raging in liberal, neo-evangelical, and even many fundamental churches, schools, colleges, universities, and seminaries. One of the most recurring falsehoods that is used by the enemies of the Greek Traditional Text or Received Text is the almost unbelievable falsehood that that Greek text was not in existence until 1516 A.O. with Erasmus. This volume thunders out an effective reply to the serious errors of this false position. It proves beyond any reasonable doubt that that Traditional Text was in the hands of the churches in a continuous time line from the original Apostolic times down to the present. The false text of Vatican and Sinai ("B" and "Aleph") cannot make this boast.

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President, THE DEAN BURGON SOCIETY



**The
Dean Burgon
Society**

In Defense of Traditional Bible Texts
Box 354
Collingswood, NJ 08108, U.S.A.



Dean John William Burgoa
(1813--1888)

'Tenet ecclesia nostra, tenuitque semper firmam illam et immotam Tertulliani regulam "Id verius quod prius, id prius quod ab initio." Quo propius ad veritatis fontem accedimus, eo purior decurrit Catholicae doctrinae rivus.'

CAVES *Proleg.* p. xlv.

'Interrogate de semitis antiquis quae sit via bona, et ambulate in ea.'-Jerern. vi. 16.

i In summa, si constat id verius quod prius, id prius quod ab initio, id ab initio quod ab Apostolis; pariter utique constabit, id esse ab Apostolis traditum, quod apud Ecclesias Apostolorum fuerit sacrosanctum.'-TERTULL. *adv. Marc.* l. iv. c. 5.

PREFACE

THE death of Dean Burgon in 1888, lamented by a large number of people on the other side of the Atlantic as well as on this, cut him off in the early part of a task for which he had made preparations during more than thirty years. He laid the foundations of his system with much care and caution, discussing it with his friends, such as the late Earl of Selborne to whom he inscribed *The Last Twelve Verses*, and the present Earl of Cranbrook to whom he dedicated *The Revision Revised*, for the purpose of sounding the depths of the subject, and of being sure that he was resting upon firm rock. In order to enlarge the general basis of Sacred Textual Criticism, and to treat of the principles of it scientifically and comprehensively, he examined manuscripts widely, making many discoveries at home and in foreign libraries; collated some himself and got many collated by other scholars; encouraged new and critical editions of some of the chief Versions; and above all, he devised and superintended a collection of quotations from the New Testament to be found in the works of the Fathers and in other ecclesiastical writings, going

far beyond ordinary indexes, which may be found in sixteen thick volumes amongst the treasures of the British Museum. Various events led him during his life-time to dip into and publish some of his stores, such as in his Last Twelve Verses of St. Mark, his famous Letters to Dr. Scrivener in the *Guardi'an* Newspaper, and in The Revision Revised. But he sedulously amassed materials for the greater treatise up to the time of his death.

He was then deeply impressed with the incomplete state of his documents; and gave positive instructions solely for the publication of his Text of the Gospels as marked in the margin of one of Scrivener's editions of the New Testament, of his disquisition on 'honeycomb' which as exhibiting a specimen of his admirable method of criticism will be found in Appendix I of this volume, and perhaps of that on ~~for~~ in Appendix II, leaving the entire question as to publishing the rest to his nephew, the Rev. W. F. Rose, with the help of myself, if I would undertake the editing required, and of others.

The separate papers, which were committed to my charge in February, 1889, were contained in forty portfolios, and according to my catalogue amounted to 2,383. They were grouped under various headings, and some were placed in one set as 'Introductory Matter' ready for the printer. Most had been copied out in a clear hand, especially by 'M. W.' mentioned in the Preface of the Revision Revised, to whom also I am greatly indebted for copying others. The papers were of lengths varying from fourteen pages or more down to a single

sentence or a single reference. Some were almost duplicates, and a very few similarly triplicates.

After cataloguing, I reported to Mr. Rose, suggesting a choice between three plans, viz.,

1. Publishing separately according to the Dean's instructions such papers as were judged to be fit for publication, and leaving the rest :-

2. To put together a Work on the Principles of Textual Criticism out of the MSS., as far as they would go :-

3. To make up what was ready and fit into a Book, supplying from the rest of the materials and from elsewhere what was wanting besides filling up gaps as well as I could, and out of the rest (as well as from the Dean's published works) to construct brief notes on the Text which we had to publish.

This report was sent to Dr. Scrivener, Dean Goulburn, Sir Edward Maunde Thompson, and other distinguished scholars, and the unanimous opinion was expressed that the third of these plans should be adopted.

Not liking to encounter

Tot et tanta negotia solus,

I invited at the opening of 1890 the Rev. G. H. Gwilliam, Fellow of Hertford College, and the Rev. Dr. Waller, Principal of St. John's Hall, Highbury—a man of mathematical accuracy—to read over at my house the first draft of a large portion of Volume I. To my loss, Dr. Waller has been too busy since that time to afford me any help, except what may be found in his valuable

comparison of the texts of the Peshitto and Curetonian printed in Appendix VI: but Mr. Gwilliam has been ready with advice and help all along which have been of the greatest advantage to me especially on the Syriac part of the subject, and has looked through all the first proofs of this volume.

It was afterwards forced upon my mind that if possible the Indexes to the Fathers ought to be included in the work. Indeed no book could adequately represent Dean Burgon's labours which did not include his *apparatus criticus* in that province of Textual Criticism, in which he has shewn himself so *facile princeps*, that no one in England, or Germany, or elsewhere, has been as yet able to come near him. With Sir E. Maunde Thompson's kind help, I have been able to get the part of the Indexes which relates to the Gospels copied in type-writing, and they will be published in course of time, God willing, if the learned world evinces sufficient interest in the publication of them.

Unfortunately, when in 1890 I had completed a first arrangement of Volume II, my health gave way; and after vainly endeavouring for a year to combine this severe toil with the conduct of a living, I resigned the latter, and moved into Oxford to devote myself exclusively to the important work of turning the unpublished results of the skilful faithfulness and the indefatigable learning of that 'grand scholar' - to use Dr. Scrivener's phrase - towards the settlement of the principles that should regulate the ascertainment of the Divine Words constituting the New Testament.

The difficulty to be surmounted lay in the fact that after all was gathered out of the Dean's remains that was suitable for the purpose, and when gaps of smaller or greater size were filled, as has been done throughout the series of unfinished and unconnected MSS., there was still a large space to cover without the Master's help in covering it.

Time and research and thought were alike necessary. Consequently, upon advice, I accepted an offer to edit the fourth edition of Scrivener's Plain Introduction, and although that extremely laborious accomplishment occupied far more time than was anticipated, yet in the event it has greatly helped the execution of my task. Never yet, before or since Dean Burgon's death, has there been such an opportunity as the present. The general *apparatus criticus* has been vastly increased; the field of palaeography has been greatly enlarged through the discoveries in Egypt; and there is a feeling abroad that we are on the brink of an improvement in systems and theories recently in vogue.

On returning to the work, I found that the key to the removal of the chief difficulty in the way of such improvement lay in an inflow of light upon what may perhaps be termed as to this subject the Pre-manuscriptal Period, -hitherto the dark age of Sacred Textualism, which precedes what was once 'the year one' of Palaeography. Accordingly, I made a toilsome examination for myself of the quotations occurring in the writings of the Fathers before St. Chrysostom, or as I defined them in order to draw a self-acting line, of those who died before 400 A.D., with the result that the Traditional

Text is found to stand in the general proportion of 3 : 2 against other variations, and in a much higher proportion upon thirty test passages. Afterwards, not being satisfied with resting the basis of my argument upon one scrutiny, I went again through the writings of the seventy-six Fathers concerned (with limitations explained in this book), besides others who yielded no evidence, and I found that although several more instances were consequently entered in my note-book, the general results remained almost the same. I do not flatter myself that even now I have recorded all the instances that could be adduced : - any one who is really acquainted with this work will know that such a feat is absolutely impossible, because such perfection cannot be obtained except after many repeated efforts. But I claim, not only that my attempts have been honest and fair even to self-abnegation, but that the general results which are much more than is required by my argument, as is explained in the body of this work, abundantly establish the antiquity of the Traditional Text, by proving the superior acceptance of it during the period at stake to that of any other.

Indeed, these examinations have seemed to me, not only to carry back the Traditional Text satisfactorily to the first age, but to lead also to solutions of several difficult problems, which are now presented to our readers. The wealth of MSS. to which the Fathers introduce us at second-hand can only be understood by those who may go through the writings of many of them with this view; and outnumbered over and over again before

the year 1000 all the contemporaneous Greek MSS. which have come down to us, not to speak of the years to which no MSS. that are now extant are in the opinion of all experts found to belong.

It is due both to Dean Burgon and to myself to say that we came together after having worked on independent lines, though I am bound to acknowledge my great debt to his writings. At first we did not agree thoroughly in opinion, but I found afterwards that he was right and I was wrong. It is a proof of the unifying power of our principles, that as to our system there is now absolutely no difference between us, though on minor points, generally outside of this immediate subject, we do not always exactly concur. Though I have the Dean's example for altering his writings largely even when they were in type, as he never failed to do, yet in loyalty I have delayed alterations as long as I could, and have only made them when I was certain that I was introducing some improvement, and more often than not upon advice proffered to me by others.

Our coincidence is perhaps explained by our having been born when Evangelical earnestness affected all religious life, by our having been trained under the High Church movement, and at least in my case mellowed under the more moderate widening caused by influences which prevailed in Oxford for some years after 1848. Certainly, the comprehensiveness and exhaustiveness - probably in imitation of German method-which had before characterized Dr. Pusey's treatment of any subject, and found an exemplification in Professor Freeman's

historical researches, and which was as I think to be seen in the action of the best spirits of the Oxford of 1848-56—to quote my own experience, —lay at the root and constituted the life of Burgon's system, and the maintenance of these principles so far as we could at whatever cost formed the link between us. To cast away at least nineteen-twentieths of the evidence on points and to draw conclusions from the petty remainder, seems to us to be necessarily not less even than a crime and a sin, not only by reason of the sacrilegious destructiveness exercised thereby upon Holy Writ, but also because such a method is inconsistent with conscientious exhaustiveness and logical method. Perfectly familiar with all that can be and is advanced in favour of such procedure, must we not say that hardly any worse pattern than this in investigations and conclusions could be presented before young men at the critical time when they are entering upon habits of forming judgements which are to carry them through life? Has the over-specialism which has been in vogue of late years promoted the acceptance of the theory before us, because it may have been under specializing influences forgotten, that the really accomplished man should aim at knowing something of everything else as well as knowing everything of the thing to which he is devoted, since narrowness in investigation and neglect of all but a favourite theory is likely to result from so exclusive an attitude?

