

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

VOL. XXII.—NO. 2.

APRIL, MDCCCLXXI.

ARTICLE I.

THE DOCTRINAL VARIOUS READINGS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT GREEK.

Novum Testamentum Græce et Latine. CAROLUS LACHMANNUS.
Berlin: 1832, 1842.

TREGELLES on the Printed Text of the Greek New Testament.
London: Bagster. 1854.

Novum Testamentum Græce. Edited by CONSTANTINE TISCHENDORF.
Leipsic: 1862.

Authorised English Version of the New Testament, with Introduction and Various Readings from the three most celebrated Manuscripts of the Original Greek Text. By C. TISCHENDORF. Tauchnitz Edition. Leipsic: 1869.

Biblorum Codex Sinait. Petropolitanus, Fac Simile. By CONSTANTINE TISCHENDORF. (Imperial Edition, Folio.) St. Petersburg. A. D. 1862.

The magnificent work, whose name stands last in this list, may be said to complete a marked stage in the progress, or at least in the rotation, of the art of *biblical criticism*. It very properly suggests, not only some inquiry into the value and authority of the Sinai manuscript introduced to the learned world by Dr. Constantine Tischendorf, but a review and comparison of the

VOL. XXII., NO. 2.—1.

present and fashionable opinions of biblical critics. We call these the opinions now fashionable; for those who watch the course of this art, are aware that there is as truly a fashion in it—infesting its votaries—as in ladies' bonnets, medicines, or cravats.

We will premise by stating a few conclusions, in which all schools of learned critics may be said to agree with the enlightened friends of the Bible. First: No one claims for the *Textus Receptus*, or common Greek Text of the New Testament, any sacred right, as though it represented the *ipsissima verba*, written by the inspired men in every case. It is admitted on all hands that it is but a reprint, substantially, of Erasmus's Fifth Basle Edition of the New Testament, which that eminent scholar edited from a few manuscripts, for none of which an eminent antiquity was claimed, and belonging, in the main, to the Κοινή Ἐκδοσις, or Constantinopolitan family; and that it is just as it has been transmitted from his day, through the presses of Robert Stephens in Paris, and the Elzevirs of Holland. It is therefore not asserted to be above emendation. But, second: This received text contains undoubtedly all the essential facts and doctrines intended to be set down by the inspired writers; for if it were corrected with the severest hand, by the light of the most divergent various readings found in any ancient MS. or version, not a single doctrine of Christianity, nor a single cardinal fact, would be thereby expunged. Third: As more numerous collations of ancient documents are made, the number of various readings is, of course, greatly increased; but yet the effect of these comparisons is, on the whole, to confirm the substantial correctness of the received text more and more. This is because these various readings (which are now counted by the hundred thousand) are nearly all exceedingly minute and trivial; and chiefly because, while they diverge, on the one side and the other, from the received text, the divergence is always within these minute bounds; which proves that text to be always within a very slight distance, if at all removed, from the infallible autographs. It is as though an engineer were attempting to fix the exact line of some ancient road. The common tradition points

to an existing road as being the same. Some attempts to verify its site, by the *data* given by ancient mathematicians and geographers, show that the ancient track probably varied a foot or two here and there. This discovery greatly excites the engineer's curiosity; he ransacks the ancient writers, and finds a great many other *data*. These, upon the severest application, show a multitude of other points where the modern road probably varied a minute space from the original. But they all concur in greatly increasing the evidence, that the ancient track was, with these minute exceptions, just where it now is; and even if all the variations of site were introduced, the road would still lie upon the same bed substantially. The wayfarer may then be fully re-assured; and leaving the antiquaries to fatigue themselves with their squabbles, whether at this valley or that rivulet the ancient thoroughfare lay a foot more to the right or a foot to the left, he would joyfully proceed, confident that the existing one was still the "King's ancient highway of holiness," and that it would lead him to the city of the apostles and martyrs. Such is the resultant total of this criticism, with all its variations; and this is gladly admitted by all right-minded critics, from the pious Bengel to this day. Fourth: The admitted result of more extensive and thorough collations of the received text with ancient documents is to retrieve its credit, even as to the slight degree in which earlier criticism seemed to impugn it. No respectable critic would now hazard his credit by proposing as many emendations as Griesbach; and it is said that Tischendorf, in his latest edition, restores a number of the received readings which he had himself criticised in his earlier ones.

It may also be premised, that since critical investigations have reached the results admitted above, and since the most laborious research seems to give so small a promise of a definite end of debate on the remaining and unessential variations, one is not surprised to find that this branch of study has lost its interest with the more practical and vigorous judgments. Such men feel that they have something better to do with their time and energies. The minds for which criticism retains its fascination are usually of that peculiar and "crotchety" type found among

antiquarians. The intelligent reader is therefore not surprised to find, along with much labor and learning, a "plentiful lack" of sober and convincing common sense.

In confirmation of this, let us review the different codes of judicial canons which the critics of the text have constructed. We shall find them continually varying, each one obnoxious to grave objections, and the question still unsettled. We find, then, that Bentley, the great English critic, proposed to discard the use of "*conjecture*," and to reform the text by the supposed agreement of the oldest Greek and the oldest Latin MS. The celebrated Bengel proposed to consider the *recensions* or families of extant MSS., as divided into the Egyptian and the Asiatic; and to give to the former, as represented by the Alexandrine MS., the decided preference. His critical canon for deciding between competing readings was: "*Proclivi scriptioni prestat ardua*"—the difficult reading has the preference over the easy one. The learned Arminian, Wetstein, in his critical edition of the New Testament, discarded all distribution of the ancient MSS. into families or recensions. He differed diametrically from Bentley, in using "*conjecture*" freely to determine the true reading, and in condemning the oldest Greek *codices* which showed the nearest resemblance to the oldest MS. of Jerome's Latin version (the ones which both Bentley and Bengel chiefly valued) as having been interpolated from the Latin, and so of little authority. He determined the weight of competing *codices* as witnesses for or against a given reading chiefly by their number. The majority ruled with him. The celebrated Griesbach, who may be said to have first constructed a critical text of the New Testament, departed again from these doctrines of Wetstein. He distributed the ancient *codices* into three families or recensions, (not absolutely, but generally distinguished by the character of their variations): a western family, originally used by the churches of West Africa, Italy, Spain, and Gaul; an Alexandrine recension and a Byzantine. The first he considered the oldest; the last the most recent and mixed, and therefore of least authority. This family he found nearest to the received text, and the individual MSS. in it strictly

resembling each other. Such was also substantially the view of Michaelis. Griesbach's fundamental canon was, that each of these families or recensions constituted an independent witness for or against a reading. That reading was entitled usually to stand, which was supported by two out of the three families. He made use of "conjecture," but did not claim for it the right to introduce a reading, unless it was supported also by some ancient evidence, either of MS., or patristic citation. When it seemed doubtful for which of two readings the ancient witnesses bore strongest testimony, he gave the preference to that which was unusual, over that which was usual; to the shorter over the longer; to the unintelligible one over the clear; and to the harsh over the smooth.

The next critic was Hug, who overthrew Griesbach's system of recensions utterly. He distributes the ancient *codices* into three recensions: that of Origen, in Palestine; of Hesychius, in Alexandria; and of Lucian, in Antioch and Byzantium. The acute and learned Irish divine, Nolan, in his "Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate," (a work which defends the received text with matchless ingenuity and profound learning,) also demolished Griesbach's system. Nolan's object is to prove the Byzantine family of *codices*, which approaches most nearly to the commonly received text, the oldest and purest. This recension he considers to be represented in the Moscow MS., whose authority had been so ably advocated by Matthiæ, on grounds similar to Dr. Nolan's. He also shows that Griesbach's preference for the Alexandrine *codices*, and for Origen their supposed editor, was utterly wrong; there being no evidence that Origen's authority ever affected the text of the *codices* used in Alexandria, and that father being moreover utterly untrustworthy as a witness to the state of the text. Dr. Nolan substantiates his valuation of the three recensions which he recognises, chiefly by a comparison with the Latin versions. He regards Jerome's version as representative of the *codices* current in Palestine in the fourth century; and the old Italic as representing that text originally current in Asia Minor and Byzantium. To this fact, his chief witness is the splendid Brescia

MS. of the Latin version, which he believes to be unquestionably the uncorrupted old Italic, and which corresponds remarkably with the Moscow and other Byzantine codices.

The system afterwards adopted (1836) in Scholz' New Testament was substantially similar. He found two prevalent recensions or families of manuscripts, the Alexandrine and the Byzantine. The latter contains many MS., the former few. He gives many strong arguments to show, from the scenes of the apostles' and evangelists' labors, from the ascendancy of the Patriarch of Constantinople, and from the early conquest of Palestine and Egypt by the Saracens, that the most numerous and the most correct MSS. would be preserved in the Constantinopolitan churches and monasteries. He also argues from internal marks, that the few *codices* of the Alexandrine family were not copied for the purposes of Church use, and did not, at the early date when they were transcribed, represent the *κοινή ἑκδοσις*. Dr. Scholz devoted the best years of his life exclusively to travels, collation of MSS., and similar critical labors, in the course of which he examined and compared six hundred and thirty MSS. The result of this immense labor was to reinstate the credit of the received text in a multitude of places where Griesbach had assailed it, and to show that it presents the most trustworthy text extant.

We now reach what may be called the recent school of biblical critics, represented by Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Alford. Their common traits may be said to be an almost contemptuous dismissal of the received text, as unworthy not only of confidence, but almost of notice; the rejection of the great mass of the *codices* of the *κοινή ἑκδοσις* as recent and devoid of nearly all authority; and the settlement of the text by the testimony of a very few MSS. for which they claim a superior antiquity, with the support of a few fathers and versions, whom they are pleased to regard as judicious and trustworthy.

