

New Testament" is pronounced by competent judges to be the best work on the subject in the English language, says: "One great truth is admitted on all hands—the almost complete freedom of the Holy Scripture from the bare suspicion of wilful corruption—the absolute identity of the testimony of every known copy in respect to doctrine and spirit, and the main drift of every argument and every narrative through the entire volume of Inspiration."\*

The same author quotes from Bently, whom he calls "at once the profoundest and the most daring of English critics," the following emphatic testimony: "Make your variations as many more and put them into the hands of a knave or a fool, and yet with the most sinistrous and absurd choice, he shall not extinguish the light of any one chapter, nor so disguise Christianity but that every feature of it will still be the same."† Thus, says Dr. Scrivener, "hath God's providence kept from harm the treasure of His written Word, so far as is needful for the quiet assurance of His Church and people."

The results of *Textual Criticism* down to the present time, in respect both to the purity of the text and the translation of the words into English, are embodied in the "Revised Version," which will always be a grand critical commentary for scholars, whether it comes into popular use or not. We can all remember the eager expectation, and in some quarters the alarm with which the appearance of the Revision was anticipated. It was regarded by many as the making of a new Bible. It was expected to revolutionize our Christian theology. Many hoped to find that the doctrines they disliked were obliterated from the authoritative records of Christianity. Still more were jealous for the truth, and troubled in heart with the fear that the old Bible in which their fathers trusted would be marred by human innovations. Both the hope and the fear would have been prevented by a more accurate knowledge of the province of Biblical criticism, and of the real purpose of the Revision; and certainly both the evil hope and the over-jealous fear have long since been removed by the study of the accomplished work.

Let us illustrate and verify these statements in regard to the doctrine of *Inspiration*. The word *θεόπνευστος* (2 Tim. iii: 16) is translated in the authorized version "given by inspiration of God;" in the Revised Version it is "*inspired of God*." Accepting the latter as the more literal translation, it is still an open question in what sense the Scriptures were inspired or *inbreathed*. And here the great canon of interpretation applies—that the more obscure and general passages must be interpreted by the plainer and more explicit. We are told (2 Pet. i: 21) that "holy men of God spake as *they were moved by the Holy Ghost*;" or, as the R. V. more tersely renders it, "*men spake*

\* Scrivener's Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament, p. 6.

† Ibid, p. 7.