

contribution to New Testament criticism, and is freely allowed to have been of special service to English readers, for the reason that it enables them to note the changes needed to bring the authorized version into conformity with the oldest and, therefore, most authoritative manuscripts.

Up to that period, no such help had been supplied to the simply English reader. In this work these changes are distinctly and fully indicated. It is known as the Tauchnitz (Leipsic) edition of the New Testament. When the authorized version was undertaken, at the instance of King James, biblical criticism was an unknown art. It has now approached the certainty and authority of a science. The Greek Text which the translators of 1611 used, was largely imperfect. It was necessarily so. Erasmus had formed it from various sources in 1515. Stephens, an eminent printer of Paris, had in 1550 appended to the work of Erasmus, numerous important corrections. Yet, no manuscript of an earlier date than the tenth century, had been consulted in its preparation. Moreover, portions of the Text, which were wanting in the manuscripts that were available, were translated back again into Greek, from early Latin and other versions!

Since the year 1611, three very old copies of the original New Testament have been brought to light. These are known to scholars as the Alexandrine, the Vatican, and the Sinaitic manuscripts. I name them in the order in which they have been discovered.

(a.) "The Alexandrine." This manuscript was presented to Charles the First, of England, fifteen years after the publication of our Authorized Version. It contains the Old Testament in Greek (the Septuagint version) and the New Testament in the original (Greek). The donor was Cyril Lucar, Patriarch of Constantinople, previously Patriarch of Alexandria, who had acquired it in that city. Hence its name. The character of the penmanship, and the general appearance in other respects, of the Manuscript, lead to the conclusion, that it was copied about the middle of the fifth century. This valuable copy of the Scriptures, now the property of the English nation, is deposited in the library of the British Museum. The New Testament portion of the Manuscript is not quite complete. Twenty-five chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel, two chapters of St. John's Gospel, and six or eight chapters of the second Epistle to the Corinthians are wanting.

(b.) "The Vatican." The existence of this Manuscript was known no earlier than 1475, its name appearing for the first time, in a catalogue of the Library of the Vatican, compiled in that year. But it is only within the

last thirteen years, that any portion of it, and therefore its New Testament portion, has been made really available for critical examination. Scholars generally agree in dating this Manuscript as far back as the middle of the fourth century; though some authorities accord to it a yet higher antiquity. The form of the letters, and the general appearance of the Manuscript, closely resemble some of the Greek manuscripts which have been disinterred from the ruins of Herculaneum, and which must, therefore, have been written during the first century of our Era. Like the "Alexandrine," this manuscript also is defective. It lacks the last four or five chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews, all the Pastoral Epistles, and the whole Book of Revelation. It was transferred to Paris by the Emperor Napoleon; but was subsequently restored to the Vatican, in the Library of which it now remains.

(c.) "The Sinaitic." This manuscript was discovered by Tischendorf two and twenty years ago, in the Greek Convent of St. Catherine, on Mount Sinai. Its great value arises first, from its antiquity; second, from its completeness. "All the considerations which tend to fix the date of manuscripts," says the discoverer, "lead to the conclusion that the Sinaitic Codex belongs to the middle of the fourth century." Its completeness may be judged of from the fact that no single verse of the New Testament is missing. This precious Biblical treasure has its home in the Imperial Library at St. Petersburg. In 1862 it was published in fac-simile, at great cost, under the superintendence of Tischendorf, and at the expense of the Emperor of Russia. The number of copies printed was, I believe, limited to fifty. One of these copies enriches the Library of the Presbyterian College, Montreal.

The fact that no one of these three ancient manuscripts was known to exist when the revision of 1611 was undertaken, and that in many important particulars they are found to differ (in several instances unanimously to differ), from the Greek Text which the revisers or translators then used, might suffice to convince any intelligent English reader that the revision undertaken eleven years ago, and now at length completed, was not merely a desirable work, but was absolutely necessary to the production of a faithful English representation of the earliest and purest form in which the Apostolic writings have come down to us.

In a third article, I shall give some illustrations of the great value and use which these ancient manuscripts have been to the "New Testament Company," in their recently published Revision.

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