The importance of the question at stake is often underrated. Dr. Philip Schaff in his well-known

'Companion' (p. 176),-as Dr. E. Nestle of Ulm in one of his brochures ('Ein ceterum censeo zur neutestamentlichen Textkritik') which he has kindly sent me, has pointed out,-observes that whereas Mill reckoned the variations to amount to 30,000, and Scrivener supposed that they have since increased to four times as much, they 'cannot now fall much short of 150,000.' This amount is appalling, and most of them are of a petty character. But some involve highly important passages, and even Hort has reckoned (Introduction, p. 2) that the disputed instances reach about one-eighth of the whole. Is it too strong therefore to say, that we live over a volcano, with a crust of earth of not too great a thickness lying between?

The first half of our case is now presented in this Volume, which is a complete treatise in itself. A second will I hope follow at an early date, containing a disquisition on the Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text; and, I am glad to say, will consist almost exclusively of Dean Burgon's own compositions. I ask from Critics who may not assent to all our conclusions a candid consideration of our case, which is rested solely upon argument and reason throughout. This explanation made by the Dean of his system in calmer times and in a more didactic form cannot, as I think, fail to remove much prejudice. If we seem at first sight anywhere to leap from reasoning to dogmatism, our readers will discover, I believe, upon renewed observation that at least from our point of view that is not so. If we appear to speak too positively, we have done this,

not from confidence in any private judgement, but because we are sure, at least in our own minds, that we express the verdict of all the ages and all the countries.

May the great Head of the Church bless our effort on behalf of the integrity of His Holy Word, if not according to our plan and purpose, yet in the way that seemeth Him best!

EDWARD MILLER.

9 BRADFIELD ROAD, OXFORD :

Epiphany 1896.

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

IACE

Sacred Textual Criticism-introduced by Origen-settled first in the fourth and before the eighth centuries-fresh rise after the invention of printing- infancy-childhood-youth-incipient maturity-Traditional Text not identical with the Received Text . . . • pp. 1-5

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY GROUNDS.

§ 1. Importance of the subject-need of new advance and of candour in investigation. § 2. Sacred Textual Criticism different from Profane - the New Testament assailed from the first. § 8. Overruling Providence-unique conditions, and overwhelming mass of evidence. i 4 Authority of the Church-Hort's admission -existence and descent of the Received Text. § 5. The question one of the many against the few-the plea of antiquity on the side of the few virtually a claim to subtle divination-impossibility of compromise . . . • pp. 6-18

CHAPTER II.

PRINCIPLES.

§ 1. Two chief branches of inquiry-collection of evidence-employment of evidence. § 2. Providential multiplication of Copies, ordinary and Ictionary-of Versions-of Patristic quotations. § 3. Similarity between later Uncials and Cursives-overestimate of the oldest Uncials -Copies the most important class of evidence-but not so old virtually as the earliest Versions and Fathers. § 4. Search for the readings of the autographs-the better attested, the genuine reading-need of tests or notes of truth-seven proposed. § 5. Mere antiquity of an authority not enough-yet antiquity a most important principle. § 6. 'Various readings' a misleading phrase-Corruption patent in B and N-four proofs that their text, not the Traditional, has been fabricated-Scrivener's mistake in supposing that the true texts must be sought in the oldest uncials-their constant disagreement with one another-self-improvement of some Critics . . . • pp. 19-31,

CHAPTER III.

THE SEVEN NOTES OF TRUTH.

§ 1. Antiquity :- the more ancient, probably the better testimony-
but not the sole arbiter. § 2. Number :- much fallacy in 'A' witnesses
are to be weighed not counted '-used to champion the very few against
the very many-number necessarily a powerful, but not the sole note
of truth-Heb. iv. 2 § 3. Variety :- a great help to Number-various
countries-various ages-no collusion-St. Matt. x. 8 § 4. Weight, or
Respectability :- witnesses must be (1) respectable-(2) MSS. must not
be transcripts of one another-(3) Patristic evidence must not be
copied-(4) MSS. from one archetype"" between one and two copies-
(5) any collusion impairs weight-(6) a Version outweighs any single
MS.-(7) also a Father-weight of single MSS. to be determined by
peculiar characteristics. § 5. Continuity :- value of Unbroken Tradition
- weakening effects of smaller chasms - fatal consequence of the
admitted chasm of fifteen centuries. § 6. Context :- (a) Context of
meaning-I Cor. xiii. 5-(b) Context of readings-St. Matt. xvii. 2 r -
xi. 2-3 and St. Luke vii. 19-consistency in immediate context . pp. 40-67

CHAPTER IV.

THE VATICAN AND SINAITIC MANUSCRIPTS.

§ 1. The seven Old Uncials-some understanding necessary between
the two schools-dialogue with a Biblical Student-the superior
antiquity of Band Na reasonable presumption that they are the purest-
yet nearly 300 years between them and the autographs-no proof that
their archetype was much older than they-conflict with the evidence
of Versions and Fathers which are virtually much older-any superior
excellence in their text merely the opinion of one school balanced by the
other-Mai's editions of B-antiquity, number, variety, and continuity
against that school-also weight-Traditional Text virtually older-
proof that the text of B and \mathfrak{L} was derived from the Traditional text,
not vice versa-alleged recensions no proof to the contrary-nor 'con-
flation,' proved to be unsound-their disagreement with one another
proved by passages. § 2. St. John v. 4-St. Luke xi. 2-4. § 3. The
'Marys' of the Gospels. § 4. Jona and John. § 5. The foregoing
instances typical-our appeal only to facts • • • • pp. 68-86

CHAPTER V.

THE ANTIQUITY OF THE TRADITIONAL TEXT.

I. *Witness of the Early Fathers.*

§ 1. Involuntary witness of Dr. Hort :- though he denied the antiquity
of the Traditional Text-no detailed examination of Dr. Hort's theory
intended in this didactic treatise-his admission that we have the period

of the Church since St. Chrysostom-driven to label the evidence of those centuries with the unhappy epithet 'Syrian'-foisting into history his' phantom recensions '-facts, not theory. § 2. J'estimony of the Ante-Chrysostom Writers :-two examinations made of all their quotations of the Gospels-trustworthiness of their writings on this point-many of their quotations not capable of use-general list-proportion of 3 : 2 for Traditional Text-verdict of those Writers on thirty test passages-proportion of 3 : 1-validity of these lists-mistakes of Hort and others respecting separate Fathers-antiquity of corruption, though subordinate, also established - list of Early Traditional deponents-Later Traditional-Western or Syrio-Low-Latin-Alexandrian-lessons from these groups pp. 90-122

CHAPTER VI.

THE ANTIQUITY OF THE TRADITIONAL TEXT.

1. *IVtforss of the Early Syriac Versions.*

Startling rise of Christianity in Syria-weakness of Cureton's arguments for the superior antiquity of the Curetonian-not helped by the heretical Lewis Codex-the idea of a Vulgate Peshitto founded upon a false parallel-traced to the fifth century by the universal use of the Peshitto by Nestorians, Monophysites, Christians of St. Thomas, and Maronites-very early date proved by numerous MSS. of the same period-attested in the fourth by Ephraem Syrus and Aphraates-must have been in existence before-proved back by its agreement with the Traditional Text-the petty Curetonian an unequal combatant-objection that the Text of the Curetonian and Lewis was the older-inaccurate advocacy of the Lewis-the age of these MSS. to be decided by the known facts- Mepharreshe or distinct Gospels to replace the Mehallette or mixed Gospels of Tatian pp. 123-134

CHAPTER VII.

THE ANTIQUITY OF THE TRADITIONAL TEXT.

1. *Witness of the Western or Syrio-Low-Latin Text.*

Veryman wrong in supposing that all Old Latin Texts came from one stem-the prima fade inference from similarity of language open to delusion-contrast of other Versions-table of the Old Latin MSS., as

used by Tischendorf-no very generic difference-comparison under the thirty test passages-variety of synonyms denotes variety of sources-direct evidence of Augustine and Jerome-translations must have been made by all who wanted them in the bilingual Roman Empire-origin of Wiseman's idea in an etymological blunder-Diez's subsequent teaching-the deflection in the language of the Old Latin MSS. due to the Low-Latin dialects of the Italian Peninsula, the 'Italia' of St. Augustine being in the most classical of later Latin-Syriacization of the Codex Bezae, and the teaching of the Ferrar group-pre-Evangelistic corruption carried to Rome from Antioch, and afterwards foisted into the Gospels-the Synoptic problem-the Traditional Text thus attested from the first by Fathers and Versions.' pp. 135-147

CHAPTER VIII.

ALEXANDRIA AND CAESAREA.

§ 1. Alexandrian Readings, and the Alexandrian School :-Text, or Readings 1-list of early Alexandrian Fathers-the thirty test passages in Bohairic-no Alexandrian MSS: of the period-instability-Origin the leading figure-elemental and critical-the cradle of criticism.
 § 2. Caesarean School :-dates from 31 A.D., when Origen moved to Caesarea-his witness to both texts-Pamphilus-Eusebius really prefers the Traditional-Palestine a central situation-coalition of readings-Eusebius' fifty MSS. probably included all sorts-Acaciuss more probably the scribe of B, and of the six leaves of -vellum came into prominent use at Caesarea-an Asiatic product-older MSS. written on papyrus-papyrus used till the tenth century-cursive hand on papyrus led to the 'Cursives' pp. 148-158

CHAPTER IX.

