

after devoting many years to the task, have published a new edition of the Old and New Testaments, with notes, in which many passages in the authorized version of the New Testament (that in common use), are marked as doubtful. And in their report the revisors say: "It is an unquestionable fact that in some cases whole verses and even large passages in the common English Bible are spurious."

This result is arrived at upon a comparison of the manuscripts from which our present Bible was taken, with other and older manuscripts which have been discovered in great numbers since our Bible was first published. And this declaration is disquieting enough, but becomes much more so when the full truth is understood. The comparison, which discloses such spurious passages, was a comparison of the more modern manuscripts, from which our Bible was taken, with older manuscripts dating from the fourth century, and when a passage in the late copies is not found in the older ones, it is pronounced spurious. But, unfortunately, no copies of the New Testament made earlier than A. D. 350 are known to exist, and, consequently, it cannot be known how many spurious passages are contained in those copies of that date, which have necessarily to be taken as the standard. That there are spurious passages in our earliest copies of A. D. 350, there can be no reasonable doubt. History tells us that in early times there were numerous sects among Christians, and each sect had its own copy of the gospel, or one of them supporting its peculiar claims to the truth. Some sects, which did not believe in the miraculous birth of Jesus, the Ebionites and Masconites, had copies of the gospel of Matthew and Luke, which did not contain any account of the miraculous birth. Out of all of these differing editions, the Council of Laodicea, in A. D. 380, chose the four which we now have. The rest have perished.

The temptation to change and insert

words in the gospels, must have been particularly great before the year 300, when the Church was establishing itself in the Gentile world, when Christians were divided into parties, and when the contest was which should control the great offices, the bishoprics, which were endowed with wealth and power exceeding that of a Roman consul—a power which not only controlled the fortunes of men in this world, but also their fate in the next. In these controversies the questions made concerned the nature of Jesus, and consequently his authority to confer such vast powers upon the Church, and they had very little to do with the teaching of Jesus, so far as he laid down rules for the conduct of his disciples. I think, then, we may reasonably conclude that these parts of the gospels and epistles have been, at least, less meddled with and distorted than any other parts; and, indeed, the four evangelists differ less in their reports of this teaching than in anything else. Indeed, we may say they do not differ at all, as to the spirit and essential parts of the teaching of Jesus.

Friends, then, who consider the teachings of Jesus, the rules he has prescribed for their guidance, as the only essential parts of the New Testament, will not be distressed by the doubts thrown upon the historical portions, but will view the disputes of scholars over these, with as much equanimity as would attend the view of a contest over any other mere matters of fact. But those whose creeds embrace the personality of Jesus and his relations to the Father, cannot be sure that any paragraph in those subjects have escaped manipulation at the hands of the partizans of Homo-ousion and Hom i-ousion. J. D. M.

Washington, D C.

Kind looks, kind words, kind acts and warm handshakes—these are the secondary means of grace when men are in trouble and are fighting their unseen battles.—Dr. John Hall.