Lachmann (whose critical edition of the Greek New Testament was published in Berlin in 1832 and 1850,) professes to reject conjecture utterly, as a basis for the introduction of a reading; and boasts that there is not an emendation in his whole

edition which rests on that foundation. His system of judicial canons may be said to be summed up in this maxim: that those are the true readings of the inspired writers which are supported by the *testes vetustissimi et longinqui*. That is, if he finds a given reading sustained by very old MSS., versions, and fathers, from very remote quarters of Christendom, this is the reading which was originally written. And there are, in his eyes, very few of either which are safe witnesses. Among the fathers, he relies chiefly upon the quotations of Irenæus, Origen, and Cyprian; among the versions, upon the pure *codices* (as he supposes them) of Jerome, and among the Greek MSS. upon the Vatican, Alexandrine, Codex Ephremi, and a few others. The Latin *Brescia Codex*, which Nolan regarded as so evidently a precious and uncorrupted exemplar of the Old Italic, he deems worthless, as being interpolated from the Greek of the *κοινὴ ἐκδοσις*.

The system of Tischendorf is very simple, consisting in the adoption of what he supposes to be the oldest Greek Codices as his guides, the Sinaitic, discovered and edited by himself, the Vatican, the Alexandrine; with the assistance of a few of the more ancient fragments, and of the Latin, Syriac, and Sahidic versions.

Tregelles proposes as an unfailing means for discriminating the authoritative *codices* from the incorrect, the following, which he vaunts as his canon of "comparative criticism." Select a father of the second or third century who is trustworthy, and who appears to quote *verbatim*. If he quotes such readings, in a number of cases, as are characteristic of a given *codex* or version now existing, we are authorised to conclude that this *codex* or version is, in general, a correct example of the actual Bible which that father used; that is, of the recognised text of the second or third century. Tregelles especially lauds Lachmann, because he first introduced the fashion distinctively, of ignoring the Greek vulgate or received text as simply naught, and of constructing his supposed original text wholly from other testimonies. This method, substantially adopted by Tischendorf, and by Alford, no longer retains the received text as a common basis

for emendation, or standard of comparison, or even as a mere cord upon which to string the proposed corrections, but proceeds to construct a text just as though it never existed.

It is this objectionable and mischievous feature of the later criticism, which, as we believe, especially demands the notice of biblical scholars at this time. Its natural result will be, that the Church of God will finally have no New Testament at all. It should be remembered that the received text is that which is now actually in the hands of the laity, in the popular versions of King James, of Luther, the Douay, the Genevan, Diodati's, and the other European languages. Does any one suppose that the labors of any learned critic will persuade either of these nations to surrender its version for a new one? It is very clear that, practically, the people must either trust the Bibles they have, or believe in none. *For there is no practicable substitute.* This appears from the fact that no two of the critics are agreed; no one of them is willing to adopt the text as settled by any other; their art has not found, and probably never will find, an authoritative umpire, to end their differences. Tregelles has published a vast list, covering ninety-four 8vo. pages, of the departures of the four leading editors whom he admires, Griesbach, Scholz, Lachmann, and Tischendorf, from the received text. Their number is more than nine thousand. That is, there are so many places in which one or more of these critics differs from the received text. But the same tables evince that *the critics differ among each other in more than nine thousand places!* A notable proof this, that the work of either one of them is still farther from being supported by the common consent, than the much abused received text. Hence, it appears manifestly, that if the latter is expelled from the use and confidence of the Church, it will practically be left with no New Testament.

But it may be asked, if the received text was confessedly printed from a few MSS. and versions, of inferior authority and age; if it is confessedly erroneous in some places, and probably so in many; if the absurd ground is relinquished on which its advocates once presumed to sanctify its very errors: why shall it claim the retention of its place? We reply, *because it is the*

received text. Some possible rival text may be better entitled to that place, *but it does not hold it, and cannot win it.* There cannot be in Christendom any common tribunal of criticism, by which the most meritorious text can now be installed in that place. Let it be, that the received text has usurped the position by accident, or been assigned to it by providence, the all-important fact is, that *it holds it.* It is far better for the interests of truth, that Christendom should recognise, as a commonly received Bible, a less accurate text, than that it should recognise none. Are then the fruits of biblical criticism to remain unemployed, and admitted errors in the received text uncorrected? We reply, not at all. Let all real emendations be made, but in the more modest method of our fathers. The received text should still be retained by all, not as a standard of absolute accuracy, but as a common standard of reference; and the proposed changes of the reading should be appended, and left each to stand upon its own evidences. The received text would then be expounded to the Church according to the convictions of the teachers in each instance. Such only would be the result upon the more audacious plan of our recent critics; for of course each teacher will exercise the same liberty and discretion in amending or retrenching their emendations which they have exercised upon the received text. The practical difference then, which would result from the method which we resist, would be only this, that the Church would no longer have a *Bible in common*; and would have nothing whatever to compensate for this immense loss. And inasmuch as the most dissatisfied of these critics confesses that the received text still presents every fact and doctrine of the Christian system uncorrupted, we cannot but regard it as a most unwarrantable exaggeration of their own results, to aim, for the sake of them, at the suppression of our common edition.

We proceed next to substantiate the assertion that the judicial canons by which these critics attempt to discriminate the true readings are not only still unsettled, and in part contradictory, but obnoxious to grave objections. The brief summary which we have given above, of the statement of those supposed principles by different critics, is sufficient proof of the first part. Let us now

bring those canons in which the recent school are most nearly agreed, to the test of reason. In attempting this, we assume that although altogether inferior to these professional experts in the knowledge of details and antiquarian facts, we are entitled to employ our humble common sense upon those deductions from their details, which they themselves offer to the common sense of Christians. Their labor with musty old parchments, and their familiarity with them we do not propose to contest. In these particulars we are to them, of course, as children to Anakim. But they propound to us, in their own way, the *data* which they say are collected from these their eminent researches. They invite us to consider the reasonableness of the conclusions they wish to draw therefrom. Then, say we, those conclusions must be considered by us in the light of our own reason. We presume that the antiquaries have no such monopoly of common sense as that which we have conceded them of their critical lore. We shall therefore venture to apply that common sense to their own showing of their *data* and facts; not having before our eyes any terror of the odious charge of intrusion into things too high for us.

Let us, as a preliminary task, test the soundness of that boast which the recent critics usually echo from Lachmann; that they discard *conjecture* as a guide to correct readings, and rely in preference upon the *testimony* of competent ancient witnesses. Do they really discard conjecture? And is it proper to do so? By a conjectural reading they mean one which is supported chiefly by its internal evidences. Now the earlier German critics used inferences from internal evidences with such preposterous license, and with such results, as might well give pause to any cautious or fair mind. But to discard internal evidence from criticism is the other extreme; and it may be equally reckless. Who would dispute that an undeniable anachronism, for instance, in a work to which infallibility was conceded, must be the result of a spurious reading? But the ground of the conclusion is internal evidence, *i. e.*, *conjecture*, a *laying together* of contradictories, demonstrating the inferential (but indisputable) truth, that the pen of the infallible writer did not write that statement,

impossible to be true, which we now read in the distant copy of his book. The obvious rule on this point, then, is that internal evidence is to be used, but with caution. Again, Lachmann plumes himself that there is not a single reading in his critical edition which rests on conjecture; all are supported by the testimony of the *testes vetustissimi et longinqui*. But when we come to his selection of the witnesses, he gives us nothing but "conjecture." No particular reading rests upon conjecture; but the grand foundation of the whole is a bundle of conjectures; that is, upon Lachmann's inferences from internal marks about the writings which he selects as ancient and competent. Why does he choose to believe that among the fathers of the third century, Origen cites (and cites literally) the *codices* of the New Testament of best authority in that age; while Julius Africanus and Dionysius the Great may not be trusted as doing so? Why does he rely on Cyprian rather than Minutius Felix or Arnobius? Why does he conclude that the Vatican, the Alexandrine, the Cambridge, the *codex Ephremi*, are ancient MSS., while none of the Byzantine are? Why, that the splendid and venerable Latin *codex of Brescia* was interpolated from the (worthless) Byzantine Greek, while the *codex of Vercelli* is more trustworthy? None of these *codices* have a continuous, authentic, known history. He proceeds only upon internal evidence. It is not now to our purpose to inquire whether Lachmann conjectures right or wrong: his ground of selection is but conjecture. This charge is eminently true concerning the age which they are pleased to assign to those Greek MSS. which they recommend to us as most venerable: the Vatican, the Alexandrine, and now the Sinai. It is expressly admitted that neither of these has an extant history. No documentary external evidence exists as to the names of the copyists who transcribed them, the date, or the place of their writing. Nobody knows whence the Vatican MS. came to the Pope's library, or how long it has been there. Nobody ventures to affirm, whether Cyril Lucaris brought the so-called Alexandrine MS. to London from Alexandria, or from the monasteries of Mt. Athos. Tischendorf himself was unable to trace the presence of his favorite *codex*, in the monastery of

St. Catharine on Mt. Horeb, by external witnesses higher than the 12th century. Their early date is confessedly assigned them by conjecture (*conjectura*: a casting together) of internal marks. It may be rightly assigned; yet, by conjecture. Why, then, may not the antiquity of some single readings be correctly assigned by similar evidence?