THE OLD UNCIALS. THE INFLUENCE OF ORIGEN.

§ 1 Superstitious deference to B-and -products of the Semi-Arian or Homoean School-(1) dated from that time-(2) condemned when Arianism was finally condemned-(3) agree with Origenism-(4) produced at Alexandria-colophons in under Esther and Ezra, and agreement with Codex Pamphili - written accordingly at Caesarea.
 § 2 Origen :-his Writings much studied by the ancients-of the same class as B and , proved from various passages-Gal. iii. 1-SL Matt. xiv. 19, xv. 35-St. John xiii. 26-St. Luke iv. 8-St. John viii. 38.
 § 3 Sceptical character of all the three pp. 159-q 1

CHAPTER X.

THE OLD UNCIALS. CODEX D.

PAGE

§ 1. Parallel and connexion between the settlements of the Canon and the Text-end of the controversy after the last General Council-Origenism finally condemned then - no rest in Roman Empire till then-the art of writing on vellum then perfected-existence of better copies than B and during the early Uncial period-A, Φ , and I.
 § 2. Codex D :-strange character-I. Assimilation on a large scale-St. Mark iii. 26-St. Luke xix. 27-SL Matt. xx. 28-St. Luke xiv. 10-II. Extreme licentiousness-St. Mark iv. 1. § 3. St. Luke iii. :1338.
 § 4. St. Luke xxii. 20, and St. Mark xv. 43-4. § 5. St. Luke i. 65-St. Mark xiv. 72. &c. § 6. Bad features in D and its family. § 7. Clumsiness and tastelessness in the Old Uncials. § 8. St. John ix. 36, xiv. 22, St. Matt. i. 18, St. Luke xviii. 14, St. John xvii. 2 - delicate points thus rubbed off pp. 172-195

CHAPTER XI.

THE LATER UNCIALS AND THE CURSIVES.

§ 1. Nature of Tradition - many streams-great period of the two St. Gregories, St. Basil, and St. Chrysostom-Canon of St. Augustine-Uncials and Cursives do not differ in kind-Cursives different enough to be independent witnesses-not copies of Cod. A - a small minority of real dissentients-era of greater perfection from end of seventh century-expression by the majority of later Uncials and the Cursives of the settled judgement of the Church. § 2. The text of the Cursives not debased-(1) the Traditional Text already proved to go back to the first-(2) could not have been formed out of non-existing materials-(3) superior to the text of B and -proved by the consentience of Copies, Versions, Fathers, and superior under all the Notes of Truth.
 § 8. St. Luke xix. 42. § 4. St. Matt. xx. 22-23. § 5. St. Matt. iv. 17-22, St. Mark i. 14-20, St. Luke v. 1-11. § 6. St. Mark x. 23-24.
 § 7. St. Luke xvi. 9. § 8. St. John xvi. 13. § 9. St. Matt. viii. 5-13.
 § 10. St. Luke xx. 14. § 11. Familiarity through *colatio* with the Cursive copies will reveal the general excellence of their text. pp. 196-223

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Recapitulation-*quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, the principle of the Traditional Text-an exhaustive case-and very strong -answers to objections-(1) antiquity of B and t(- (2) witnesses must be weighed first-(3) charge of conflation, Eph. v. 30-weak

pleas - (4) Genealogy explained - only true in a limited measure - reduces some groups of MSS. to one archetype each - advance of this plea solely as an excuse for B and N - which were founders of an obscure family dating from Caesarea, with huge gaps in their descent - perfect genealogy of the Traditional Text through many lines of descent - attested contemporaneously by numerous Fathers - proved step by step back to the earliest days - the Traditional Text contrasted with the Neologian in three ways, viz. - (!) wide and deep against narrowness - (11) founded on facts, not on speculation - (111) increasing now in strength, instead of daily getting out of date - the verdict of the Church, and therefore **RESTING ON THE ROCK** pp. 224-239

APPENDIX I.

HONEYCOMB - *riiro JifAlmu(ov K')piov* pp. 240-252

APPENDIX II.

"O or VINEGAR pp. 253-258

APPENDIX III.

THE RICH YOUNG MAN pp. 259-278

APPENDIX IV.

ST. MARK I. I. pp. 279-286

APPENDIX V.

THE SCEPTICAL CHARACTER OF B AND pp. 287-291

APPENDIX VI.

THE PESHITTO AND CURETONIAN pp. 292-297

APPENDIX VII.

THE LAST TWELVE VERSES OF ST. MARK'S GOSPEL
pp. 298-307

APPENDIX VIII.

**NEW EDITIONS OF THE PESHITTO-SYRIAC AND THE
HARKLEIAN VERSIONS** pp. 308-309

GENERAL INDEX pp. 311-315

**INDEX OF PASSAGES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT
COMMENTED ON** pp. 316-317

THE TRADITIONAL TEXT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.



INTRODUCTION.

A FEW remarks at the outset of this treatise, which was left imperfect by Dean Burgon at his unexpected death, may make the object and scope of it more intelligible to many readers.

Textual Criticism of the New Testament is a close inquiry into what is the genuine Greek—the true text of the Holy Gospels, of the Acts of the Apostles, of the Pauline and Apostolic Epistles, and the Revelation. Inasmuch as it concerns the text alone, it is confined to the Lower Criticism according to German nomenclature, just as a critical examination of meaning, with all its attendant references and connexions, would constitute the Higher Criticism. It is thus the necessary prelude of any scientific investigation of the language, the purport, and the teaching of the various books of the New Testament, and ought itself to be conducted upon definite and scientific principles. The object of this treatise is to lead to a general settlement of those principles. For this purpose the Dean has stripped the discussion of all adventitious disguise, and has pursued it lucidly into manifold details, in order that no

employment of difficult terms or involved sentences may shed any mystification over the questions discussed, and that all intelligent people who are interested in such questions-and who is not?-may understand the issues and the proofs of them.

In the very earliest times much variation in the text of the New Testament, and particularly of the Holy Gospels-for we shall treat mainly of these four books as constituting the most important province, and as affording a smaller area, and so being more convenient for the present inquiry:-much diversity in words and expression, I say, arose in the Church. In consequence, the school of scientific Theology at Alexandria, in the person of Origen, first found it necessary to take cognizance of the matter. When Origen moved to Caesarea, he carried his manuscripts with him, and they appear to have formed the foundation of the celebrated library in that city, which was afterwards amplified by Pamphilus and Eusebius, and also by Acacius and Euzoius¹, who were all successively bishops of the place. During the life of Eusebius, if not under his controlling care, the two oldest Uncial Manuscripts in existence as hitherto discovered, known as B and N, or the Vatican and Sinaitic, were executed in handsome form and exquisite caligraphy. But shortly after, about the middle of the fourth century-as both schools of Textual Critics agree-a text differing from that of B and N advanced in general acceptance; and, increasing till the eighth century in the predominance won by the end of the fourth, became so prevalent in Christendom, that the small number of MSS. agreeing with B and N forms no sort of comparison with the many which vary from those two. Thus the problem of the fourth century anticipated the problem of the nine-

¹ See Jerome, Epist. 34 (Migne, xxii. p. 44)- Cod. V. of Philo has the following inscription :-Εἰ(61'os ἰλῖκ'οντος τῷ οὐρανῷ ἀνέγνωτο, i.e. transcribed on vellum from papyrus. Leopold Cohn's edition of Philo, *De Opiriciis Mundi*, Vratistaw, 1889.

teenth. Are we for the genuine text of the New Testament to go to the Vatican and the Sinaitic MSS. and the few others which mainly agree with them, or are we to follow the main body of New Testament MSS., which by the end of the century in which those two were produced entered into possession of the field of contention, and have continued in occupation of it ever since? This is the problem which the following treatise is intended to solve, that is to say, which of these two texts or sets of readings is the better attested, and can be traced back through the stronger evidence to the original autographs.

A few words are now needed to describe and account for the present position of the controversy.

After the discovery of printing in Europe, Textual Criticism began to rise again. The career of it may be divided into four stages, which may be termed respectively, Infancy, Childhood, Youth, and Incipient Maturity¹

I. Erasmus in 1516 edited the New Testament from a very small number of manuscripts, probably only five, in repute at the time ; and six years afterwards appeared the Complutensian edition under Cardinal Ximenes, which had been printed two years before that of Erasmus. Robert Stephen, Theodore Beza, and the Elzevirs, also, as is well known, published editions of their own. In the latter edition of the Elzevirs, issued in 1633, occurred for the first time the widely-used expression 'Textus Receptus.' The sole object in this period was to adhere faithfully to the text received everywhere.

II. In the next, evidence from Manuscripts, Versions, and Fathers was collected, chiefly by Mill and Wetstein. Bentley thought of going back to the fourth century for decisive evidence. Bengel and Griesbach laid stress upon **families** and recensions of manuscripts, and led the way in departing

¹ See my *Guide to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, pp. 7-37, George Bell and Sons, 1886.

from the received standard. Collation of manuscripts was carried on by these two critics and by other able scholars, and largely by Scholz. There was thus an amplification of materials, and a crop of theories. Much that was vague and elemental was intermingled with a promise of a great deal that would prove more satisfactory in the future.

III. The leader in the next advance was Lachmann, who began to discard the readings of the Received Text, supposing it to be only two centuries old. Authorities having already become inconveniently multitudinous, he limited his attention to the few which agreed with the oldest Uncials, namely, L or the Regius at Paris, one or two other fragments of Uncials, a few Cursives, the Old Latin Manuscripts, and a few of the oldest Fathers, making up generally some six or seven in all upon each separate reading. Tischendorf, the discoverer of \aleph , the twin-sister of B, and the collator of a large number of MSS. 1, followed him in the main, as did also Tregelles. And Dr. Hort, who, with Bishop Westcott, began to theorize and work when Lachmann's influence was at the highest, in a most ingenious and elaborate Introduction maintained the cause of the two oldest Uncials-especially B-and their small band of followers. Admitting that the Received Text dates back as far as the middle of the fourth century, Hort argued that it was divided by more than two centuries and a half from the original Autographs, and in fact took its rise at Antioch and should be called 'Syrian,' notwithstanding the predominance which he acknowledged that it has enjoyed since the end of the fourth century. He termed the readings of which B and \aleph are the chief exponents 'the Neutral Text,' and held that that text can be traced back to the genuine Autographs ²

¹ For an estimate of Tischendorf's great labour, see an article on Tischendorf's Greek Testament in the Quarterly Review for July, 1895.

