

incorporating in the body of the text the marginal annotations, ignorantly supposing them to have been omitted, or perhaps, in some cases, by wilful corruption made for sectarian purposes. MSS. were also often written from the dictation of another. Consequently many passages are found differently worded in different copies, or as it is technically termed have *various readings*. To these and other variations was the Greek text liable till the invention of printing.

There are still extant copies of the New Testament printed in Greek, dated Basil, 1516, edited by Erasmus, and in Greek and Latin, dated Alcalá (in Spain) 1514. These two editions form the basis of the Received Text, the first edition of which was printed by Elzevir, in 1654. At that time there were MS. copies of the Scriptures in most of the public libraries of Europe. Upwards of 640 MSS. have been examined for recent editions of the *Greek Testament*.

Original copies were probably written on papyrus roll, the writing was in uncial, or large capital letters, with no divisions between words, and no accents, breathings or stops, as the following from St. John's Gospel will illustrate:—
INTHEBEGINNINGWASTHEWORDANDTHE
WORDWASGOD.

If a MS. of each book of the Bible in the author's handwriting were still extant, and if the fact of it being such could be proved, every copy that agreed with the MS. would be perfectly genuine. The MSS. written by the Apostles themselves, or their amanuenses have however long since been lost. The earliest MS. of the New Testament yet discovered cannot be traced beyond the *fourth* century; the most of them are of a much later date; and yet there are circumstances attending the preservation of the MSS. of the Scriptures, which prove their genuineness with nearly as much certainty as if the first copies were still in existence.

To be Continued.

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