

rections and additions made in different handwritings as if the respective owners had been from time to time either comparing these copies with others or making improvements from memory. All such notes have been carefully examined and are sometimes found to be of critical value.

Although these MSS. seem to have been prepared with religious care yet they are by no means free from the errors of copyists of modern times. Those who have had much to do with employing writers can best understand the causes of such mistakes. Strange as it may appear, it by no means follows that a man of lively and intelligent mind is the best copyist. The mind will work, and despite all precautions, its own thoughts will leave their impress on the page. Often a synonymous word makes its appearance in place of another, and a word is slipped in which, in the original, did not exist. We thus find, sometimes, the word *Jesus* inserted in place of *He*, and often Christ Jesus for Jesus Christ and *vice versa*. An example of this class of error may be found in Matt. xxv. 6, where we now read "Behold the bridegroom cometh," instead of simply "Behold the bridegroom." In many cases, the errors are those of *intention*. Such errors frequently arise from the apparent desire of the writer to correct what he thought was a mistake of his predecessor either in a word or the fancied obscurity of a sentence. An illustration of this will be found in Luke xiv. 5, where the original "Which of you shall have a son or an ox fallen into a pit?" etc., is modified to "an ass or an ox" to suit the writer's erroneous fancy that the argument is a *minor ad majus*. In many cases, too, parallel passages in the Gospels, and also in the epistles are made to harmonize. Thus in Matt. ix. 13, and Mark ii. 17, the original reading is: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." The text in Luke v. 32 adds the words "to repentance," and now these words are read in all the three Gospels.

Another class of errors of intention, and these, happily, are very few, arose from the dogmatic opinions of the copyist finding their way into the text. An example of this may be found in the different readings of John i. 18, around which raged the Arian controversy, where we read: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." In many MSS. of high authority, such as the Vatican and Sinaitic, we read "The only begotten God."

Sometimes words and clauses are imported into the text from the ancient liturgies. An illustration of this class of errors will be found in the importation of the words we now append to the Lord's Prayer: "For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever, amen." For this doxology there is no authority whatever in the ancient MSS. A common cause of errors is found in words of similar endings, particularly when they stand at the end of adjacent lines. An example of this class of errors may be found in Mark xii. 47. That verse is omitted in some important MSS. for the very simple reason that it terminates with the same words as the immediately preceding verse. Sometimes words resembling one another are mistaken by the copyist. An illustration of an error of this kind is found in 1 Tim. i. 4, where our version has "godly edifying which is in faith," instead of the correct reading "God's dispensation which is in faith." This mistake originates in the difference of one letter between the Greek word "edification" and the word for "dispensation."

It will be noticed that such mistakes as those above noted are common to copyists of the present day who transcribe even printed documents. The probabilities of errors arising in copying from uncial MSS. are greatly increased when we remember that such manuscripts are written without any division between the words, and without punctuation of any kind.

The ancient versions of the New Testament afford a valuable aid in ascertaining what is the correct text. They are themselves liable, in addition to the various classes of errors just noticed, to such mistakes in translation as are found in our own version.

One of the most important of these is the Syriac version, known as the *Peshite* or *Simple*. As a translation it ranks high, and were it really the original version of the second century, it would be of very great value. Unfortunately, it was revised in the fourth century, and many parts of it were evidently brought into conformity with the prevalent ecclesiastical ideas of what ought to be the text.

The *Old Latin* translation is also important. This

was originally composed in the north of Africa. It was afterwards revised by Jerome.

Two ancient and independent Egyptian versions still exist. They are known as the *Alephitic* and *Theban*. Their history is unknown.

The Gothic version made in A.D. 348 is also valuable. The translator, Ulphilas, was an Arian, and in Phil. ii. 6, he substitutes "*likeness to God*" for "*equality with God*." A manuscript of this exists at Upsala, and is known as the "*Codex Argenteus*," or silver manuscript, from its being written in silver characters. This manuscript was made in the sixth century. It contained only fragments of the Gospels.

The *Armenian* and *Ethiopic* versions may be noticed, but neither are regarded as weight in textual criticism.

Quotations from the books of the New Testament, by ancient writers, form a not unimportant means of ascertaining the true text. Such evidence is more ancient than that afforded by even the uncial MSS., or the versions. The quotations we possess—and they are very numerous—are found in the writings of men whose lives touched the apostolic age itself. But, again, the same difficulties meet us as are presented in the MSS. The text of these writers has suffered more from errors and alterations than in the case of the copies of the sacred book themselves. Again, these old writers had not the same easy access to the Scriptures as we have, and when we consider what havoc is made of Scripture, in quotations among ourselves, we can readily understand the value to be placed on such extracts, often made from memory, in old writers. How often do we hear 2 Tim. i. 12 quoted as "I know in whom I have believed" instead of "I know whom I have believed," or the trite "He may run that readeth" of Hab. ii. 2, persistently given as "He that runneth may read." Such citations are of great value when the writer expressly argues from them. In such cases, he doubtless takes care to verify his quotation.