² Dr. Hort's theory, which is generally held to supply the philosophical explanation of the tenets maintained in the school of critics who support B

IV. I have placed the tenets of the opposite school last as exhibiting signs of Incipient Maturity in the Science, not because they are admitted to be so, that being not the case, but because of their intrinsic merits, which will be unfolded in this volume, and because of the immense addition recently made of authorities to our store, as well as on account of the indirect influence exercised of late by discoveries pursued in other quarters¹. Indeed, it is sought to establish a wider stock of ruling authorities, and a sounder method in the use of them. The leaders in the advocacy of this system have been Dr. Scrivener in a modified degree, and especially Dean Burgon. First, be it understood, that we do not advocate perfection in the Textus Receptus. We allow that here and there it requires revision. In the Text left behind by Dean Burgon, about 150 corrections have been suggested by him in St. Matthew's Gospel alone. What we maintain is the TRADITIONAL TEXT. And we trace it back to the earliest ages of which there is any record. We trust to the fullest testimony and the most enlightened view of all the evidence. In humble dependence upon God the Holy Ghost, Who we hold has multiplied witnesses all down the ages of the Church, and Whose cause we believe we plead, we solemnly call upon those many students of the Bible in these days who are earnest after truth to weigh without prejudice what we say, in the prayer that it may contribute something towards the ascertainment of the true expressions employed in the genuine Word of God.

and N as pre-eminently the sources of the correct text, may be studied in his Introduction. It is also explained and controverted in my Textual Guide, pp. 38-59; and has been powerfully criticized by Dean Burgon in The Revision Revised, Article III, or in No. 306 of the Quarterly Review, without reply.

¹ Quarterly Review, July 1895, 'Tischendorf's Greek Testament.'

• See Preface,

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY GROUNDS.

§ 1.

IN the ensuing pages I propose to discuss a problem of the highest dignity and importance¹: namely, On what principles the true text of the New Testament Scriptures is to be ascertained? My subject is the Greek text of those Scriptures, particularly of the four Gospels; my object, the establishment of that text on an intelligible and trustworthy basis.

That no fixed principles were known to exist before 1880 is proved by the fact that the most famous critics not only differed considerably from one another, but also from themselves. Till then all was empiricism in this department. A section, a chapter, an article, a pamphlet, a tentative essay—all these indeed from time to time appeared: and some were excellent of their kind. But we require something a vast deal more methodical, argumentative, and

¹ It is remarkable, that in quarters where we should have looked for more scientific procedure the importance of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament is underrated, upon a plea that theological doctrine may be established upon passages other than those of which the text has been impugned by the destructive school. Yet (a) in all cases consideration of the text of an author must perforce precede consideration of inferences from the text—Lower Criticism must be the groundwork of Higher Criticism; (b) confirmatory passages cannot be thrown aside in face of attacks upon doctrine of every possible character; (c) Holy Scripture is too unique and precious to admit of the study of the several words of it being interesting rather than important; (d) many of the passages which Modern Criticism would erase or suspect—such as the last Twelve Verses of St. Mark, the first Word from the Cross, and the thrilling description of the depth of the Agony, besides numerous others—are valuable in the extreme; and, (e) generally speaking, it is impossible to pronounce, especially amidst the thought and life seething everywhere round us, what part of Holy Scripture is not, or may not prove to be, of the highest importance as well as interest.—E. M.

complete, than is compatible with such narrow limits. Even where an account of the facts was extended to greater length and was given with much fullness and accuracy, there was an absence of scientific principle sufficient to guide students to a satisfactory and sound determination of difficult questions. Tischendorf's last two editions differ from one another in no less than 3,572 particulars. He reverses in every page in 1872 what in 1859 he offered as the result of his deliberate judgement. Every one, to speak plainly, whether an expert or a mere beginner, seemed to consider himself competent to pass sentence on any fresh reading which is presented to his notice. We were informed that 'according to all principles of sound criticism' this word is to be retained, that to be rejected: but till the appearance of the dissertation of Dr. Hort no one was so obliging as to tell us what the principles are to which reference is confidently made, and by the loyal application of which we might have arrived at the same result for ourselves. **And** Hort's theory, as will be shewn further on, involves too much violation of principles generally received, and is too **devoid** of anything like proof, ever to win universal acceptance. As matters of fact easily verified, it stands in sharp antagonism to the judgement passed by the Church all down the ages, and in many respects does not accord **with** the teaching of the most celebrated critics of the century who preceded him.

I trust I shall be forgiven, if in the prosecution of the present inquiry I venture to step out of the beaten track, and to lead my reader forward in a somewhat humbler style than has been customary with my predecessors. Whenever they have entered upon the consideration of principles, they have always begun by laying down on their own authority a set of propositions, some of which so far from being axiomatic are repugnant to our judgement and are found as they stand to be even false. True

that I also shall have to begin by claiming assent to a few fundamental positions : but then I venture to promise that these shall all be self-evident. I am very much mistaken if they do not also conduct us to results differing greatly from those which have been recently in favour with many of the most forward writers and teachers.

Beyond all things I claim at every thoughtful reader's hands that he will endeavour to approach this subject in an impartial frame of mind. To expect that he will succeed in divesting himself of all preconceived notions as to what is likely, what not, were unreasonable. But he is invited at least to wear his prejudices as loose about him as he can ; to be prepared to cast them off if at any time he has been shewn that they are founded on misapprehension; to resolve on taking nothing for granted which admits of being proved to be either true or false. And, to meet an objection which is sure to be urged against me, by proof of course I do but mean the nearest approach to demonstration, which in the present subject-matter is attainable.

Thus, I request that, apart from proof of some sort, it shall not be taken for granted that a copy of the New Testament written in the fourth or fifth century will exhibit a more trustworthy text than one written in the eleventh or twelfth. That indeed of two ancient documents the more ancient might not unreasonably have been expected to prove the more trustworthy, I am not concerned to dispute, and will not here discuss such a question; but the probabilities of the case at all events are not axiomatic. Nay, it will be found, as I am bold enough to say, that in many instances a fourteenth-century copy of the Gospels may exhibit the truth of Scripture, while the fourth-century copy in all these instances proves to be the depositary of a fabricated text. I have only to request that, until the subject has been fully investigated, men will suspend their

judgement on this head: taking nothing for granted which admits of proof, and regarding nothing as certainly either true or false which has not been shewn to be so.

§ 2.

That which distinguishes Sacred Science from every other Science which can be named is that it is Divine, and has to do with a Book which is inspired ; that is, whose true Author is God. For we assume that the Bible is to be taken as inspired, and not regarded upon a level with the Books of the East, which are held by their votaries to be sacred. It is chiefly from inattention to this circumstance that misconception prevails in that department of Sacred Science known as 'Textual Criticism.' Aware that the New Testament is like no other book in its origin, its contents, its history, many critics of the present day nevertheless permit themselves to reason concerning its Text, as if they entertained no suspicion that the words and sentences of which it is composed were destined to experience an extraordinary fate also. They make no allowances for the fact that influences of an entirely different kind from any with which profane literature is acquainted have made themselves felt in this department, and therefore that even those principles of Textual Criticism which in the case of profane authors are regarded as fundamental are often out of place here.

It is impossible that all this can be too clearly apprehended. In fact, until those who make the words of the New Testament their study are convinced that they move in a region like no other, where unique phenomena await them at every step, and where seventeen hundred and fifty years ago depraving causes unknown in every other department of learning were actively at work, progress cannot really be made in the present discussion. Men must by all means disabuse their minds of the prejudices

which the study of profane literature inspires. Let me explain this matter a little more particularly, and establish the reasonableness of what has gone before by a few plain considerations which must, I think, win assent. I am not about to offer opinions, but only to appeal to certain undeniable facts. What I deprecate, is not any discriminating use of reverent criticism, but a clumsy confusion of points essentially different.

No sooner was the work of Evangelists and Apostles recognized as the necessary counterpart and complement of God's ancient Scriptures and became the 'New Testament,' than a reception was found to be awaiting it in the world closely resembling that which He experienced Who is the subject of its pages. Calumny and misrepresentation, persecution and murderous hate, assailed Him continually. And the Written Word in like manner, in the earliest age of all, was shamefully handled by mankind. Not only was it confused through human infirmity and misapprehension, but it became also the object of restless malice and unsparing assaults. Marcion, Valentinus, Basilides, Heracleon, Menander, Asclepiades, Theodotus, Hermophilus, Apollonides, and other heretics, adapted the Gospels to their own ideas. Tatian, and later on Ammonius, created confusion through attempts to combine the four Gospels either in a diatessaron or upon an intricate arrangement made by sections, under which as a further result the words of one Gospel became assimilated to those of another¹. Want of familiarity with the sacred words in the first ages, carelessness of scribes, incompetent teaching, and ignorance of Greek in the West, led to further corruption of the Sacred Text. Then out of the fact that there existed a vast number of corrupt copies arose at once the need of Recension, which was carried on by Origen and his school. This was a fatal

¹ See below, Vol. II. throughout, and a remarkable passage quoted from Caius or Caius by Dean Hurgon in *The Revision Revised* (Quarterly Review, No. 306), pp. 323-314.

necessity to have made itself felt in an age when the first principles of the Science were not understood ; for 'to correct' was too often in those days another **word for** 'to corrupt.' And this is the first thing to be **briefly** explained and enforced : but more than a counterbalance was provided under the overruling Providence of God.

