

Bible Class Department.

The Holy Bible.

The Bible commands our reverence and respect because of its author – God. We accept its teachings as authority and law on this account. How important it is then that we have the Word of God as pure and free as possible from human teaching. The channels through which it has come have not all been pure. Are we certain then, that the Bible as we now have it, is all inspired and holy? Let us glance at the New Testament. Perhaps all are aware that the New Testament was written originally by various apostles at different places and times. After their death, their letters, &c., came to be highly prized by the church as authorities on various subjects, and we have reason to believe that this was the design of the Spirit in causing the writings at first, – not merely to bless and instruct the portion of the church to whom directly addressed, but to have it contain elements of truth valuable, and intended for the whole church in all ages. It was not long before each church had a copy of all the sacred writings. These copies were all made with the pen for about fourteen hundred years (until printing was invented) and the process of copying and recopying gave rise to many small errors and omissions, as for instance the addition or omission of an and, or the, or but. Another source of trouble is the interpolation, or adding to the word of various words and sentences. A few of these, about four, bear marks of design and seem to have been added about the ninth century, probably to give a basis or support to some papal dogma, while the great majority seem to have arisen from accident. For instance, one copyist while writing the text of the word might add as a sort of parenthesis some thought which he might have as to its meaning, not designed to be understood as a part of the sacred writing, but merely to refresh his own mind when reading the same scripture again, much

as we are in the habit of doing on the margin of our Bible. Yet another copyist using this MSS. as a guide would be apt to copy the previous writer's note into the body of the text, and so that uninspired clause would be handed down to future generations as inspired, and these have given much trouble.

Seeing then the liability to error, it is only just to ourselves that we be careful that what we accept as our basis of faith and hope is the word of God and not the errors of men, since it is "all scripture given by inspiration of God," that is "profitable for instruction in righteousness, etc." Our regular authorized version called "King James' Bible," was published A.D. 1511. It was not a translation from the original. It was not a direct translation from the original Greek, but a revision of several versions then in use as will appear from the following instructions given by King James to the forty-seven learned persons whom he appointed to revise translations then in use (1604) – "The Bishop's Bible (A.D. 1568) to be followed and altered as little as the original will permit. And these translations to be used when they agree better with the text than the Bishop's Bible – namely: "Tyndale's, (first Bible published 1526.) Coverdales, (1535) Matthews (1537) Whitchurch's and Geneva (1560.) These being all translations from the Vulgate Latin and not from the original Greek text, (only compared with it) it follows that our "King James' Bible" is only a revision of the Vulgate Latin. Says an able writer: "This translation was perhaps, the best that could be made at the time, but if it had not been published by kingly authority, it would not now be venerated by English and American protestants as though it had come direct from God." At the time of the revision of "King James' Bible," the translators had the advantage of some eight Greek MSS. and none of these were of earlier date than the tenth century. Who will say how many errors large and small crept into the text during that thousand years? It is claimed that the errors may be numbered

by thousands, mostly small and insignificant, but some of importance and weight.

Few perhaps are aware of the great advantages possessed by translators of the present day. Between 600 and 700 Greek MSS. are now known, some of which are quite ancient. Two of them, the "Sinaitic" and "Vatican No. 1209," dating about the year A.D. 350. What an advantage in our favor above every other age, for obtaining the pure word of God. Truly the word of God is being fulfilled, "In the time of the end ...knowledge shall be increased. Not merely scientific and mechanical knowledge has increased but also knowledge and understanding of what is the word of God. The Sinaitic MSS. the most valuable of all was only recently found and was published in 1870.

If not governed by prejudice and preconceived opinions we should improve all the opportunities offered to grow in the knowledge of the truth, remembering that it is not error but truth which sanctifies. Truly

"We are living; we are dwelling,
In a grand and awful time.
In an age on ages telling,
To be living is sublime."

WHAT HELPS CAN WE OBTAIN

which would give us a more clear understanding of what is the true and inspired text, you ask.

I answer: There are three which I can commend, all of which I make use of and receive help from, viz: The New Testament (regular authorized version) with foot notes of different readings by the three oldest MSS. – "Sinaitic," "Vatican No. 1209," and "Alexandrine" – the latter written about A.D. 450. (From the Vatican MSS. are missing the epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon and Heb., from

9:14 to close and also the book of Revelation.) This work, known as "Tischendorf's New Testament," is to me very valuable.

Second: The "Emphatic Diaglott," a work upon which a great deal of time and care have been bestowed by its author Benj. Wilson. We value it highly. It contains the Greek text of the N.T. according to Dr. Griesbach and interlined with it a literal word-for-word translation – The corresponding English being placed directly under the Greek word. Together with this it contains a new version for general reading based upon the labors of many learned critics. In the form of foot notes, it gives the different readings of the Vatican MSS. No. 1209, as far as it goes, after which Vatican MSS. 1160 (of the seventh century) 884 pp.

Third: "The American Bible Union" translation of the N.T. – a revision of the oldest translations compared with ancient MSS. It is very useful, giving a good clear rendering which is usually in harmony with the others above mentioned, though not so critical. It would be of little advantage to any who possess the Emphatic Diaglott.

We have corresponded with the publishers of the above named works, and are able to announce that we can furnish them to our readers at wholesale prices – postage added, viz:

"Emphatic Diaglott" cloth, (price \$4.00) for.... \$2.70

" " finer binding (" 5.00) " ... 3.35

"Tischendorf" N.T. cloth, (price 1.00) " ... 75

"A Bible Union" N.T. " (" 1.00) " ... 65

" " " pocket edition (" 1.00) " ... 75

If you wish any of these books we shall take pleasure in furnishing them to you at these prices.
