

sacredness did not exist, and hence it was not considered a sacrilegious act to so change a passage as to make it bring out the sentiment which the copyist thought it was intended to convey, or even what in his opinion it ought to convey.

Of course, some will at once rush to the conclusion, that if this fact be accepted as true then all scripture must be worthless, and that its true, original meaning can never be learned. Well, if such must be the necessary result of accepting the fact, here alluded to, as a fact, then this result must be reached, for nothing is better established as a fact than what we have stated.

But such a wholesale, reckless conclusion, is by no means established by the fact in question. For, in dealing with the copyists and manipulators of the books of the New Testament, we are dealing with sincere and conscientious men, men who would not do such things as believing they were wrong, and who therefore made what changes they did in the interests of what they believed to be truth. As an illustration of our meaning we point to the thirty-seventh verse of the eighth chapter of the book of the Acts of the Apostles, which verse has been left out of the Revised Version.

It is found in the common version as a part of the history which relates how Philip met and baptized the Eunuch. The interpolated verse read "And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

Now, it is more than likely that this was the work of one who honestly believed that Philip had been too simple and quick in his work of conversion, especially would it seem to be so to one in the second century, when already the primal simplicity of baptism had given place to considerable ceremony concerning this rite. The inventor of this colloquy would presume that this, or a similar conversation, must have taken place, and so, to guard against dis-

respect for the rite of baptism, put in, on his own responsibility, what modern revisers were forced to leave out. We but hint at this interesting subject, and return from this excursion into the regions of criticism to the main subject of the article; remarking, however, that it has a more significant bearing on the passage under consideration than many would expect. For, in another allusion to this same deliverance of the first christian council, found in the twenty-first chapter of *The Acts*, there exists a marked difference in the two different versions. The verse reads in the Revised Version, "But as touching the Gentiles which have believed, we wrote giving judgment that they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, &c.," but in the authorized version it reads, "As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only, that they keep themselves from *things* offered to idols, &c. A difference which in this connection is at least suggestive.

What, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter concerning the deliverance of this first christian council? It is, that if the record thereof which has come down to us is in perfect agreement with the original facts, that thus early the followers of Christ had failed fully to understand the teaching of Christ concerning divine guidance.

But, as an offset to this, there is the fact that the first century had not passed away before there had appeared a decided tendency to make bishops, and especially an assembly of bishops, authoritative teachers to the church, and thus to dethrone the Holy Ghost as the only authoritative teacher to individual christians. Hence, a very heavy pressure was exerted in favor of so manipulating the history of this first council as to make it harmonize as much as possible with the assumptions of the priesthood.