§ 3

Before our Lord ascended up to Heaven, He told His disciples that He would send them the Holy Ghost, Who should supply His place and abide with His Church for ever. He added a promise that it should be the office of that inspiring Spirit not only 'to bring to their remembrance all things whatsoever He had told them ¹' but also to 'guide' His Church 'into all the Truth,' or, 'the whole Truth²' (ἡ ἀληθεία ὅλη). Accordingly, the earliest great achievement of those days was accomplished on giving to the Church the Scriptures of the New Testament, in which authorized teaching was enshrined in written form. And first, out of those many Gospels which incompetent persons had 'taken in hand' to write or to compile out of much floating matter of an oral or written nature, He guided them to discern that four **were** wholly unlike the rest-were the very Word of God.

There exists no reason for supposing that the Divine Agent, who in the first instance thus gave to mankind the Scriptures of Truth, straightway abdicated His office; took no further care of His work; abandoned those precious writings to their fate. That a perpetual miracle was wrought for their preservation-that copyists were protected against the risk of error, or evil men prevented from adulterating shamefully copies of the Deposit-no one, **it is** presumed, is so weak as to suppose. But it is quite a different thing to claim that all down the ages the sacred

¹ St. John xiv. 26.

² St. John xvi. 13.

writings must needs have been God's peculiar care; that the Church under Him has watched over them with intelligence and skill ; has recognized which copies exhibit a fabricated, which an honestly transcribed text ; has generally sanctioned the one, and generally disallowed the other. I am utterly disinclined to believe-so grossly improbable does it seem-that at the end of 1800 years 995 copies out of every thousand, suppose, will prove untrustworthy; and that the one, two, three, four or five which remain, whose contents were till yesterday as good as unknown, will be found to have retained the secret of what the Holy Spirit originally inspired. I am utterly unable to believe, in short, that God's promise has so entirely failed, that at the end of 1800 years much of the text of the Gospel had in point of fact to be picked by a German critic out of a waste-paper basket in the convent of St. Catherine ; and that the entire text had to be remodelled after the pattern set by a couple of copies which had remained in neglect during fifteen centuries, and had probably owed their survival to that neglect ; whilst hundreds of others had been thumbed to pieces, and had bequeathed their witness to copies made from them.

I have addressed what goes before to persons who sympathize with me in my belief. To others the argument would require to be put in a different way. Let it then be remembered, that a wealth of copies existed in early times; that the need of zealous care of the Holy Scriptures was always felt in the Church; that it is only from the Church that we have learnt which are the books of the Bible and which are not; that in the age in which the Canon was settled, and which is presumed by many critics to have introduced a corrupted text, most of the intellect of the Roman Empire was found within the Church, and was directed upon disputed questions; that in the succeeding ages the art of transcribing was brought

to a high pitch of perfection ; and that the verdict of all the several periods since the production of those two manuscripts has been given till a few years ago in favour of the Text which has been handed down :-let it be further borne in mind that the testimony is not only that of all the ages, but of all the countries: and at the very least so strong a presumption will ensue on behalf of the Traditional Text, that a powerful case indeed must be constructed to upset it. It cannot be vanquished by theories grounded upon internal considerations-often only another name for personal tastes-, or for scholarly likes or dislikes, or upon fictitious recensions, or upon any arbitrary choice of favourite manuscripts, or upon a strained division of authorities into families or groups, or upon a warped application of the principle of genealogy. In the ascertainment of the facts of the Sacred Text, the laws of evidence must be strictly followed. In questions relating to the inspired Word, mere speculation and unreason have no place. In short, the Traditional Text, founded upon the vast majority of authorities and upon the Rock of Christ's Church, will, if I mistake not, be found upon examination to be out of all comparison superior to a text of the nineteenth century, whatever skill and ingenuity may have been expended upon the production or the defence of it.

§ 4.

For due attention has never yet been paid to a circumstance which, rightly apprehended, will be found to go a great way towards establishing the text of the New Testament Scriptures on a solid basis. I refer to the fact that a certain exhibition of the Sacred Text - that exhibition of it with which we are all most familiar - rests on ecclesiastical authority. Speaking generally, the Traditional Text of the New Testament Scriptures, equally with the New Testament Canon, rests on the authority of the Church

Catholic. 'Whether we like it, or dislike it' (remarked a learned writer in the first quarter of the nineteenth century), 'the present New Testament Canon is neither more nor less than the probat of the orthodox Christian bishops, and those not only of the first and second, but of the third and fourth, and even subsequent centuries ¹.' In like manner, whether men would or would not have it so, it is a plain fact that the Traditional Greek Text of the New Testament is neither more nor less than the probat of the orthodox Greek Christian bishops, and those, if not as we maintain of the first and second, or the third, yet unquestionably of the fourth and fifth, and even subsequent centuries.

For happily, the matter of fact here is a point on which the disciples of the most advanced of the modern school are entirely at one with us. Dr. Hort declares that 'The fundamental text of late extant Greek MSS. generally is, beyond all question, identical with the dominant Antiochian or Graeco-Syrian text of the second half of the fourth century.... The bulk of extant MSS. written from about three or four to ten or eleven centuries later must have had in the greater number of extant variations a common original either contemporary with, or older than, our oldest MSS.²' And again, 'Before the close of the fourth century, as we have said, a Greek text, not materially differing from the almost universal text of the ninth century and the Middle Ages, was dominant, probably by authority, at Antioch, and exercised much influence elsewhere ³.' The mention of 'Antioch' is, characteristically of the writer, purely arbitrary. One and the same Traditional Text, except in comparatively few particulars, has prevailed in the Church from the beginning till now. Especially deserving of attention is the admission that the Text in

¹ Rev. John Oxlee's sermon on Luke xxii. 28-30 (.18n), p. 91 (Three Sermons on the power, origin, and unction of the Christian Hierarchy, and especially that of the Church of England).

• Westcott and Hort, Introduction, p. !P.

• Ibid. p. 142.

question is of the fourth century, to which same century the two oldest of our Sacred Codexes (B and) belong. There is observed to exist in Church Lectionaries precisely the same phenomenon. They have prevailed in unintermitted agreement in other respects from very early times, probably from the days of St. Chrysostom ¹, and have kept in the main without change the form of words in which they were originally cast in the unchangeable East.

And really the problem comes before us (God be praised!) in a singularly convenient, a singularly intelligible form. Since the sixteenth century-we owe this also to the good Providence of God-one and the same text of the New Testament Scriptures has been generally received] I am not defending the 'Textus Receptus'; I am simply stating the fact of its existence. That it is without authority to bind, nay, that it calls for skilful revision in every part, is freely admitted. I do not believe it to be absolutely identical with the true Traditional Text. Its existence, nevertheless, is a fact from which there is no escaping. Happily, Western Christendom has been content to employ one and the same text for upwards of three hundred years. If the objection be made, as it probably will be, 'Do you then mean to rest upon the five manuscripts used by Erasmus?' I reply, that the copies employed were selected because they were known to represent with accuracy the Sacred Word; that the descent of the text was evidently guarded with jealous care, just as the human genealogy of our Lord was preserved; that it rests mainly upon much the widest testimony; and that where any part of it conflicts with the fullest evidence attainable, there I believe that it calls for correction.

The question therefore which presents itself, and must needs be answered in the affirmative before a single syllable of the actual text is displaced, will always be one

¹ Scrivener, *Plain Introduction*, ed. 4, Vol. I. pp. 15-76.

and the same, viz. this: Is it certain that the evidence in favour of the proposed new reading is sufficient to warrant the innovation? For I trust we shall all be agreed that in the absence of an affirmative answer to this question, the text may on no account be disturbed. Rightly or wrongly it has had the approval of Western Christendom for three centuries, and is at this hour in possession of the field. Therefore the business before us might be stated somewhat as follows: What considerations ought to determine our acceptance of any reading not found in the Received Text, or, to state it more generally and fundamentally, our preference of one reading before another? For until some sort of understanding has been arrived at on this head, progress is impossible. There can be no Science of Textual Criticism, I repeat-and therefore no security for the inspired Word-so long as the subjective judgement, which may easily degenerate into individual caprice, is allowed ever to determine which readings shall be rejected, which retained.

In the next chapter I shall discuss the principles which must form the groundwork of the Science. Meanwhile a few words are necessary to explain the issue lying between myself and those critics with whom I am unable to agree. I must, if I can, come to some understanding with them ; and I shall use all clearness of speech in order that my meaning and my position may be thoroughly apprehended.

§ 5.

Strange as it may appear, it is undeniably true, that the whole of the controversy may be reduced to the following narrow issue: Does the truth of the Text of Scripture dwell with the vast multitude of copies, uncial and cursive, concerning which nothing is more remarkable than the marvellous agreement which subsists between them? Or is it rather to be supposed that the truth abides exclusively

with a very little handful of manuscripts, which at once differ from the great bulk of the witnesses, and-strange to say-also amongst themselves?

The advocates of the Traditional Text urge that the Consent without Concert of so many hundreds of copies, executed by different persons, at diverse times, in widely sundered regions of the Church, is a presumptive proof of their trustworthiness, which nothing can invalidate but some sort of demonstration that they are untrustworthy guides after all.

The advocates of the old uncials-for it is the text exhibited by one or more of five Uncial Codexes known as AB CD which is set up with so much confidence-are observed to claim that the truth must needs reside exclusively with the objects of their choice. They seem to base their claim on 'antiquity'; but the real confidence of many of them lies evidently in a claim to subtle divination, which enables them to recognize a true reading or the true text when they see it. Strange, that it does not seem to have struck such critics that they assume the very thing which has to be proved. Be this as it may, as a matter of fact, readings exclusively found in Cod. B, or Cod. . or Cod. D are sometimes adopted as correct. Neither Cod. A nor Cod. C are ever known to inspire similar confidence. But the accession of both or either as a witness is always acceptable. Now it is remarkable that all the five Codexes just mentioned are never found, unless I am mistaken, exclusively in accord.

