

as scarcely to be of any account ;" and he proceeds to argue that "these discrepancies being such as they are found to be, are of inestimable value. They show that there has been no collusion among our witnesses, and that our MS. copies of the Gospels, about 500 in number, and brought from all parts of the world, have not been mutilated nor interpolated with any sinister design ; that they have not been tampered with by any religious sect, for the sake of propagating any private opinion as to the word of God. These discrepancies are, in fact, evidences of the purity and integrity of the sacred text. They show that the Scriptures which we now hold in our hands in the nineteenth century are identical with those which were received by the Church in the first century, as written by the Holy Ghost." The publication of the English Testament, in which the variations of the Alexandrian, the Vatican, and the Sinaitic manuscripts are noted, furnishes a valuable means to the English reader of judging of their importance, and thence of the accuracy of the received text. These attacks made on Christianity, through the supposed impurity and unfaithfulness of its sacred books, are met to an extent that had been impossible a few years ago. The careful investigations of Tischendorf, and the discovery and publication of the Sinaitic Manuscript, have restored our sacred books to a position from which for a time they had been thrown down.

But evidence has also been brought to the confirmation of Scripture as to its historical and topographical statements, at a time when such evidence was peculiarly needed. The visits paid to the giant cities of Bashan, the disentanglement of the records of Assyria, the discovery of an inscribed stone in Moab, have wrung from the very stones, testimony to the veracity of Holy Writ. Sargon was a name unknown in ancient history as an Assyrian king, except in the book of Isaiah. But the discovery of Assyrian memorials has confirmed Isaiah's historical truthfulness, mentioning Sargon as an Assyrian king. The revolt of Moab under Mesha (2 Kings iii. 4, 5.) is confirmed by the Moabite stone just named. Cylinders discovered in Lower Babylon, and read in 1854, relieve the Book of Daniel of some of its historical difficulties. Belshazzar is found to have been co-equal with his father, Nabonidus or Labynetus, so that when the post of third in the kingdom was offered to the interpreter of the handwriting, the intention was to place him next the throne, so for the discrepancy between the Gentile and Jewish historians, one having spoken of the death of the sovereign, the other of his escape, it is found that Belshazzar perished at the capture of Babylon, while his father, Nabonidus, in a neighbouring stronghold, survived. Of the Moabite stone it may be well to say, that it is an original historical document set up by Mesha, king of Moab, in the days of Ahab. It is an indirect incidental evidence of the truth of the Scriptures, an undesigned coincidence which served to justify the date assigned to some of the sacred writings, about which doubts had been expressed.

If we turn to the result of recent explorations of travellers in the East, we see that much has been effected toward elucidating the topography of the