

nounce and write His will in a book, can we suppose that He would permit their writings to be abandoned to all the chances of time and all the caprices of men? that He would suffer His holy word to see corruption? The very thought is like the first shaking of the foundations. And what man's instinct suggests, the Bible everywhere, and with express emphasis, declares, that as the word of God its every jot and tittle is under a mysterious but most certain defence: with no less assurance than it appeals to inspiration for its origin does it appeal to a special omnipotent Providence for its preservation. Sceptical criticism cannot deny that the Bible contains substantially the same documents as were received by the faith of the church before and after Christ. And reverent criticism glories in her function, as the handmaid of the Holy Ghost, gradually and surely to restore to the sight of man what to the eye of God has always existed amongst the diversified copies,—the true and faithful sayings which first sprang from inspiration. Concerning some of the jots and tittles of the word we may for a time hang in doubt; but our faith is assured that there is no uncertainty in the Holy Spirit. The foundation of God's word also standeth sure, having this seal, *The Lord knoweth the words that are His*. And we also may yet have absolute certainty. Before the holy volume is rolled up again for ever, it will shine forth in all its faultless glory. Meanwhile, its transmission and preservation, as an aggregate of holy writings running through all the ages of the world, is a phenomenon standing alone. Its enemies, confessing this, have many theories more or less plausible to account for it: to us it suffices that as the word of God, created and hallowed to be the elect instrument of the world's renewal, it must live on in its integrity until it has taught its last lesson and conferred its last blessing on our race.

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