This question will be more fully discussed in the following treatise. Here it is only necessary further to insist upon the fact that, generally speaking, compromise upon these issues is impossible. Most people in these days are inclined to remark about any controversy that the truth resides between the two combatants, and most of us would like to meet our opponents half-way. The present

contention unfortunately does not admit of such a decision. Real acquaintance with the numerous points at stake must reveal the impossibility of effecting a settlement like that. It depends, not upon the attitude, or the temper, or the intellects of the opposing parties: but upon the stern and incongruous elements of the subject-matter of the struggle. Much as we may regret it, there is positively no other solution.

Indeed there exist but two rival schools of Textual Criticism. And these are irreconcilably opposed. In the end, one of them will have to give way: and, *væ vietis!* unconditional surrender will be its only resource. When one has been admitted to be the right, there can no place be found for the other. It will have to be dismissed from attention as a thing utterly, hopelessly in the wrong 1.

¹ Of course this trenchant passage refers only to the principles of the school found to fail. A school may leave fruit, of research of a most valuable kind, and yet be utterly in error as to the inferences involved in such and other facts. Dean Burgon amply admitted this. The following extract from one of the many detached papers left by the author is appended as possessing both illustrative and personal interest:-

'Familiar as all such details as the present must of necessity prove to those who have made Textual Criticism their study, they may on no account be withheld. I am not addressing learned persons only. I propose, before I lay down my pen, to make educated persons, wherever they may be found, partakers of my own profound conviction that for the most part certainty is attainable on this subject-matter; but that the decrees of the popular school-at the head of which stand many of the great critics of Christendom-are utterly mistaken. Founded, as I venture to think, on entirely false premisses, their conclusions almost invariably are altogether wrong. And this I hold to be demonstrable; and I propose in the ensuing pages to establish the fact. If I do not succeed, I shall pay the penalty for my presumption and my folly. But if I succeed-and I wish to have jurists and persons skilled in the law of evidence, or at least thoughtful and unprejudiced persons, wherever they are to be found, and no others, for my judges,-if I establish my position, I say, let my father and my mother's son be kindly remembered by the Church of Christ when he has departed hence.'

CHAPTER II.

PRINCIPLES.

§ 1.

THE object of Textual Criticism, when applied to the Scriptures of the New Testament, is to determine what the Apostles and Evangelists of Christ actually wrote-the precise words they employed, and the very order of them. It is therefore one of the most important subjects which can be proposed for examination ; and unless handled unskillfully, ought to prove by no means wanting in living interest. Moreover, it clearly takes precedence, in synthetical order of thought, of every other department of Sacred Science, so far as that rests upon the great pillar of Holy Scripture.

Now Textual Criticism occupies itself chiefly with two distinct branches of inquiry. (1) Its first object is to collect, investigate, and arrange the evidence supplied by Manuscripts, Versions, Fathers. And this is an inglorious task, which demands prodigious labour, severe accuracy, unflagging attention, and can never be successfully conducted without a considerable amount of solid learning. (2) Its second object is to draw critical inferences; in other words, to discover the truth of the text-the genuine words of Holy Writ. And this is altogether a loftier function, and calls for the exercise of far higher gifts. Nothing can be successfully accomplished here without large and exact knowledge, freedom from bias and prejudice. Above all, there must be a clear and judicial understanding. The

logical faculty in perfection must energize continually : or the result can only be mistakes, which may easily prove calamitous.

My next step is to declare what has been hitherto effected in either of these departments, and to characterize the results. In the first-named branch of the subject, till recently very little has been attempted: but that little has been exceedingly well done. Many more results have been added in the last thirteen years : a vast amount of additional evidence has been discovered, but only a small portion of it has been thoroughly examined and collated. In the latter branch, a great deal has been attempted: but the result proves to be full of disappointment to those who augured much from it. The critics of this century have been in too great a hurry. They have rushed to conclusions, trusting to the evidence which was already in their hands, forgetting that only those conclusions can be scientifically sound which are drawn from all the materials that exist. Research of a wider kind ought to have preceded decision. Let me explain and establish what I have been saying.

§ 2.

It was only to have been anticipated that the Author of the Everlasting Gospel-that masterpiece of Divine Wisdom, that miracle of superhuman skill-would shew Himself supremely careful for the protection and preservation of His own chiefest work. Every fresh discovery of the beauty and preciousness of the Deposit in its essential structure does but serve to deepen the conviction that a marvellous provision must needs have been made in God's eternal counsels for the effectual conservation of the inspired Text.

Yet it is not too much to assert that nothing which man's inventive skill could have devised nearly comes up

to the actual truth of the matter. Let us take a slight but comprehensive view of what is found upon investigation, as I hold, to have been the Divine method in respect of the New Testament Scriptures.

1. From the very necessity of the case, copies of the Gospels and Epistles in the original Greek were multiplied to an extraordinary extent all down the ages and in every part of the Christian Church. The result has been that, although all the earliest have perished, there remains to this day a prodigious number of such transcripts; some of them of very high antiquity. On examining these with care, we discover that they must needs have been (a) produced in different countries, (b) executed at intervals during the space of one thousand years, (c) copied from originals no longer in existence. And thus a body of evidence has been accumulated as to what is the actual text of Scripture, such as is wholly unapproachable with respect to any other writings in the world ¹. More than two thousand manuscript copies are now (1888) known to exist ².

¹ There are, however, in existence, about 200 MSS. of the Iliad and Odyssey of Homer, and about 10 of Virgil. But in the case of many books the existing authorities are but scanty. Thus there are not many more than thirty of Aeschylus, and they are all said by W. Dindorf to be derived from one of the eleventh century: only a few of Demosthenes, of which the oldest are of the tenth or eleventh century: only one authority for the first six books of the Annals of Tacitus (see also Madvig's Introduction): only one of the Clementines: only one of the Didache, &c. See Gow's Companion to School Classics, Macmillan & Co. 1888.

• I had already assisted my friend Prebendary Scrivener in greatly enlarging Scholz's list. We had, in fact, raised the enumeration of "Evangelia" [copies of Gospels] to 621: of "Acts and Catholic Epistles" to 239: of "Paul" to 281: of "Apocalypse" to 108: of "Evangelistaria" [Lectionary copies of Gospels] to 299: of the book called "Apostolos" [Lectionary copies of Acts and Epistles] to 81-making a total of 1629. But at the end of a protracted and somewhat laborious correspondence with the custodians of not a few great continental libraries, I am able to state that our available "Evangelia" amount to at least 739: our "Acts and Cath. Epp." to 261: our "Paul" to 338: our "Apoc." to 02: our "Evst." to 415: our copies of the "Apostolos" to 128-making a total of 2003. This shows an increase of three hundred and seventy-four. Revision Revised, p. 521. But since the publication of Dr. Gregory's Prolegomena, and of the fourth edition of Dr. Scrivener's Plain Introduction to the

It should be added that the practice of reading Scripture aloud before the congregation—a practice which is observed to have prevailed from the Apostolic age—has resulted in the increased security of the Deposit: for (1) it has led to the multiplication, by authority, of books containing the Church Lessons; and (2) it has secured a living witness to the *ipsissima verba* of the Spirit—in all the Churches of Christendom. The ear once thoroughly familiarized with the words of Scripture is observed to resent the slightest departure from the established type. As for its tolerating important changes, that is plainly out of the question.

II. Next, as the Gospel spread from land to land, it became translated into the several languages of the ancient world. For, though Greek was widely understood, the commerce and the intellectual predominance of the Greeks, and the conquests of Alexander having caused it to be spoken nearly all over the Roman Empire, Syriac and Latin Versions were also required for ordinary reading, probably even in the very age of the Apostles. And thus those three languages in which 'the title of His accusation' was written above His cross—not to insist upon any absolute identity between the Syriac of the time with the then 'Hebrew' of Jerusalem—became from the earliest time the depositaries of the Gospel of the World's Redeemer. Syriac was closely related to the vernacular Aramaic of Palestine and was spoken in the adjoining region: whilst Latin was the familiar idiom of all the Churches of the West.

Thus from the first in their public assemblies, orientals

Criticism of the New Testament, after Dean Burgon's death, the list has been largely increased. In the fourth edition of the Introduction (Appendix F, p. 397*) the total number under the six classes of 'Evangelia,' 'Acts and Catholic Epistles,' 'St. Paul,' 'Apocalypse,' 'Evangelistaria,' and 'Apostolos,' has reached (about) 3,829, and may be reckoned when all have come in at over 4,000. The separate MSS. (some in the reckoning just given being counted more than once) are already over 3,000.

anri occidentals alike habitually read aloud the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles. Before the fourth and fifth centuries the Gospel had been further translated into the peculiar idioms of Lower and Upper Egypt, in **what** are now called the Bohairic and the Sahidic Versions,-of Ethiopia and of Armenia,-of Gothland. The text thus embalmed in so many fresh languages was clearly, to a great extent, protected against the risk of further change ; and these several translations remain to this day as witnesses of what was found in copies of the New Testament which have long since perished.

III. But the most singular provision for preserving the memory of what was anciently read as inspired Scriptures remains to be described. Sacred Science boasts of a literature without a parallel in any other department of human knowledge. The Fathers of the Church, the Bishops and Doctors of primitive Christendom, were in some instances voluminous writers, whose works have largely come down to our times. These men often comment upon, freely quote, habitually refer to, the words of Inspiration: whereby it comes to pass that a host of unsuspected witnesses to the truth of Scripture are sometimes producible. The quotations of passages by the Fathers are proofs of the readings which they found in the copies used by them. They thus testify in ordinary quotations, though it be at second hand : and sometimes their testimony has more than usual value when they argue or comment upon the passage in question. Indeed, very often the manuscripts in their hands, which so far live in their quotations, are older-perhaps centuries older-than any copies that now survive. In this way, it will be perceived that a three-fold security has been provided for the integrity of the Deposit :-Copies,-Versions,-Fathers. On the relation of each of which heads to one another something particular has now to be delivered.

§ 3.

