

the globe. In China and Japan, in Egypt and India, all over the steppes of Asia and through the jungles of Africa, men must read "in their own tongue wherein they were born" the wonderful works of God. But what shall be the standard by which all these versions shall be verified, and what the text from which they shall severally be drawn?

Obviously there can be no final and uniform arbiter, except in a Revelation which has been locked up in a language itself congealed into a fixed form and put forever beyond the reach of change. How marvellous the working of that Providence, by which the unchangeable God has stamped the likeness of His own unchangeableness upon the Record of His own purposes and thoughts! Men may deny or refuse, or misconstrue His testimony: but they cannot add to it, nor take from it. God has locked up the Record in the archives of His own providing, and has taken the key into His own possession.

2. I call attention next to the *providential multiplication and preservation of ancient manuscripts*, by which we are able to-day to establish the verity of the Sacred Text. The topic is large, and can only be handled here under its most general aspect. Of course the question presents itself upon taking up a copy of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, have we here the very words which the Holy Ghost inspired Prophets and Apostles to write? It so happens that early copies of the Sacred Record were made with evident care, and were collected at important ecclesiastical centres—such as Alexandria in Egypt, Constantinople and Rome in Europe, in Babylonia and Syria in Asia. With untiring industry these have been collated by the ripest scholars of every age, and through this comparison and combination of testimony the verity of the original text can be satisfactorily ascertained. It will serve to illustrate this point to refer to a single fact. When Kennicott and De Rossi first announced their detection of many thousand various readings in the manuscripts they had compared, the Christian world rose in alarm against critical labours which threatened to unsettle the authority of God's word. But when these variations came to be sifted, they were found almost uniformly of the most unimportant character—such, for example, as whether we should spell the word honour in English with or without the letter u. With the exception of one or two single passages, the genuineness of the received text was unchallenged; and not a single doctrine or fact was displaced or even weakened, by this imposing array of seeming contradictions. The integrity of the Sacred Text was thus unchangeably established; and these manuscripts remain and will be kept with holy vigilance, as permanent vouchers of the integrity of the Scriptures in our hands to-day. How marvellous is that Providence which caused so many copies of the Divine word to be taken at so many points, and at a period when fraud and interpolation, or simple errors of transcription, would certainly be detected! And how remarkable, that so many of these witnessing manuscripts should have escaped the ravages of time and the changes to which all things mortal are exposed! How wonderful that historic criticism finds the evidence for establishing the genuineness of the Scriptures increasing with every new discovery!

3. I pass to another striking verification of the Divine Record, which has come to light in recent times: *the antiquarian researches into the remains of ancient profane history contemporaneous with the events recorded in the Bible.*

* * * * *

It should be stated in this connection that these researches have made no substantive addition to the sum of our knowledge of the past. They have in some degree rounded out the knowledge we had before, by filling up the gaps which existed in the previous record, but they have added no chapters to history which are positively fresh and new. Intrinsically valuable as enlarging and confirming what was already known, so far as I am aware, the sum total of history remains without increase of bulk. This leaves us to infer not only that we have in the inspired volume the key to all past history, but that God has treasured in His book the cream of all the facts which were worth preserving and transmitting. And it is well suited to provoke admiration, that