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THE BOOK OF BOOKS

(From a Lecture delivered at Bath, England, by Prebendary Kemble.)

After remarking on the various objections against the credibility of the Bible he proceeds :

And first, as regards the purity of the text. A few years ago the idea found favour with many, that the text in its transit through many centuries had become so corrupt that it was not safe to lay any stress on words, and that it was very doubtful if we really had a moderately faithful transcript of the original writings. Various principles were laid down for testing the text. Thousands of emendations were suggested, with a view of bringing the text of the New Testament to its original form. But the mature scholarship and patient investigation applied of late to this branch of Biblical study, has tended to justify, to a very considerable extent, the confidence reposed in the received text of the New Testament. In Tischendorf's seventh edition of the New Testament, he has abandoned many of the readings preferred in his earlier editions, and returns to those of the received text. In St. Matthew's gospel alone he does so in more than a hundred instances. Access has been obtained to MSS. of an early date within very recent times, and these furnish most important testimony to the general accuracy of our received text ; and the differences that are found in the oldest manuscripts and versions we possess are of the most trifling character. Bishop Wordsworth writes : "The verbal discrepancies of the MSS. of the New Testament are so slight and trivial