We shall next attempt to show that several of the critical canons retained by our recent editors, are, in their application, of a conjectural nature; and unsafe conjecture at that. Let the reader take first, that rule which is in full force from Bengel to Tischendorf: "*Scriptioni proclivi præstat ardua.*" Is not the "difficulty" or "facility" of the reading an internal mark? But we demur to the justice of the rule, as a general one. It is grounded on the supposition, that a copyist is far more likely to take the liberty of changing a phrase, in order to make it easier, or more intelligible, or more euphonious, or more credible, than to change it into something more difficult, or harsh, or unpopular. But we reply: Is it at all certain that the majority of copyists were competent to judge what reading would be more grammatical, more easy, more credible? Is it certain that if they did exercise a license of changing the readings for the purpose of gaining these advantages, their standard of taste and judgment was identical with that of these European gentlemen of the 19th century? We have but to remember who and what were the probable copyists of our oldest *codices*; that the most of them were drowsy and ignorant monks, or the merest mechanical drudges; just as in classic MSS., we know the most of this work was done by slaves; that the process of transcription was, while intended to be servilely faithful, most unintelligent and humdrum; that a copyist, who supposed himself more intelligent, and more capable of useful emendation, was very likely to choose precisely that reading as most consonant to his ideas of propriety which seems to our modern notions most a solecism; and we must admit that it is extremely likely, the very readings which our critics prefer, because they think them too difficult to be introduced as emendations, were thus introduced because they were supposed to be easier; and that the very readings which

they suppose to be easy, and therefore suspicious, would have struck those copyists, from their point of view, as very great solecisms. For, the least acquaintance with the loose grammar, the superstitious exegesis, the strange prescriptive notions, of the Christians of the 4th and 5th centuries, now exploded, will convince a fair mind how much more probable our hypothesis is than the other. Doubtless, where our modern critics find a reading so difficult or ungrammatical that they conclude it never could have gotten into the text had not the original author put it there, the more natural solution is this: if the *codices* show any ground to suspect a various reading, it was the difficult one which arose from the mere mechanical inattention of the copyist, or from his ignorance of the idiom of his own language, or from the prompting of some queer theory of his day, which is now exploded and forgotten. Surely a mere hypothesis, when so fairly counterpoised by another, cannot be accepted as a general rule of internal evidence.

A second critical canon much employed, is this: Where any ground exists for suspecting a various reading in any passage which has a parallel in another gospel, that reading shall be condemned as spurious which would harmonise the two parallel places most; and that reading shall be held the original one which most tends to make them contradict each other. The argument for this astonishing canon is, that, since the change was made by somebody, in one way or the other, it is presumable it was made by the over-zeal of the copyists, in order to hide the supposed evidence of contradiction between two inspired men. Again we ask: How much evidence have we that these copyists were either over-zealous or knavish? Do we know that the pair of sleepy monks who were droning over a given place in Mark, knew anything, or remembered anything, or cared anything, at the time, for the parallel place in Matthew? But the chief objection to this canon, is, that like some others which evangelical critics have adopted from the mint of infidel Rationalism, its sole probability is grounded in the assumption that the evangelists and apostles were not guided by inspiration. Let us adopt the Christian hypothesis, that the scenes of our Saviour's

life were enacted, and his words spoken, in a given way, and that the several evangelists were inspired of God to record them infallibly; and the most harmonising readings will obviously appear to us the most probable readings.

We next consider that method of "comparative criticism" stated on our 197th page, in which Tregelles confides so much. A given MS. is characterised, in the main, by a given school of variations from the received text. We consult an ancient father, who, we have reason to believe, quotes his Greek or Latin Testament literally—say Irenæus. We find that, in perhaps a score of places or more, his quotations from Scripture are *verbatim*, according to the various readings in the old MS. in hand. This authorises him, Tregelles thinks, to conclude that this MS. corresponded *verbatim* throughout, with the very Testament which lay on the study-table of old Irenæus, (at the beginning of the 3rd century); that we have in it an exact representation of the text which that father used as the authentic one. Now, a moment's reflection will convince the reader, that unless we believe that the existing MSS. at that date were very strictly conformed to some distinct "*recensions*," or families, the inference is worthless. For else, it is not safe to conclude on the old premise of "*ex pede Herculem*;" it is not safe to assume that the occurrence of a few of the same readings in Irenæus' Testament proves that it contained the whole list of the thousands of peculiar readings contained in the old MS. before us. Let us explain by a supposed case: Let it be supposed, that among editions of Shakspeare printed in the 19th century, there were clearly observable two *schools* of typographical errors, counting some thousands; that the literary *quidnuncs* had ascertained that this curious fact arose thus, viz., that in the 17th century there existed two (and only two current) printed editions of Shakspeare, and these two sets of typographical errors existed in the two old editions, respectively, distinguishing them from each other; and that all the very numerous recent editions, whether printed by a Murray, a Harper, or a Putnam, were but faithful reprints of the one or the other of the two old editions. All that is very intelligible. Now let us suppose further, that in

turning over the poet Waller, we found, in some twenty or fifty cases, that his citations from Shakspeare regularly contained the typographical errors (if errors they were) found at the places cited, in the one school of our printed editions. Then we might very safely conclude, that the copy of Shakspeare which Waller used was *of that old edition* of which this school is the progeny. This seems to be precisely Tregelles' inference. And one might possibly go further, and assume that possibly the poet Waller believed the copy of Shakspeare he used the more authentic of the two editions current in his day. But now, to illustrate the fatal vice of Tregelles' argument, let us suppose that he himself denied the whole explanation of the two schools of modern editions; that he disbelieved the whole theory of a family relationship between the two schools, and two current old editions distinguished from each other in the 17th century; it is exceedingly plain that he has uprooted the basis of his own argument. Now this is just what Tregelles and his friends do: they discard the whole theory of distinct ancient "*recensions*," whether distributed into two or three; they recognise no distinguishing character by which the MSS. and versions are classed in families, save the old and the new. The old, they believe to be correct; and the new, incorrect. If this is true, then obviously their "comparative criticism" is baseless. It may be correctly inferred that the Greek Testament which lay on Irenæus study-table corresponded in its readings with the various readings of the old MS. we are examining, in twenty or fifty cases; and yet it may be just as likely as not, that these were all the peculiar readings that corresponded, and that this amount of correspondence was accidental.

Let us now look a little more closely at the fundamental maxim of our recent critics—that the oldest are most trustworthy, and the more recent comparatively worthless. In their eyes the testimony of one MS. of the fourth century is worth more than that of a whole family of agreeing MSS. of the ninth century, though counted by the hundred. The reason assigned for this maxim is popular and plausible—that the older must of course be more accurate, because separated by fewest transcriptions

from the original autographs of the inspired men. Let us search and see whether this is so clear. First: It might very well be that a copy transcribed in the ninth century might be separated by fewer transcriptions from the original inspired autographs than another copy written in the fourth century. How? Thus: that this copyist of the ninth century may have copied direct from an old copy of the second century, separated by only two removes from the autograph left by St. John at Ephesus; whereas the fourth century copyist may have borrowed for transcription the MS. of a friend written a few months before from a MS. of the latter part of the third century, which, in turn, was copied from a MS. of the middle of that century, which, in turn, was copied from one of the beginning of that century, which again was separated by three or four transcriptions from the old second century MS. so nearly related to St. John's. Dr. Tischendorf claims that he has effected the exact parallel of what we have supposed. He has published in A. D. 1862 a *fac simile* edition of the Sinai *codex*. Let it be supposed that we have in our library a copy of Robert Stephens' great edition of the (despised) *κοινή έκδοσις*, of the year 1550 A. D. We, proceeding upon the argument of Tischendorf and the recent critics, that the oldest are nearest the autographs, claim that the Folio of Stephens is as much more correct than the Imperial folio of Tischendorf, as A. D. 1550 is earlier than A. D. 1862. From this Dr. Tischendorf would demur energetically. But on what grounds? He would claim that although his edition is three hundred years later, it is separated from the apostles by far fewer transcriptions. He would affirm that his St. Petersburg Folio is a *fac simile* of the Sinai MS.; that this is of the fourth century; that it is most probably one of the veritable fifty of Eusebius Cæsariensis, transcribed by order of the Emperor Constantine; that the copy which was immediate parent to that was most probably of Origen's editing; and that this was separated by very few transcriptions from the apostles. Whereas he objects, Stephens's folio, though printed in 1550, was copied from the Erasmian and Aldine editions, but a little older than itself; they in turn from recent MSS.; and these separated by many transcriptions from the

apostles. Just so, we reply, *the date is worth but little*, to determine the number of removes at which a given copy is related to the apostolic autographs.

Second. If the maxim were true that the most ancient *codices* are the most trustworthy, then the most ancient ought to differ least *inter se*. As we approach so nearly to the common fountain-head, the streams ought to approach more and to unity. Is this so? Now, according to the showing of the critics themselves, the case seems to be thus: that the three oldest *codices*, the Sinaitic, Vatican, and Alexandrine, have what we shall find to be a very significant (not to say suspicious) resemblance, in their common omission of *a few* readings, to which a peculiar interest attaches. But in other respects they do not seem to approximate identity. Tischendorf has himself given us a very striking proof of this in his Tauchnitz edition of the authorised English version. He has given us there, at the bottom of the page, a great many various readings, *as between his three favorites*, and not merely as between them on the one side and the received text on the other. It is only necessary to run the eye over these foot notes, to see that while the variations from the received text are very numerous, the instances in which the Sinaitic, Vatican, and Alexandrine MSS. agree among themselves are comparatively rare. The disagreements of the three (among themselves) which are of sufficient magnitude to be represented in the English language, are, upon an approximate estimate, not less than five thousand; and this, of course, excludes the minuter variations of spelling and arrangement, which disappear in translation. This is a larger number of various readings than Augustus Hahn has collected, as worthy of notice, from all the critical labors of Griesbach's, Knapp's, Scholz's, and Lachmann's New Testaments. Thus it appears that the plan of our critics, when executed by their own hands, seems to yield very poor results. The three "faithful witnesses" harmonise less with each other than the digests made from the diversified testimony of the despised!