To attempt in a paper of this nature to give even an outline of the history of modern Biblical criticism would be impossible. This tempting subject must be passed over by merely alluding to the Greek Testament of Erasmus, the Complutensian Bible of Cardinal Ximenes, the Testament of Beza, the Polyglott of Walton, the labours of Scholz, of Mill, of Bengel and Griesbach, and the works of Tischendorf, Tregelles, Scrivener, Davidson and Alford. By the patient labours of these men Biblical criticism has not been reduced to a science, and so far from textual criticism being a matter left to the fancy and imagination of every tyro as is popularly supposed, the critic is met in his investigations with a series of rules as clearly defined as those of any science. These rules are as follows:

I. INTERNAL EVIDENCE.

I. That reading is to be preferred which seems to have suggested the others, or out of which it is most easy to suppose that the others would arise.

II. That the more difficult reading is to be preferred to the more easy.

III. The reading at first sight obscure is to be preferred to one that is plain and easily understood.

IV. That reading presenting a historical difficulty is to be preferred to one from which the difficulty is removed.

V. That a reading in one Gospel which seems to convey a sense different from that of a parallel passage in another Gospel is to be preferred to one which makes the two Gospels strictly harmonize.

VI. That the shorter reading is generally preferable to the longer.

VII. That the style of writing characteristic of particular writers, or what we know of their modes of thought, is to be taken into account in judging of the various readings of their text.

VIII. That the argument from internal evidence is always precarious.

II. EXTERNAL EVIDENCE.

I. The text must throughout be determined by evidence without allowing any prescriptive right to printed editions.

II. Every element of evidence must be taken into account before a decision is made.

III. The relative weight of the several classes of evidence is modified by their generic character.

IV. The mere preponderance of numbers is in itself of no weight.

V. The more ancient reading is generally preferable.

VI. The more ancient reading is generally the reading of the more ancient MSS.

VII. The ancient text is often preserved substantially in recent copies.

VIII. The agreement of ancient MSS., or of MSS. containing an ancient text, with all the earliest versions and quotations marks a certain reading.

IX. The disagreement of the most ancient authorities often marks the existence of a corruption anterior to them.

To give examples of the application of each of these rules would be very interesting. Our space prevents any such extended illustrations.

In a recent work on "The Words of the New Testament," by Dr. Milligan, of Aberdeen and Dr. Roberts, of St. Andrews, is given a specimen of the working of the general application of these rules. As these gentlemen are both members of the Company of Revisers an additional interest attaches to this extract as throwing some light on the labour of the Committee: "In Luke ii. 14 we read 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.' But there is another reading which greatly changes the aspect of the verse. It is difficult to render it in English, but literally rendered—and we content ourselves for the present with such a rendering—it will run, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men of good pleasure,' or 'good will.' The evidence in favour of the *received* reading is several uncial MSS., among which are readings introduced into the Sinaitic Codex and the Vatican Codex by *later corrections*; all cursive MSS.; the Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, and Ethiopic versions, and a number of the Greek fathers. On the *other side* we have *four* of the most important uncials: the Sinaitic, Vatican, Alexandrian and the Codex Bezae; the first two, though afterwards altered, having so read in their original form, the Old Latin, the Vulgate, and the Gothic versions, together with at least two very ancient and important fathers, one belonging to the west, and the other to the east. Such is the evidence. How shall we decide?"

"I. Our two most important MSS. are here supported by other ancient authority; and so much greater therefore is the weight due to them.

"II. The evidence of versions is in favour of the reading commonly received.

"III. The important fact meets us, that the most learned and critical Greek father of early Christianity, not only knew the reading *not* received, but he argues from it, and depends on it in establishing a point he has in view.

"IV. The long rejected reading is by much the more difficult of the two. We can see at once how a transcriber of the Greek should have substituted the one now familiar to us for the other. How the contrary course should have been taken by any it is most difficult to conceive.

"These considerations lead to the conclusion that the received reading is to be rejected, and the other put into its place. It may be said: Is not the parallelism thus destroyed? We answer: No! It is preserved. The Greek has only *two* members, not *three*. There is no copula between the two, which are generally considered to be the second and third members of the group. The word 'and' divides the whole sentence into its parts, and unless what follows that word can be gathered into one clause the parallelism is broken. The *new* but *original* reading enables us to do so; and bearing in mind that 'good will' or 'good pleasure' here is not a human virtue, but the Divine benevolence or love, the merciful purpose of God towards His people, the passage as a whole will run: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, in men whom in His good pleasure He hath chosen.'

Such a passage as that just cited enables us to realize to some extent how laborious is the duty of our revisers, and of what importance the result of their work will be to the Church of God.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

MR. EDITOR,—I notice in your paper of 14th February, the substance of an address delivered on the ordination of elders in Zion Church, Brantford, which—if the views therein contained were correct, would very easily account for so many of our young people being Presbyterian one day, Episcopalian another, Congregationalist another.

If the Great King and Head of the Church has not appointed a government in His Church, and set offi-