Manuscript copies are commonly divided into Uncial, i.e. those which are written in capital letters, and Cursive or 'minuscule,' i.e. these which are written in 'running' or small hand. This division though convenient is misleading. The earliest of the 'Cursives' are more ancient than the latest of the 'Uncials' by full one hundred years¹. The later body of the Uncials belongs virtually, as will be proved, to the body of the Cursives. There is no merit, so to speak, in a MS. being written in the uncial character. The number of the Uncials is largely inferior to that of the Cursives, though they usually boast a much higher antiquity. It will be shewn in a subsequent chapter that there is now, in the face of recent discoveries of Papyrus MSS. in Egypt, much reason for inferring that Cursive MSS. were largely derived from MSS. on Papyrus, just as the Uncials themselves were, and that the prevalence for some centuries of Uncials took its rise from the local library of Caesarea. For a full account of these several Codexes, and for many other particulars in Sacred Textual Criticism, the reader is referred to Scriveners' Introduction, 1894.

Now it is not so much an exaggerated, as an utterly mistaken estimate of the importance of the Textual decrees of the five oldest of these Uncial copies, which lies at the root of most of the criticism of the last fifty years. We are constrained in consequence to bestow what will appear to some a disproportionate amount of attention on those five Codexes: viz. the Vatican Code B, and the Sinaitic Codex . which are supposed to be both of the fourth century: the Alexandrian Codex A, and the fragmentary Parisian Codex C, which are assigned to the fifth: and lastly D, the Codex Bezae at Cambridge, which is supposed to have been written in the sixth. To these

¹ Evan. 481 is dated A.D. 835; Evan. S. is dated A.D. 949.

may now be added, as far as St. Matthew and St. Mark are concerned, the Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae, and the Rossanensis Codex, both of which are of the early part of the sixth century or end of the fifth. But these two witness generally against the two oldest, and have not yet received as much attention as they deserve. It will be found in the end that we have been guilty of no exaggeration in characterizing B, N, and D at the outset, as three of the most corrupt copies in existence. Let not any one suppose that the age of these five MSS. places them upon a pedestal higher than all others. They can be proved to be wrong time after time by evidence of an earlier period than that which they can boast.

Indeed, that copies of Scripture, as a class, are the most important instruments of Textual Criticism is what no competent person will be found to deny. The chief reasons of this are their continuous text, their designed embodiment of the written Word, their number, and their variety. But we make also such great account of MSS., because (1) they supply unbroken evidence to the text of Scripture from an early date throughout history until the invention of printing; (2) they are observed to be dotted over every century of the Church after the first three; (3) they are the united product of all the patriarchates in Christendom. There can have been no collusion therefore in the preparation of this class of authorities. The risk of erroneous transcription has been reduced to the lowest possible amount. The prevalence of fraud to a universal extent is simply a thing impossible. Conjectural corrections of the text are pretty sure, in the long run, to have become effectually excluded. On the contrary, the testimony of Fathers is fragmentary, undesigned, though often on that account the more valuable, and indeed, as has been already said, is often not to be found; yet occasionally it is very precious, whether from eminent antiquity or the clearness of

their verdict: while Versions, though on larger details they yield a most valuable collateral evidence, yet from their nature are incapable of rendering help upon many important points of detail. Indeed, in respect of the *ipsissi'ma vcrba* of Scripture, the evidence of Versions in other languages must be precarious in a high degree.

Undeniable it is, that as far as regards Primitiveness, certain of the Versions, and not a few of the Fathers, throw Manuscripts altogether in the shade. We possess no actual copies of the New Testament so old as the Syriac and the Latin Versions by probably more than two hundred years. Something similar is perhaps to be said of the Versions made into the languages of Lower and Upper Egypt, which may be of the third century¹. Reasonable also it is to assume that in no instance was an ancient Version executed from a single Greek exemplar: consequently, Versions enjoyed both in their origin and in their acceptance more publicity than of necessity attached to any individual copy. And it is undeniable that on countless occasions the evidence of a translation, on account of the clearness of its testimony, is every bit as satisfactory as that of an actual copy of the Greek.

But I would especially remind my readers of Bentley's golden precept, that 'The real text of the sacred writers does not now, since the originals have been so long lost, lie in any MS. or edition, but is dispersed in them all.' This truth, which was evident to the powerful intellect of that great scholar, lies at the root of all sound Textual Criticism. To abide by the verdict of the two, or five, or seven oldest Manuscripts, is at first sight plausible, and is the natural refuge of students who are either superficial, or who wish to make their task as easy and simple as possible. But to put aside inconvenient witnesses is contrary to all principles of justice and of science. The problem is more

¹ Or, as some think, at the end of the second century.

complex. and is not to be solved so readily. Evidence of a strong and varied character may not with safety be cast away, as if it were worthless.

§ 4.

We are constrained therefore to proceed to the consideration of the vast mass of testimony which lies ready to our hands. And we must just as evidently seek for principles to guide us in the employment of it. For it is the absence of any true chart of the ocean that has led people to steer to any barren island, which under a guise of superior antiquity might at first sight present the delusive appearance of being the only safe and sure harbour.

I. We are all, I trust, agreed at least in this, -That the thing which we are always in search of is the Text of Scripture as it actually proceeded from the inspired writers themselves. It is never, I mean, 'ancient readings' which we propose as the ultimate object of our inquiries. It is always the oldest Reading of all which we desire to ascertain ; in other words, the original Text, nothing else or less than the very words of the holy Evangelists and Apostles themselves.

And axiomatic as this is, it requires to be clearly laid down. For sometimes critics appear to be engrossed with the one solicitude to establish concerning the readings for which they contend, that at least they must needs be very ancient. Now, since all readings must needs be very ancient which are found in very ancient documents, nothing has really been achieved by proving that such and such readings existed in the second century of our era :-unless it can also be proved that there are certain other attendant circumstances attaching to those readings, which constitute a fair presumption, that they must needs be regarded as the only genuine wording of the passage in question. The Holy Scriptures are not an arena for the exercise or display of the ingenuity of critics.

2. I trust it may further be laid down as a fundamental principle that of two possible ways of reading the Text, that way which is found on examination to be the better attested and authenticated-by which I mean, the reading which proves on inquiry to be supported by the better evidence-must in every instance be of necessity presumed to be the actual reading, and is to be accepted accordingly by all students.

3. I will venture to make only one more postulate, viz. this: That hitherto we have become acquainted with no single authority which is entitled to dictate absolutely on all occasions, or even on any one occasion, as to what shall or shall not be regarded as the true Text of Scripture. We have here no one infallible witness, I say, whose solitary dictum is competent to settle controversies. The problem now to be investigated, viz. what evidence is to be held to be 'the best,' may doubtless be stated in many ways: but I suppose not more fairly than by proposing the following question,-Can any rules be offered whereby in any case of conflicting testimony it may be certainly ascertained which authorities ought to be followed? The court is full of witnesses who contradict one another. How are we to know which of them to believe? Strange to say, the witnesses are commonly, indeed almost invariably, observed to divide themselves into two camps. Are there no rules discoverable by which it may be probably determined with which camp of the two the truth resides?

I proceed to offer for the reader's consideration seven Tests of Truth, concerning each of which I shall have something to say in the way of explanation by-and-by. In the end I shall ask the reader to allow that where these seven tests are found to conspire, we may confidently assume that the evidence is worthy of all acceptance, and is to be implicitly followed. A reading should be attested then by the seven following

NOTES OF TRUTH.

1. Antiquity, or Primitiveness ;
2. Consent of Witnesses, or Number;
3. Variety of Evidence, or Catholicity;
4. Respectability of Witnesses, or Weight;
5. Continuity, or Unbroken Tradition;
6. Evidence of the Entire Passage, or Context ;
7. Internal Considerations, or Reasonableness.

§ 5.

The full consideration of these Tests of Truth must be postponed to the next chapter. Meanwhile, three discussions of a more general character demand immediate attention.

I. Antiquity, in and by itself, will be found to avail nothing. A reading is to be adopted not because it is old, but because it is the best attested, and therefore the oldest. There may seem to be paradox on my part: but there is none. I have admitted, and indeed insist upon it, that the oldest reading of all is the very thing we are in search of: for that must of necessity be what proceeded from the pen of the sacred writer himself. But, as a rule, fifty years, more or less, must be assumed to have intervened between the production of the inspired autographs and the earliest written representation of them now extant. And precisely in that first age it was that men evinced themselves least careful or accurate in guarding the Deposit,-least critically exact in their way of quoting it;-whilst the enemy was most restless, most assiduous in procuring its depravation. Strange as it may sound,-distressing as the discovery must needs prove when it is first distinctly realized,-the earliest shreds and scraps-for they are at first no more-that come into our hands as quotations of the text of the *New Testament Scriptures* are not only disappointing by reason of their inexactness, their fragmentary character, their vagueness; but they are often

demonstrably inaccurate. I proceed to give one example out of many.

'My God, My God, wherefore hast thou forsaken me?'
 I, KATEA 1H; So it is in St. Matt. xxvii. 46: so in St. Mark xv. 34. But because, in the latter place, NB, one Old Latin, the Vulgate, and the Bohairic Versions, besides Eusebius, followed by L and a few cursives, reverse the order of the last two words, the editors are unanimous in doing the same thing. They have yet older authority, however, for what they do. Justin M. (A.D. 164) and the Valentinians (A.D. 150) are with them. As far therefore as antiquity goes, the evidence for reading ;y KATEAmls I is really wondrous strong.

And yet the evidence on the other side, when it is considered, is perceived to be overwhelming¹. Add the discovery that i, KArLAmIs I is the established reading of the familiar Septuagint, and we have no hesitation whatever in retaining the commonly Received Text, because the secret is out. NB were sure to follow the Septuagint, which was so dear to Origen. Further discussion of the point is superfluous.

I shall of course be asked, -Are we then to understand that you condemn the whole body of ancient authorities as untrustworthy? And if you do, to what other authorities would you have us resort?