Third. The oldest existing MS. is not claimed to possess an antiquity earlier than the fourth century. The interval between

that date and the apostles is abundantly wide to make corruptions of the text in that oldest MS. both by accident and design, both possible and probable. That is to say, no MS. is ancient enough to lead us above the first source of the stream of errors. Now then, what is the state of the facts? On one side there are a very few MSS. for which very great age is claimed; on the other side (the Byzantine or Constantinopolitan), there is a numerous family of MSS., of which nearly seven hundred have been collated in whole or in part, which have a great uniformity in their readings, but they are admitted to be, mostly, subsequent to the ninth century. The few for which extreme antiquity is claimed do not, in fact, agree closely, but they do agree in a small number of very significant differences (chiefly omissions), by which they are very distinctly characterised as against the Constantinopolitan school of MSS. Now shall these few, which are claimed to be old, discredit the many more recent? We reply, No. And in addition to the reasons disclosed already we urge this: This Constantinopolitan family must have had a parentage from some MS. older than themselves. Although this their ancient parent is now lost, yet their existence proves that it once existed and had the features which they now possess in common. So that the actual (former) existence and character of that original is as perfectly demonstrated to the reason as the existence and character of the Sinaitic MS. is to the senses. Now whence that original? From authentic or from corrupt sources? It is no reasoning to say, on grounds of conjecture, that it was from a corrupt source; for it is equally possible to conjecture that the Sinai or the Vatican MS. arose out of corrupt sources. Has it not been shown that the fourth century is not early enough to ascend above the sources of possible corruptions? If then we and our rivals proceed to reasons, in order to substantiate our conjectures, we urge that one *codex* is much more liable to corruption than a whole family. One dishonest hand is enough to do the former; there must be a concert of many to do the latter. The one was a *codex* made and preserved for private uses, the others were for public church uses. There were therefore a thousand jealous guardians, bishops, clergy, intelligent

laymen, to watch against the corruption of the many; but there was only one mind, or at most a few, interested in the purity of the single *codex*.

And this leads us to consider, fourth, the critical value of scripture MSS. made for liturgical purposes, as compared with those made for scholastic private use. The Constantinopolitan family of existing MSS. evidently belong to the former sort; because this appears from their general conformity with existing lectionaries, from their so often containing the calendar of the Greek Church, and from their careful and ornamental execution. But the few old MSS. of the greatest supposed antiquity, were not made for liturgical use, but for scholastic and private preservation. Now our modern critics admit, yea, claim, both these facts, and assert that the liturgical MSS. are least to be relied upon. We ask, why? Is not this conclusion exactly against common sense? Are not our pulpit bibles now most carefully printed of all? Does not church history teach us, that both the pride and the principle of the bishops and other clergy led them to use great care in the accuracy of their church MSS., and especially under the patriarchate of Constantinople? But, say our opponents, the liturgical use of a MS. would compel it to be conformed, at all hazards, to the *κοινή έκδοσις*, because the ear of the people accustomed to this would require such agreement. We reply: very well; and was not that very necessity wholly favorable to the perpetuation of accuracy? To deny it, is to assume that the *κοινή έκδοσις* was at first inaccurate. Such indeed is the vicious circle in which the argument of these critics moves. The amount of it is: the Constantinopolitan family of existing MSS. must be very corrupt, because they agree with the *κοινή έκδοσις*; and the *κοινή έκδοσις* must be very faulty, because it agrees with them! But now grant, (what is not an assumption, but history,) that the church teachers were at first very scrupulous, especially in that part of Christendom, to give their churches a correct Bible, and that thus there was at first a received text which was correct; then the necessity of conforming the new liturgical copies to the established habitudes of the people was a safeguard for accuracy, not a source of corruption. In this

connexion let us notice the reproach, that no old MS. of the Constantinopolitan family survives, to warrant the fidelity of its progeny. The probable reason is, that those *codices* were worn out by the popular use for which they were designed; or being in weekly use in the churches, fell victims to the persecuting fury of Diocletian and his successors, more easily than the scholastic copies hidden away in the monasteries and hermitages.

Fifth. Everything in the historical position of those churches, which afterwards formed the patriarchate of Constantinople, marks them as the most likely places in which to look for correct copies of the New Testament. There was the native home of the Greek language, with the truest Grecian culture. To them nearly all the New Testament was at first addressed. There were the churches for whose use Luke (with St. Paul's guidance) and Mark (with Peter's guidance) and John the beloved apostle, prepared three out of the four Gospels. It was at *Ephesus* that the Apostle John, in his last days, recognised and codified the four Gospels, including Matthew's. There chiefly labored nearly all the apostles who have wielded the pen of inspiration. To those churches, or among them, nearly all the Epistles were written: the Romans, and John 1st, 2d, and 3d, *among them*; the Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Philemon, Timothy, and Titus, *to them*. There was the canon closed, by the Apocalypse of John, first published in the home of his old age, Ephesus. In a word, the soil of the Greek Church is the native birthplace of the New Testament canon. Facts are also much obscured by representing Alexandria as the metropolis of Greek learning after the Christian era, and directing us to look thither for the most intelligent and earliest sources of Christian Greek. Alexandria was, in those ages, a large, an assuming, a bristling, a heterogeneous commercial city. But it is very erroneous to represent it as the acknowledged queen of the Greek civilisation. Antioch was still its equal. Iconium was for Asia Minor a far more influential centre. Ephesus was still the queen of the Ægean. And, above all, the old ascendancy of Athens, with her younger rival, Corinth, was still supreme, even down to the days of Constan-

tine ; and, beside her acknowledged classic culture, the pretensions of Alexandria were but semi-barbaric. It is not a historical fact, that Greek Christianity drew its knowledge prevalently from Alexandria.

The last great persecution seems to have raged equally over the whole eastern empire ; and, if we may credit the Christian writers, was everywhere attended with a great destruction of the sacred books. But those writers tell us also of the many pious expedients by which the faithful preserved a part of them. It is reasonable to think that as large a portion of them were saved by the numerous churches of Asia Minor, and Greece, as elsewhere ; and that, when the days of peace returned, these were again multiplied, with the pristine care and accuracy for the supply of the churches. But in the 7th and 8th centuries, a great historic change occurred, which established a grand difference in favor of the Constantinopolitan churches—the Saracen conquests. Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Africa, were then utterly subdued by the Moslems ; and in these countries Christianity was everywhere suppressed and almost exterminated. But, until the middle of the 15th century, Constantinople still stood, sorely pressed indeed by the Moslems, but still independent ; a Christian Greek kingdom, retaining the ecclesiastical literature, the language, and the church usages of the 3rd and 4th centuries, with a singular and stereotyped tenacity. Then came the final overthrow and dispersion of 1453. The Greek scholars and ecclesiastics who then filled Europe with the news of their calamity, became the channels for transmitting to all the west the precious remains of early Christianity ; and Providence prepared the Church with the new art of printing to preserve and diffuse them. It was thus that the Constantinopolitan MSS., the representatives of the *κοινὴ ἐκδοσις* of former ages, became the parents of our received text.

We have hitherto seemed to admit the full claims of the Sinaitic, Vatican, and Alexandrine MSS., to a great antiquity. But let us now advert to the grounds on which the experts rest those claims ; we shall find them, according to their own showing, far from conclusive. As we remarked, none of these *codices* have

an authentic external history; their antiquity is inferred wholly from internal marks. Those marks are so nearly common to them all, that we may, with sufficient correctness, take that statement of them made by Tischendorf for his Sinai MS. in his *Prolegomena* to the imperial edition, as an example of all.

The monastery of St. Catharine on Mt. Horeb, is supposed to have been founded by the Emperor Justinian, A. D. 530; and Tischendorf would fain persuade himself that this venerable MS. was a part of the endowment originally bestowed upon it by its royal founder; and that it was one of the fifty MSS. provided by Eusebius of Cæsarea for the Emperor Constantine. There is no external mark of its age save that it was there, and was handled by some of the monks in the 12th century. Its internal marks of age are the following: It is written, not only in uncial Greek characters, but in that species of uncials found in the Vatican MS., and in some classical MSS. on *papyrus* found in Herculaneum. It has scarcely any marks of punctuation. It has four columns on each page, (the largest folios next to it, having but three,) and Tischendorf thinks, with Hug, that this marks such MSS. as belonging to the age when the old rolled parchments were just going out of fashion; because it is supposed the copyists who were adopting the new fashion would seek to propitiate the reader's eye, by making as many columns as possible present themselves *ad aperturam* on the two faces of the two contiguous leaves. It resembles the oldest biblical MSS. in their antiquated spelling, inflection of words, and order of several books. It has the Ammonian chapters, and the Eusebian canons; yet it is conceded they may have been added by another hand than the copyist's. It contains the *Epistle of Barnabas* (so called), and the *Pastor Hermæ*, from which it is inferred that the copyist regarded these two spurious pieces as belonging to the canon of Scripture. Now it is supposed that their claim to that place was exploded before the end of the 4th century, because the Council of Laodicea in A. D. 364, and Carthage in 297, condemned them as spurious. Yet Eusebius expressly places these pieces, with the "Acts of Paul," among the ἀπὸ ἀποστόλων: a sufficiently clear proof, one would think, in

this copy was not one of his fifty. Tischendorf thinks that, inasmuch as the two pieces were not *universally* rejected, the politic Eusebius would be more likely to retain them, than to make the *general* suspicion of them a ground for their exclusion. Another sign of antiquity for the Sinai MS. is, that the numerous marginal corrections, which are supposed to be later than the writing itself, are also in uncials. Last, its omissions (such as those in Mark xvi. 8 to end; Matt. xiii. 35,) are such as to associate it with the Vatican, and the very oldest fragments. Such is the editor's argument.

