

has been copied from one much more ancient, it sometimes renders important aid in the construction of the New Testament text.

In addition to these two great and most important classes of MSS., critics call to their aid versions or translations and quotations (from MSS.) as they are found in the early fathers of the Church. The value of versions as sources of the text of scripture is affected by several considerations, such as the following: The translator may have had only an imperfect knowledge of the language of his MS.; or he may have mistaken the meaning of the text he translated; or his MS. itself may have been an inferior one; or he may have made a free translation. In either one of these cases his translation would be vitiated as a means of fixing the text of the original from which he translated, which alone would be of service in deciding upon the words of the scriptures. Besides all this, the idiom of one language is so different from that of another, that in most cases it would be impossible from a translation to fix with critical exactness the true expression in the original. Then, too, the causes of variations in the MSS. of scripture have been at work producing similar variations in the MSS. of the versions themselves. Indeed, in some cases we know that intentional changes were made in the versions by later hands, to adapt them to the text that had then obtained the ascendancy in the Church.

The principal versions are the Peshito; Philoxenian or Harclean; the Curetonian, and some others of lesser importance in Syriac; *Vetus Latina* and the version of Jerome, which, about the 8th century, became the Vulgate of the Roman Catholic Church, in Latin; two or three Egyptian; one Gothic; one Armenian, and one Ethiopic.

Quotations collected from the early fathers also constitute a valuable source of the sacred text. So numerous are these quotations that the learned Bentley asserted, after trial, that if all the originals had been lost, the text of the New Testament could be compiled from the quotations in the fathers who flourished before the 7th century.

The value of quotations, however, for critically fixing the text, is vitiated by several facts. Among these we may mention that the same text is quoted differently in different parts of the same author; and, moreover, the work in which we find the quotation