I answer :- So far from regarding the whole body of ancient authorities as untrustworthy, it is precisely 'the whole body of ancient authorities' to which I insist that we must invariably make our appeal, and to which we must eventually defer. I regard them therefore with more than reverence. I submit to their decision unreservedly. Doubtless I refuse to regard any one of those same most ancient manuscripts-or even any two or three

¹ ACI (Ⲙ in St. Matt.) with fourteen other uncials, most cursives, four Old Latin, Gothic, St. Irenaeus, &c. &c.

of them-as oracular. But why? Because I am able to demonstrate that every one of them singly is in a high degree corrupt, and is condemned upon evidence older than itself. To pin my faith therefore to one, two, or three of those eccentric exemplars, were indeed to insinuate that the whole body of ancient authorities is unworthy of credit.

It is to Antiquity, I repeat, that I make my appeal: and further, I insist that the ascertained verdict of Antiquity shall be accepted. But then, inasmuch as by 'Antiquity' I do not even mean any one single ancient authority, however ancient, to the exclusion of, and in preference to, all the rest, but the whole collective body, it is precisely 'the body of ancient authorities' which I propose as the arbiters. Thus, I do not mean by 'Antiquity' either (1) the Peshitto Syriac: or (2) Cureton's Syriac: or (3) the Old Latin Versions: or (4) the Vulgate: or (5) the Egyptian, or indeed (6) any other of the ancient Versions:-not (7) Origen, nor (8) Eusebius, nor (9) Chrysostom, nor (10) Cyril,-nor indeed (11) **any** other ancient Father standing alone: neither (12) Cod. A,-nor (13) Cod. B,-nor (14) Cod. C,-nor (15) Cod. D,-nor (16) Cod. *, -nor in fact (17) any other individual Codex that can be named. I should as soon think of confounding the cathedral hard by with one or two of the stones which compose it. By Antiquity I understand the whole body of documents which convey to me the mind of Antiquity,-transport me back to the primitive age, and acquaint me, as far as is now possible, with what was its verdict.

And by parity of reasoning, I altogether decline **to accept** as decisive the verdict of any two or three of **these** in defiance of the ascertained authority of all, or a majority of the rest.

In short, I decline to accept a fragment of Antiquity, arbitrarily broken off, in lieu of the entire mass of ancient witnesses. And further than this, I recognize other Notes

of Truth, as I have stated already; and I shall prove this position in my next chapter.

§ 6.

II. The term 'various readings' conveys an entirely incorrect impression of the grave discrepancies discoverable between a little handful of documents-of which Codexes B-N of the fourth century, D of the sixth, L of the eighth, are the most conspicuous samples-and the Traditional Text of the New Testament. The expression 'various readings' belongs to secular literature and refers to phenomena essentially different from those exhibited by the copies just mentioned. Not but what 'various readings,' properly so called, are as plentiful in sacred as in profane codexes. One has but to inspect Scrivener's Full and Exact Collation of about Twenty Greek Manuscripts of the Gospels (1853) to be convinced of the fact. But when we study the New Testament by the light of such Codexes as BNDL, we find ourselves in an entirely new region of experience; confronted by phenomena not only unique but even portentous. The text has undergone apparently an habitual, if not systematic, depravation; has been manipulated throughout in a wild way. Influences have been demonstrably at work which altogether perplex the judgement. The result is simply calamitous. There are evidences of persistent mutilation, not only of words and clauses, but of entire sentences. The substitution of one expression for another, and the arbitrary transposition of words, are phenomena of such perpetual occurrence, that it becomes evident at last that what lies before us is not so much an ancient copy, as an ancient recension of the Sacred Text. And yet not by any means a recension in the usual sense of the word as an authoritative revision: but only as the name may be applied to the product of individual inaccuracy or caprice, or tasteless assiduity

on the part of one or many, at a particular time or in a long series of years. There are reasons for inferring, that we have alighted on five specimens of what the misguided piety of a primitive age is known to have been fruitful in producing. Of fraud, strictly speaking, there may have been little or none. We should shrink from imputing an evil motive where any matter will bear an honourable interpretation. But, as will be seen later on, these Codexes abound with so much licentiousness or carelessness as to suggest the inference, that they are in fact indebted for their preservation to their hopeless character. Thus it would appear that an evil reputation ensured their neglect in ancient times ; and has procured that they should survive to our own, long after multitudes which were much better had perished in the Master's service. Let men think of this matter as they will,-whatever in fact may prove to be the history of that peculiar Text which finds its chief exponents in Codd. BNDL, in some copies of the Old Latin, and in the Curetonian Version, in Origen, and to a lesser extent in the Bohairic and Sahidic Translations,-all must admit, as a matter of fact, that it differs essentially from the Traditional Text, and is no mere variation of it.

But why, it will be asked, may it not be the genuine article? Why may not the 'Traditional Text' be the fabrication ?

1. The burden of proof, we reply, rests with our opponents. The consent without concert of (suppose) 990 out of 1000 copies,-of every date from the fifth to the fourteenth century, and belonging to every region of ancient Christendom,-is a colossal fact not to be set aside by any amount of ingenuity. A predilection for two fourth-century manuscripts closely resembling one another, yet standing apart in every page so seriously that it is easier to find two consecutive verses in which they differ than two consecutive verses in which they entirely agree :-such

a preference, I say, apart from abundant or even definitely clear proof that it is well founded, is surely not entitled to be accepted as conclusive.

2. Next, -Because, -although for convenience we have hitherto spoken of Codexcs BNDL as exhibiting a single text, -it is in reality not one text but fragments of many, **which** are to be met with in the little handful of authorities enumerated above. Their witness does not agree together. The Traditional Text, on the contrary, is unmistakably one.

3. Further, -Because it is extremely improbable, if not impossible, that the Traditional Text was or could have been derived from such a document as the archetype of B-N: whereas the converse operation is at once obvious and easy. There is no difficulty in producing a short text by omission of words, or clauses, or verses, from a fuller text : but the fuller text could not have been produced from the shorter by any development which would be possible under the facts of the case ¹ Glosses would account for changes in the archetype of B-N, but not conversely ²

4. But the chief reason is, -Because, on making our appeal unreservedly to Antiquity-to Versions and Fathers as well as copies, -the result is unequivocal. The Traditional Text becomes triumphantly established, -the eccentricities of BND and their colleagues become one and all emphatically condemned.

¹ See Vol. II.

• All such questions are best understood by observing an illustration. In St. Matt. xiii. 36, the disciple; say to our Lord, 'Explain to us {ἡ ποικίλην} the parable of the tares.' The cursives (and late uncials) are all agreed in this reading. Why then do Lachmann and Tregelles (not Tischendorf) exhibit ~~ἡ ποικίλην~~ 1 Only because they find ~~ἡ ποικίλην~~ in B. Had they known that the first reading of K exhibited that reading also, they would have been more confident than ever. But what pretence can there be for assuming that the Traditional reading of all the copies is untrustworthy in this place 1 The plea of antiquity at all events cannot be urged, for Origen reads ~~ἡ ποικίλην~~ four times. The Versions do not help us. What else is ~~ἡ ποικίλην~~ 1 Let a transparent Gloss I ~~ἡ ποικίλην~~ (elucidate) explain ~~ἡ ποικίλην~~, but ~~ἡ ποικίλην~~ (tell) does not explain ~~ἡ ποικίλην~~

All these, in the mean time, are points concerning which something has been said already, and more will have to be said in the sequel. Returning now to the phenomenon adverted to at the outset, we desire to explain that whereas 'Various Readings,' properly so called, that is to say, the Readings which possess really strong attestation-for more than nineteen-twentieths of the 'Various Readings' commonly quoted are only the vagaries of scribes, and ought not to be called 'Readings' at all-do not require classification into groups, as Griesbach and Hort have classified them ; 'Corrupt Readings,' if they are to be intelligently handled, must by all means be distributed under distinct heads, as will be done in the Second Part of this work.

III. 'It is not at all our design' (remarks Dr. Scrivener) 'to seek our readings from the later uncials, supported as they usually are by the mass of cursive manuscripts; but to employ their confessedly secondary evidence in those numberless instances wherein their elder brethren are hopelessly at variance ¹.' From which it is plain that in this excellent writer's opinion, the truth of Scripture is to be sought in the first instance at the hands of the older uncials: that only when these yield conflicting testimony may we resort to the 'confessedly secondary evidence' of the later uncials: and that only so may we proceed to inquire for the testimony of the great mass of the cursive copies. It is not difficult to foresee what would be the result of such a method of procedure.

I venture therefore respectfully but firmly to demur to the spirit of my learned friend's remarks on the present, and on many similar occasions. His language is calculated to countenance the popular belief ❶ That the authority of an uncial codex, because it is an uncial, is necessarily greater than that of a codex written in the cursive character : an imagination which upon proof I hold to be groundless.

¹ Plain Introduction, I. a77. 4th edition.

Between the text of the later uncials and the text of the cursive copies, I fail to detect any separative difference : certainly no such difference as would induce me to assign the palm to the former. It will be shewn later on in this treatise, that it is a pure assumption **to take** for granted, or to infer, that cursive copies were all descended from the uncials. New discoveries in palaeography have ruled that error to be out of court.

But (z) especially do I demur to the popular notion, to which I regret to find that Dr. Scrivener lends his powerful sanction, that the text of Scripture is to be sought in the first instance in the oldest of the uncials. I venture to express my astonishment that so learned and thoughtful a man should not have seen that before certain 'elder brethren' are erected into a supreme court of judicature, some other token of fitness besides that of age must be produced on their behalf. Whence, I can but ask -, whence is it that no one has yet been at the pains to establish the contradictory of the following proposition, viz. that Codexes BNCD are the several depositaries of a fabricated and depraved text: and that BND, for C is a palimpsest, i.e., has had the works of Ephraem the Syrian written over it as if it were of no use, are probably indebted for their very preservation solely to the fact that they were anciently recognized as untrustworthy documents? Do men indeed find it impossible to realize the notion that there must have existed such things as refuse copies in the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries as well as in the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh? and that the Codexes which we call BNCD may possibly, if not as I hold probably, have been of that class ¹?

Now I submit that it is a sufficient condemnation of

¹ It is very remarkable that the sum of Eusebius' own *evangelion* is *invidius* against those uncials. Yet it seems most probable that he had U and it executed from the *α*_p, *β*_q or 'critical' copies of Origen. See below, Chapter IX.