These marks we cannot but regard as very far short of a demonstration that the MS. was the work of either the 4th or 5th century. We have no disposition to contest its possession of an equal antiquity to that of the Vatican and Alexandrine MSS. But one obvious remark is, that several of these arguments depend wholly upon the assumed antiquity of the latter; whereas the evidences of their age are not different from these. Such arguing amounts to no more than this—that the Sinaitic MS. is as old as the Vatican; and how old is the Vatican? Why, as old as the Sinaitic. Second—all the internal marks of great antiquity, as the character in which it is written, the spelling, the inflections, the arrangement, are made invalid by this consideration: that so many reasons existed to prompt the copyist to retain those peculiarities from the older copy before him. A temper of monkish conservatism, superstitious veneration for the forms of the past, the wish to perpetuate a pious fraud, or incompetency to change the antiquated features intelligently, may have caused, and doubtless often did cause, copyists after copyists still to reproduce these peculiarities, even ages after they had become generally antiquated. Let it be remembered, on the last point, that multitudes of *codices* were transcribed in the monasteries by men whose grammatical knowledge was wholly insufficient to construe what they were writing. They employed the hours of a superfluous leisure, which had no value, in imitating mechanically, letter by letter, the copy before them, much as a Chinaman paints the name of his English customer on a sign-board, while he knows not a letter of the English alphabet. It is

obvious that such transcribers could not venture to change anything intentionally, (however liable to change many things unconsciously;) they could not change uncials into cursive letters, or old inflections into contemporary ones; they must imitate precisely what was before them, or else not copy at all.

Moreover, in the third place, it is exceedingly erroneous to suppose that the uncial and the cursive writing succeeded each other at a given date; they were contemporary for centuries. The cursives are known to have been in use as early as Trajan, and the uncials are known to have remained in use until the 8th century. The one set of characters were used for certain species of writing; the other for more serious kinds. A maker of grave-stones in our day carves the inscription on his marble in uncials, and then goes to his ledger and enters his bill in cursives, for the cost of the carving. It would be very unsafe reasoning, which should afterwards conclude that the marble must have been inscribed many ages after the ledger. To the practical mind it will appear very obvious (however provoking to the romantic temper of the antiquary) that the transcription of copies in large uncials may be accounted for by the very prosaic fact, that *spectacles were not yet invented*. The only expedient for assisting the failing eyesight of the aged, was to enlarge the size of the letters.

Fourth. The presence of the two apocryphal pieces is very far from a demonstration that the whole writing was older than the councils of Laodicea and Carthage. When the piety of the monkish ages inscribed works of human, but revered, origin on the same parchment with its bibles, this was very far from showing that it assigned it a formal place in the canon. How obvious is this, when we remember that the Anglican Church, in imitation of the patristic ages, is doing the very thing now! She prints and binds up into the same volume the Apocrypha and the Scriptures, while she declares that the former are not canonical. Again, Tischendorf places the Alexandrine MS. only in the 5th century; but it contains the Epistle of Clement. Again, Eusebius places the Acts of Paul, the Epistle of Barnabas, and the Pastor of Hermas, not among the *ἀντιλεγόμενα*, as Tischendorf sup-

poses; but among the *N⁶⁰ai*. (See his Ecclesiastical History, B. III., Ch. 25). Let the reader accept this as one among several proofs, that the affectation of superior accuracy of research over those grand and honest old English scholars, whose critical opinions they would supersede, has but little ground. Once more—Athanasius gave (A. D. 315) a list of the New Testament books esteemed genuine, which agrees exactly with ours in omitting these spurious pieces. And the earlier fathers, up to Irenæus and Tertullian, while not giving, like Eusebius, professed lists of the canon, yet quote just the same books as genuine as now compose our New Testament. We have then the lists of Caius the Presbyter, A. D. 200, and of Origen, as preserved in the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius, B. VI., ch. 25. These also exclude the two pieces from among the genuine. Now then, if Tischendorf's inference were valid, the presence of this spurious Epistle of Barnabas, and of the Pastor of Hermas, in his Sinai MS., must elevate its antiquity, not to the 4th century, but to the 2d century. The argument is therefore worthless. This feature of his MS. on the contrary, in the eyes of every sober critic, must depreciate its value, and make it probable that it was the work of monkish superstition, rather than of sound biblical scholarship, and the production of a place and an age which give but a feeble guarantee of honesty or accuracy.

This inquiry into the credit of these so-called oldest *codices* is preliminary to another, which is of more practical interest to the Christian. While the various readings are, as we have seen, almost numberless, there are but a few which implicate in any degree, any fact, usage, or doctrine of our religion. The singular thing is, that the modern critics claim the three *codices* on almost every one of these important variations, as against the received text. The following list of them is not presented as complete, but as containing the most notable of these points.

As affecting facts and usages, the Sinai and the Vatican MSS. concur in omitting, in Matt. vi. 13, the closing doxology of our Lord's prayer. In John viii. 1 to 11, they and the Alexandrine omit the whole narrative of Christ's interview with the woman taken in adultery, and her accusers. The first two also omit the

whole of Mark xvi., from the 9th verse to the end. Acts viii. 37, is omitted by all three, in which Philip is represented as propounding to the eunuch faith as the qualification for baptism.

As affecting doctrine, the only omissions of practical importance are the following, in which there is also a general agreement between the (supposed) old *codices*. In Acts ix. 5 and 6, the received text reads, that Paul, when struck to the earth by the light from heaven, said, "Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, arise," etc. Now the Sinai, Vatican, and Alexandrine MSS. all concur in making such omissions, as to leave the passage thus: "I am Jesus (of Naz. Alexandrine) whom thou persecutest; but arise, and go into," etc.

In Acts xx. 28, the received text makes St. Paul say to the Ephesine elders: "to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." The Alexandrine *codex* here makes him say: "to feed the Church of the Lord, which he hath purchased with his own blood;" and so read the *Codices Ephræmi and Beza*.

In 1 Tim. iii. 16, the received text represents St. Paul as saying: "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh," etc. The Vatican here supports the received text; but the Sinai, the *Codex Ephræmi*, and probably the Alexandrine read: "Great is the mystery of godliness, who was manifest in the flesh," etc. It is true that the editors say the reading of the Alexandrine MS. is here uncertain. Certain pen marks have been either changed or rewritten (it cannot be ascertained which) by a later hand, which, if genuine, would make it read, with the received text, θεός, instead of ὁς.

In 1 John v. 7, the received text represents St. John as saying: "There are three that bear record in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." All the old MSS. concur in omitting the heavenly witnesses; so that it shall read: "For there are three that bear

record: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one."

In Jude 4, the received text represents the heresiarchs whom Jude rebukes, as "denying the only Master, the God and Lord of us, Jesus Christ." (*καὶ τὸν μόνον δεσπότην Θεὸν καὶ Κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἀρνούμενοι.* The authorised English version mistranslates.) The MSS. omit *Θεόν*.

In Rev. i. 11, the received text represents the glorified Messiah as declaring to John in Patmos, "Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last; and what thou seest write in a book," etc. All the three MSS. under remark, concur in omitting the Messiah's eternal titles, so as to read thus: "heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet, saying, What thou seest write," etc.

If now the reader will glance back upon this latter list of variations, he will find that in every case, the doctrinal effect of the departure from the received text is to obscure or suppress some testimony for the divinity of the Saviour. In the first, Acts ix. 5, 6, the received text teaches us that Saul's resistance to the cause of Jesus was an impracticable resistance to divine monitions. This the so-called older MSS. suppress. In Acts xx. 28, if the Church which is bought with blood, is *God's*, and bought with "*his own blood*," then Christ, who confessedly bought it, is very God. This striking proof is adroitly suppressed by the suppression or change of a word. In 1 Tim. iii. 16, the only God ever manifest in the flesh, is obviously our Lord Jesus Christ. If then the received text stands, He is categorically called God. Here again, the adroit change of a letter, and a dash of the pen, expunges the testimony, by reading *ὅς* for *θεός*; "who," for "God." In 1 John v. 7, 8, the received text presents us two sets, or triads, of witnesses, one in heaven, the other on earth, and asserts the unity of the first triad in one. All this is omitted, and thus all reference to a trinity is obliterated. In Jude, verse 4th, a correct rendering of the received text calls our Lord Jesus Christ the only Master and God, thus asserting his proper divinity in exclusive terms. The MSS. by leaving out the word God, greatly weaken, though,

even then, they do not destroy this testimony for Christ's divinity. And last, in Rev. i. 11, they all concur in omitting those assertions of divine eternity which the received text ascribes to the Messiah, which in the 8th verse are ascribed to "the Almighty."

Now it should be remarked, that were all these readings of the received text expunged as spurious, many other clear testimonies for Christ's divinity would remain unquestioned by any critical authority, and abundantly sufficient to establish the doctrine on an impregnable basis. But the significant fact, to which we wish especially to call attention is this: that all the variations proposed on the faith of these MSS. which have any doctrinal importance, *should attack the one doctrine of the Trinity; nay, we may say even more specifically, the one doctrine of Christ's deity.* The various readings taken from the various MSS. and versions are counted by the hundred thousands; but the vast majority of them are utterly insignificant; and among the few which remain, after deducting these, all which bear on doctrine bear on one doctrine; and that, a doctrine which was keenly debated just before the times when, it is claimed, these three old *codices* were copied. Their admirers claim for them an origin in the 4th or 5th century. The Sabellian and Arian controversies raged in the 3rd and 4th. Is there no coincidence here? Things do not happen again and again regularly, without a cause! Why is it that some other doctrines of Christianity do not happen to be assailed by these variations, if indeed their occurrence is fortuitous? The curious coincidence, we repeat, that only one vital doctrine should be touched in any of its supposed testimonies, by all the myriads of variations, almost irresistibly impels the mind to the conclusion, that not the chance errors of transcribers, but some deliberate hand has been at work in these instances. And when we remember the date of the great Trinitarian contests, and compare it with the supposed date of these exemplars of the sacred text, the ground of suspicion becomes violent. Now did the party of Athanasius introduce spurious testimonies into the sacred text in support of the ὑποστάσιον; or did the party of Arius expunge

authentic testimonies from the sacred text, in order to obscure that doctrine? The question seems to lie most probably between these limits. It may never admit of solution; but a moment's reflection will convince the reader that the credit and value of these so-called oldest *codices* are complicated with that question. This stands out as one of their most prominent characteristics, viz., that they agree with each other in omitting these striking testimonies to the divinity of Christ: and that they also agree, in the main, in all the other extensive omissions, implicating matters of gospel fact and practice. Now, without deciding whether the Athanasians or the Arians were in fact the corrupters, we must decide that the three ancient *codices* represent the views of persons who regarded the Athanasians as in these passages the corrupters. If this latter charge can be proved, then the credit of the three old *codices* is thereby greatly strengthened; if the opposite charge can be established (that the Arian party sought fraudulently to expunge these valuable testimonies against them) then the credit of the three old *codices*, as against the rival *κοινή* ἔκδοσις, is weakened.

Can any evidence be found in our day substantiating the one charge and refuting the other? It appears to an impartial view that such evidence must be, if it exists at all, of the following kinds: First, the MS. and internal evidence for or against the genuineness of the first class of passages omitted, namely, the historical, such as Mark xvi. 9 to end; Jno. viii. 1-11. It is true that the Arian strife is not implicated in these places, but their extent and historical importance is so marked that if their genuineness be demonstrated, then their absence from the three old *codices* characterises them very strongly as mutilated copies. For it is no slight thing for copies obviously professing so much completeness to omit whole blocks of ten or twelve verses, containing substantive and important incidents in our Saviour's life and teachings. But if the character of mutilated copies is fixed on them, then the reader is prepared, by probable evidence, to suspect them of error in the other, the very marked doctrinal omissions. Second, the evidence in the case must consist of the MS. and internal evidences against or for the readings which sustain the

divinity of Christ. If these readings can be sustained on critical grounds purely, to that extent the three old *codices* are convicted of complicity with Arian mutilations of the genuine text. And third, the question may be decided in part by external testimony and inference as to the existence and the justice of such charges against the Athanasians of interpolating, or against the Arians of expunging, readings favorable or adverse to their distinctive dogmas. For, in fine, we return to the proposition with which we set out, that the existing variations in these doctrinal readings raise a violent probability of the fact that *somebody's hands* have been at work on the ancient text, with malice prepense, to do the one or the other thing.

Under the first head it is not our purpose to oppress our readers with a long detail of the suffrages of MSS. versions, and editors, for or against the first class of passages. We shall satisfy ourselves with presenting the probability which appears from the conclusions of the modern critics, including the "votaries" of the "old codices." All of them, then, are against the genuineness of the doxology in Matt. vi. 13. All of them except Lachmann are in favor of the genuineness of Mark xvi. 9 to end. Even that most unsparing amputator of the received text, Tregelles, dares not insert his knife here. When we come to John viii. 1-11, we find Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles against its genuineness, but all the others admit it, as does Bishop Ellicot, substantially. Against the genuineness of Acts viii. 37 they all concur. We thus see that these critics are compelled themselves to admit the genuineness of a large part of these omissions against the authority of the old *codices*. Whatever of probability this carries, is therefore rather against their credit than in favor of it.

When we come to the second class of evidences, that from the MSS. and internal proofs for or against the doctrinal various readings, we find a very similar showing of the critics, save as to the most explicit one of all, 1 Jno. v. 7. This all concur in condemning. As to the rest, they differ more or less, while the majority of them admit such a show of ancient and of internal authority for them as would satisfy most minds, even from their

point of view, that they have a fair claim to stand as authentic. Dismissing them with this remark, we proceed to consider 1 John v. 7 a little more in detail. This reading Tregelles considers so obviously spurious that he disdains to discuss it. All the critics vote against it. But let us see whether the case is as clear as they would have it. When we raise this inquiry, let it be understood that we do not undertake the hopeless task of satisfying the biblical critics of its certain genuineness. Our object is to keep it an open question, and to preserve that amount of probability which appears fairly to attach to the common reading. The reader will then, by a plain *a fortiori* argument, conclude as to the other doctrinal readings, which these scholars attack with so much less confidence, that the probabilities are altogether in their favor. The often contested text in 1 John v. 7 also furnishes us a good instance of the value of that internal evidence which the recent critics profess to discard.

The critics all agree in excising from the common reading, the words which we include within parenthesis. "Ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες [ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὁ Πατήρ, ὁ Λόγος, καὶ τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα· καὶ οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἐν εἰσι. Καὶ τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῇ γῆ,] τὸ Πνεῦμα, καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ τὸ αἷμα· καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἐν εἰσιν. The internal evidence against this excision then, is in the following strong points. First, if it be made, the masculine article, numeral, and participle, οἱ τρεῖς μαρτυροῦντες, are made to agree directly with three neuters; an insuperable, and very bald grammatical difficulty. But if the disputed words are allowed to stand, they agree directly with two masculines, and one neuter noun, ὁ Πατήρ, ὁ Λόγος, καὶ τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα; where, according to a well known rule of syntax, the masculines among the group control the gender over a neuter connected with them. Then the occurrence of the masculines τρεῖς μαρτυροῦντες in the 8th verse agreeing with the neuters, Πνεῦμα, ὕδωρ and αἷμα, may be accounted for by the power of attraction, so well known in Greek syntax, and by the fact, that the Πνεῦμα, the leading noun of this second group, and next to the adjectives, has just had a species of masculineness superinduced upon it by its previous position in the masculine group. Second, if the excision is made, the 8th verse coming next to

the 6th, gives us a very bald and awkward, and apparently meaningless repetition of the Spirit's witness, twice in immediate succession. Third, if the excision is made, then the proposition at the end of the 8th verse, *καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν*, contains an unintelligible reference. The insuperable awkwardness of this chasm in the meaning is obscured in the authorised English version; "and these three agree in one." Let a version be given, which shall do fair justice to the force of the definite article here, as established by the Greek idiom, and of the whole construction, thus: "and these three agree to that (aforesaid) One," the argument appears. What is that aforesaid unity, to which these three agree? If the 7th verse is excised, there is none: the *τὸ ἓν* so clearly designated by the definite article, as an object to which the reader has already been introduced, has no antecedent presence in the passage. Let the 7th verse stand, and all is clear: the three earthly witnesses testify to that aforementioned unity, which the Father, Word, and Spirit constitute.

But fourth, the internal evidence from the apostle's scope is, if possible, still more conclusive. He had just asserted (verse 1 to 6) the essential importance of *faith* as the instrumental bond of our spiritual life, and the only victory over the world. To exert such energy, faith must have a solid warrant. And the thing of which faith must be assured, is *the true sonship* and *proper divinity* of Christ. See emphatically verse 5, with verses 11, 12, 20. The only faith that quickens the soul, and overcomes the world, is the belief (verse 5) that Jesus is God's Son, that God has appointed him our Life, (compare John's Gospel v. 21 and 26), and that this Life is *true* or *veritable God*. Now, then, the apostle's scope is to answer this question: *On what warrant* shall our faith accept these wondrous propositions about Jesus? The 9th verse gives us the key-note of his answer: *On God's warrant*. This divine warrant (nothing less would answer) comes to us first, verse 6, in the words of the Holy Ghost speaking by his inspired men. (See John's Gospel xvi. 8, etc.) It comes to us, second, (verse 7,) in the words of the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, asserting and confirming by miracles, the sonship and unity of Jesus Christ with the

Father, (as in Matt. iii. 16, 17; John v. 37; Matt. xii. 28; John viii. 18; xv. 26; and such like places.) It comes to us, third, (verse 8), in the work of the Holy Ghost, applying the blood and water from Christ's pierced side for our cleansing, in accordance with ancient types and modern sacraments, which concur in the doctrine of Christ's divinity. It comes to us, fourth, (verse 10), in the spiritual consciousness of the believer himself, certifying to him that he feels within a divine change. How consistent, how accordant with St. John's modes of teaching, how harmonious is all this, if we accept the 7th verse as genuine? But, if we excise it, the very keystone of the arch of evidence is wanting; the crowning proof that the *warrant of our faith is DIVINE* (verse 9) is struck out.

The probability in favor of the reading which thus arises, is confirmed when we remember the circumstances in view of which the Apostle John undoubtedly wrote this passage. Authentic tradition teaches us that St. John spent his latest years at and near Ephesus. Internal marks evince what that tradition testifies, that this Epistle was written in those latter years, and for his own spiritual children in those regions. He tells them that the purpose of his writing was to warn them against seducers, (ii. 26,) whose heresy, long predicted, was now developed; and was characterised by a denial of the proper sonship (ii. 26) and incarnation (iv. 2) of Jesus Christ. Now we know that these heretics were Ebionites, and chiefly Cerinthians and Nicolaitanes. Irenæus, Epiphanius, and other fathers, tell us that they all vitiated the doctrine of the Trinity. Cerinthus taught that Jesus was not miraculously born of a virgin, and that the "Word" Christ was not truly and eternally divine, but a sort of angelic *Aion*, associated with the natural man Jesus up to his crucifixion. The sect of Nicolaitanes is most probably identified with the Gnostic Docetæ, who denied that the *Aion* Christ had a real body, ascribing to him only a seeming or phantasmal body and blood. It can scarcely be doubted that these are the errors against which St. John is here fortifying the faith of his "children." Then, the very point of the 7th verse in the disputed passage was obtruded upon the apostle's attention when

he was writing it. Is it not hard to believe that he should, under the circumstances, write anything but what the received text ascribes to him? If we let the seventh verse stand, then the whole passage is framed, with apostolic wisdom, to exclude at once both heresies. In verse 7th, he refutes the Cerinthian, declaring the unity of the Father, Word, and Spirit; and with the strictest accuracy, employing the *neuter*, *ἐν εἰσιν*, to fix the very point which Cerinthus denied, the unity of the three persons in one common substance. He then refutes the Nicolaitanes, declaring the proper humanity of Jesus, and the actual shedding and application of the Spirit, of that water and blood, of whose effusion he was himself eye-witness, and to which he testifies in his Gospel, so emphatically, in chapter xix. 34, 35. We agree here with Calvin, in regarding "the water and the blood" as not a direct reference to the sacraments of baptism and the supper; but to that blood and water which came from the Redeemer's side, of which our two sacraments are emblems. The shedding of that water and blood, witnessed by the apostle himself, evinced that Jesus was the true antitype to the Hebrew laver and altar, and to all the ritual of both, in all ages; that water and blood, applied by the Holy Ghost, cleansing believers from depravity and guilt, mark Christ as the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," the promised Jehovah-Christ, Emmanuel, of both dispensations. Now, when we hear the apostle tell his "children," in the chapter above cited from his own Epistle, that the two heresies, against whose seductions he designed by this writing to guard them, were these: the denial of Christ's sonship to God, and the denial of his incarnation; and when we see him in his closing testimony exclude precisely these two errors, there is a coherency in the whole, which presents a very strong internal evidence for the genuineness of the received text. It is, moreover, very interesting to notice the common circumstances connecting this with the two other great Trinitarian readings, which the old MSS. (so-called) concur in excluding, Acts xx. 28; 1 Tim. iii. 16. St. Paul uttered the discourse of Acts 20th to the elders of this same Ephesine Church, in which St. John almost certainly wrote this Epistle.

The former there forewarns the elders of the coming Cerinthians and Nicolaitanes, under the name of "grievous wolves." St. Paul wrote the First Epistle to Timothy when he placed him as evangelist in this same Ephesine Church; and he advertises him in it, of the presence of this "*Gnosis*." We are thus led to see how St. Paul and St. John make common cause against these hated errors. We see with what object they shaped their declarations, so as to leave the most distinct testimony on the disputed points. Paul takes occasion to say that the Church was ransomed with divine blood, and to tell Timothy that the very God was manifest in the flesh. John testifies that the Father, the Word, and the Spirit are one, and that the humanity was as real as the divinity.

But it is clearly admitted that for the genuineness of the 7th verse, there is very little authority from Greek MSS. It has, thus far, been found in only two of the many hundreds which have been collated—the Montfort MS. in the University Library of Dublin, which is supposed by some to be of little authority, because suspected of having been conformed to the Latin; and in the *Codex Wizanburgensis*, which Lachmann reckons of the 8th century. But a more faithful examination of the Montfort MS. shows that the suspicion of its being a modern forgery is certainly unfounded; and that, on the contrary, this *codex* so much spoken against has several peculiar marks of antiquity and interest, besides this disputed verse. The chief MS. authority which can be cited for it is that of the Latin versions. It is found in all the *codices* of these, with a few exceptions; and not only in those representing the Latin Vulgate, but those which preserve to us the *Vetus Itala*. So, likewise, the patristic authority for this reading is confined to Latin fathers; but among these, it is cited as genuine Scripture by several, among whom may be mentioned Tertullian and Cyprian, as both early and well-informed, and the Council of Carthage, and a multitude of others in the later ages. In a word, it seems that this reading, omitted almost unanimously by the Greek MSS., is asserted as genuine Scripture with almost equal unanimity by Latin Christendom; and that, from the earliest ages. In favor of this

testimony of the West are these considerations: That the *Vetus Italica* was confessedly translated from the Greek Scriptures at a very early age, certainly within a century from the death of the apostles; that in the great persecutions, the Western, and especially the African churches, (in which we find the earliest citations of the passage,) did not lose their sacred books to so great an extent as the Greek churches; that the ancient Latin churches were comparatively untainted with Arianism, the suspected source of corruptions; and that in the contests with the Arians, the Council of Carthage, as well as many other fathers, appeal with unquestioning confidence to this very verse as a decisive testimony against them.

This, then, seems to be the sum of the matter. As to 1 John v. 7, the Latin Church stands opposed to the Greek. As to the other various readings affecting the doctrine of Christ's divinity, the body of the Greek MSS. representing the *κοινή ἔκδοσις* stands, in the main, opposed to the three, so-called, oldest *codices*. These variations are too numerous, and too significant in their effect upon the one doctrine, to be ascribed to chance. We seem then to be reduced by a strong probability to the adoption of one of these conclusions: Either that the received readings are corrupt interpolations of the Trinitarians; or that the omissions of them were dishonest mutilations of the Arians, and other Anti-Trinitarians. Which of these conclusions shall we adopt? The answer seems to be in substance this: The date is so remote, and so many of the records of that age have perished, that no decisive settlement of the question is now possible; yet the probabilities strongly tend to fix the blame upon the Anti-Trinitarians.

In support of this conclusion, we remark, first, that there are strong probable grounds to conclude, that the text of the Scriptures current in the East received a mischievous modification at the hands of the famous *Origen*, which has not been usually appreciated. The learned reader needs only to be reminded of his transcendent reputation and influence as a critic and expositor, especially over Pamphilus, Eusebius Pamphili, and the monkish theologians of the 4th and 5th centuries. The chief

critical labor of Origen, which is usually mentioned, is his *Hexapla* of the Old Testament Scriptures. But it is known that he was an indefatigable collector of New Testament MSS., and a voluminous expositor; and that while no *edition* of the New Testament Scriptures is traced directly to his editorial labors, like the *Hexapla*, the readings which he adopted in his *scholia* and commentaries were, unquestionably, much followed by his admirers in transcribing the New Testament. In a word, Origen was, during the times of the Sabellian and Arian controversies, the *Magnus Apollo* of oriental biblical scholars; and his critical opinions were regarded by them as almost infallible. Now, what manner of man was Origen? He is described by Mosheim (in his *Com. de Rebus Christ.*, vol. 2, p. 144) as “a compound of contraries, wise and unwise, acute and stupid, judicious and injudicious; the enemy of superstition, and its patron; a strenuous defender of Christianity, and its corruptor; energetic and irresolute; one to whom the Bible owes much, *and from whom it has suffered much.*” While he gained, amidst the superstitious contemporaries who then gave character to Eastern Christianity, a splendid reputation for sanctity, as well as learning, his character was evidently dishonest and tricky, and his judgment most erratic. The disgraceful story that his condemnation by his bishop, Demetrius, and his flight from Alexandria, were caused by his apostasy to Paganism under the impulse of fear, is not only detailed by Epiphanius, the great enemy of Origenism, but by Cedremus and Suidas. As a controversialist, he was wholly unscrupulous. His reputation as the great introducer of mysticism, allegory, and Neo-Platonism into the Christian Church, is too well known to need recital. Those who are best acquainted with the history of Christian opinion know best, that Origen was the great corruptor, and the source, or at least earliest channel, of nearly all the speculative errors which plagued the Church in after ages. This general character, coupled with his influence as autocrat among the biblical critics, is enough to excite well-grounded suspicion.

But these suspicions are confirmed, when we examine the particular traits of his system. He was strictly a *Rationalist*. No

wonder that modern Rationalistic critics should manifest an instinctive sympathy with him, which gives weight to his critical testimony! He disbelieved the full inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures, holding that the inspired men apprehended and stated many things obscurely. His philosophy was that of Ammonius, who asserted a common religion in all the schemes of philosophy, *including the Bible*, which only needed the excision of the excrescences and misconceptions added by poets and priests, to make their universal harmony appear; and the key-note of all Origen's labors was the effort to reconcile Christianity and this eclectic Pagan philosophy into a substantial unity. He held, as his theory of exposition, that there are three senses of Scripture—the grammatical or literal, the spiritual, and the anagogical; that the first sense does not exist at all in many places, but only the second or third; that the attempt to impose a literal grammatical sense on those places would lead us to absolute falsehood and nonsense; and that the mere words are, accordingly, of no importance. His opinions on the Trinity veered between Sabellianism and Arianism. He expressly denied the consubstantial unity of the Persons, and the proper incarnation of the Godhead—the very propositions most clearly asserted in the doctrinal various readings we have under review. His theory was, that the objections of the philosophers, and of the Marcionites and Valentinians, to many supposed facts and dogmas which seem to be contained in the grammatical sense of the Bible, would be unanswerable if that sense is asserted; and that the only solution was to discard that sense, and advance allegorical meanings instead. Nolan charges that his method of citing the Scriptures is inconsistent and vacillating; that he often cites from heretical *codices* and readings; that he often proposes to correct the text of the New Testament by the supposed indications of the Septuagint, and even of heretical comments, upon the most reckless and licentious critical principles. "As he had labored to supersede the authorised version of the Old Testament, he contributed to weaken the authority of the received text of the New. In the course of his commentaries he cited the versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion,

on the former part of the canon; he appealed to the authority of Valentinus and Heracleon, on the latter. While he thus raised the credit of these revisals which had been made by the heretics, he detracted from the authority of that text which had been received by the orthodox. Some difficulties which he found himself unable to solve in the evangelists, he undertook to remove, by expressing his doubts of the integrity of the text. In some instances, he ventured to impeach the reading of the New Testament on the testimony of the Old, and to convict the copies of one Gospel on the evidence of another." (Nolan, pp. 432, 433.) Such are the charges which this learned writer finds on a laborious review of Origen's critical efforts. This acute critic also charges that a number of the most characteristic discrepancies between the Greek Vulgate or Constantinopolitan text, and the texts current from Origen's day in Palestine and Egypt, are distinctly traceable to a Marcionite or Valentinian source; and that Origen's was demonstrably the mediating hand for introducing those corruptions into the latter texts. See his work, pp. 470 to 509, where he traces the readings from the Apocryphal Gospels of those Gnostics, through Origen's comments. We especially commend to the admirers of the Oriental and Egyptian *codices* these concluding words of Nolan: "Through various channels those readings might have crept into the edition of Eusebius. The Scripture text of Tatian, which most probably conformed in many respects to the Gospel and Apostolicum of Marcion, the text of Ilesychius," (the Alexandrian,) "which was compiled from various apocryphal works, and the commentaries of Origen, which abounded in quotations drawn from heretical revisals of Scripture, opened a prolific source, whence they directly passed into the Palestine edition. The facilities of correcting this text from Origen's writings, and the blind reverence in which that ancient father was held in the school of Cæsarea, seem to have rendered the corruption of this text unavoidable; short annotations, or *scholia*, had been inserted by Origen in the margin of his copies of Scripture; and the number of these had been considerably augmented by Eusebius, most probably by extracts taken from Origen's commentaries.

A comparison between the text and comment constantly pointed out variations in the reading; and Origen's authority being definitive on subjects of sacred criticism, the inspired text was amended by the comments. Had we no other proof of this assertion than the feasibility of the matter, and the internal evidence of the Greek MSS., we might thence assume the truth of the fact, without much danger of erring. But this point is placed beyond conjecture by the most unquestionable documents. In some MSS. containing the Palestine text, it is recorded that they were transcribed from copies the originals of which had been 'corrected by Eusebius.' In the celebrated *Codex Marchalianus*, the whole process observed in correcting the text, is openly avowed. The reviser there candidly states that, 'having procured the explanatory tomes of Origen, he accurately investigated the sense in which he explained every word, as far as was possible, and corrected everything ambiguous according to his notion.' After this explicit acknowledgment, it seems unnecessary further to prolong this discussion."

Thus far "Nolan's Inquiry." Now it is worthy of notice that these Trinitarian proof-texts, which appear in the Greek and Latin Vulgate, but are wanting in the old *codices* of the Palestine and Egyptian, were aimed by the apostles who wrote them precisely against Ebionite and Gnostic heresies. How natural that when, through the ill-starred manipulation of Origen, the text was infected from those heretical sources, these very readings should disappear? There appears a strong probability then that "the learned Origen" is least of all entitled to that authority which the recent critics claim for him as a witness to the state of the genuine readings: but that, if the whole truth could be recovered, he would be found the original corrupter of the text. We would particularly invoke the reader's attention to these admitted facts. This overweening confidence in the literary autocrat of Cæsarea did not much extend to the Latin churches or to Byzantium and Greece. It chiefly affected the East. The Western churches were never infected with the Origenist controversies which convulsed the churches of the East during the fourth and fifth centuries. Again. The admiration

of Origen's learning and opinions was chiefly limited to the monasteries.' The fanatical monks generally swore by him almost as their God, because his self-emasculation, asceticism, mysticism, self-righteousness, and superstition, exactly favored monkery. The secular clergy usually condemned his sentiments and influence; and it was by a Byzantine council of such clergy that his name was finally fixed (where it belongs) in the list of *heretics*. Couple now with this the fact asserted by our recent critics in favor of their preferred *codices*, that they were obviously copied for monastic libraries, and not for liturgical use in churches. We conclude that there is so much the more probability they embody the Origenist corruptions. And the judgment which depreciates the liturgical *codices* as compared with the monastic will be reversed: we shall conclude that the Church MSS. were originally the truest. Once more. We shall be prepared to believe that the Western early version, where Origenism had then no currency, reflects the original purity of the text, even more truly than the Greek MSS. prevalent after Origen's day in Palestine and Egypt. The testimony of the old Italic in favor of 1 John v. 7 is therefore more weighty than at first appeared.

Let us descend now to the epoch of the Arian heresy, and we shall find in Eusebius of Cæsarea another probable source of mutilation of the original text. His also was a *clarum et venerabile nomen*, with the corrupt and fantastical religionism of the day. He was a blind admirer of Origen and constantly made tacit pretensions of being (through Pamphilus) the lineal successor to his fame and influence. He was in theology a semi-Arian; in church-politics, tricky and time-serving; to the pretentious tyrant, Constantine the Great, a truckling sycophant. Whatever proof exists that Origen and his school deteriorated the correctness of the text, it is to the same extent clear that Eusebius accepted and perpetuated that injury. His employment by the Emperor Constantine to edit fifty complete *codices* of the Scriptures, as detailed in his life of that prince, may be received as being as authentic as any part of the history. Theodoret (Eccles. Hist., Bk. I., Ch. 16,) professes to give the

very words of this command. The emperor does not assign the destruction of the sacred books in the last persecution, or any resulting scarcity as the cause of the want; but only the prosperity and rapid advancement of Christianity, requiring more ample appliances. This transaction, therefore, gives no support to the statement which some have insinuated, that the original *ἔκδοσις* current in the Greek regions had been obliterated by persecution. And it is certain that the recension which finally prevailed in the patriarchate of Constantinople (the *κοινὴ ἔκδοσις*;) is very far from being this Eusebian edition. Yet the reputation of the editor, and the force of royal favor must have given it some currency and some influence over the received text. Tischendorf, as we have seen, surmises that the Sinaitic *Codex* is one of these veritable Eusebian MSS. presented to the Monastery of St. Catharine by Justinian, the successor of Constantine. Now we are not left wholly in the dark as to the character of this edition. The "Eusebian Canons," as they are called, a species of table by which the parallel passages might be found in the four Gospels, have come down to us; and they disclose the fact that this father excluded Mark xvi. 9 to end, and John vii. 53 to viii. 11, from the text. For the canons contain a complete enumeration of all the chapters and sections, or *στίχοι*, which he recognised, not only arranging those which he considered as parallel against each other, but those places which he considered as unique (but genuine) by themselves. These canons for finding the parallel passages seem to have had a wide currency after Eusebius' day, as they are attached to many Greek MSS. and even to some MSS. of versions. Now the amount of the evidence from them is the following: If it is proved that the two important passages omitted were genuine parts of the Gospels before his day, then it is clear that he endeavored to excise them, and their absence from so many MSS. and versions is very naturally accounted for by his dishonest example. But the evidences of their claim to a place in the Gospels are conclusive, especially the internal. Nor are Eusebius' works lacking in intimations, at least as to the history of the woman taken in adultery, that he was disposed to excise it upon the ground of

a misunderstanding of its true scope. So, the supposed contradiction between Mark's account of our Saviour's acts after his resurrection and that of the other evangelists, was, as we know, regarded as a great difficulty in the way of its admission. But if there is any case where Bengel's rule, that the harder reading is to be preferred over the easier, is applicable, it is here where the apparent collision lies so on the surface, that it must almost necessarily have deterred the copyists of that day from interpolating it had it not been already a part of the text. We conclude then, on the whole, that the connexion of Eusebius with the text is suspicious, and that there is a strong probability it suffered again from his hands.

To estimate the probability that the Arian party also injured the integrity of the Trinitarian readings in some places, we must remember their temporary triumph in the East under Constantine's successors; their reckless and unprincipled persecuting spirit; the villainous means to which they are known to have resorted to gain their ends, fraud, lying, subornation, (as in the case of the venerable Bishop Athanasius and Eustathius of Antioch,) and violence, and the charges of mutilating the sacred books made against them by the orthodox. Athanasius, for instance, in his first Encyclical Letter against the Arians to the bishops of Egypt and Lybia, charges it upon them, as one of their customary tricks to deceive the unwary, that they advanced deceitful readings of the Scriptures. (Vol. I., p. 287, A.) The fact which Nolan cites is also full of significance, that the Constantinopolitan *εκδοσις* is found to contain all the readings which we know from their extant writings the Arians were wont to urge against the proper divinity of Christ. It appears also that there is no evidence the Arians ever had to complain of their orthodox opponents for tampering with the integrity of the text in order to refute them. Here then were the facts. The Arians were notoriously unscrupulous. They were openly charged with corrupting the text for polemical purposes. They could not bring any such charge against the orthodox. The *codices* which their orthodox adversaries used, honestly retained all the readings which the Arians supposed damaging to orthodoxy. But

here is a class of *codices* which present a very singular and suspicious resemblance in omitting certain readings particularly damaging to Arianism. This dogma is, as it happens, the only important one involved in the various readings. The coincidences are too regular to be accounted for by fortuitous influences—somebody has played the knave with the text, either the so-called orthodox by corruptly interpolating, or some anti-Trinitarians by dishonestly mutilating. The alternative is between the two hypotheses. Let the candid reader choose between them in the light of these facts. We think that he will conclude with us that the weight of probability is greatly in favor of this theory, viz., *That the anti-Trinitarians, finding certain codices in which these doctrinal readings had been already lost through the licentious criticism of Origen and his school, industriously diffused them, while they also did what they dared to add to the omissions of similar readings.*

Let us then briefly sum up the results attempted in this discussion. If all the debated readings were surrendered by us, no fact or doctrine of Christianity would thereby be invalidated, and least of all would the doctrine of Christ's proper divinity be deprived of adequate scriptural support. Hence the interests of orthodoxy are entirely secure from and above the reach of all movements of modern criticism of the text, whether made in a correct or incorrect method, and all such discussions in future are, to the Church, of subordinate importance. Yet they have their interest, and should receive the intelligent watch of the teachers of the Church. Absolute historical certainty of results is not to be expected, since so many of the documents of the primitive Church are gone forever; but probable conclusions are all which are to be expected. But, after all, the weight of that probability brings back the critical conclusions to the theory of Nolan and Scholz, restoring the claims of the *Κουνη Ἐκδοσις*, or received text, to be a faithful one, and invalidating the claims of exclusive accuracy made by our recent critics in favor of the so-called oldest *codices*.