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A CRITICISM CRITICISED

A gentleman who read in "Food" concerning the first clause of Rev. 20:5. – "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished" – that this passage is spurious, and not found in any MSS. written previous to the fifth century – possibly questioning the correctness of our statement, or at least desiring to have additional testimony, wrote to the "Bible Banner," a Second-Advent publication, inquiring the correctness of this statement.

In reply Eld. D. T. Taylor published the following in the "Banner" of May 4th, 1882:

The words, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished," Rev. 20:5, are omitted, and not found in the Sinaitic Codex, which was probably made A.D. 331-350. It is the oldest N.T. MSS. known. But Tischendorf says its omission is "a mere error." The Alexandrine MSS., written about A.D. 450, has the text, and merely omits the words "but" and "again." The Vatican MSS., made about A.D. 350, omits no part, but contains the entire text, as now in our Bibles. Hence it is not true, as some writer has said in the "Banner," that this verse "is not found in any MSS. written previous to the fifth century.

We must answer this, and if we answer it satisfactorily we hope our opponent will give a proper retraction to his remarks above quoted, at an early date.

First then, the brother says: "The Alexandrine MS. – A.D. 450 – has the text." We reply, that any one understanding the subject, knows that [R365 : page 8] the fifth century commenced with the year 401, and ended with the year 500. Just so the fourth century began with the year 301 and ended with the year 400. So too, we say since 1801 that we are now living in the nineteenth century and may

properly use the expression until the end of the year 1900. Now we admit freely that the text is found in [R366 : page 8] the Alexandrine MS., but we still claim, and every scholar will support us in it, that if the Alexandrine MS. was written in A.D. 450, or any time after the year 400, it was not written previous to the fifth century.

But it is claimed, that the passage is found in the Vatican MS. of about the year 350. This we most positively deny. Every authority on the subject bears witness that this Vatican MS. supposed to have been written about the middle of the fourth century, contains the New Testament only so far as Heb. 9:14, "from which verse to the end of the New Testament it is deficient; so that not only the last chapters of the Hebrews, but the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, as well as the Revelation are missing." [We quote from C. Tischendoerf, perhaps the best of all authorities on ancient MSS of N.T.]

While the above mentioned is the MS., which is generally understood by the name "Vatican MS.," yet as a matter of fact there was more than one MS. of the New Testament in the Vatican Library; but none but the one above, is sufficiently ancient to constitute it an authority. The Emphatic Diaglott is principally compared with the "Vatican MS. No. 1209," the ancient copy; but for the lacking book of Revelation the Vatican MS. No. 1160 is used, the author giving it a preference over the "Alexandrine MS.," though it was written about the eleventh century. (See "Diaglott" note to Rev. 1:1.)

But even if brother Taylor got mixed on the two Vatican MSS., he is still at fault, for Vat. MS. 1160 does not contain the disputed clause. See Diaglott note on Rev. 20:5.

But it is claimed that Tischendoerf, the finder and translator of the very ancient and most authentic of all Greek MSS., excuses the fact that this clause does not appear in his "Sinaitic MS." by saying that it is doubtless "a mere error." To this we reply that we fail to see what weight this has on the subject. The finder of a book knows no

more than any one else about whether or not the omission of this clause was a "mere error." We claim again, that the absence of this clause from all MSS. written prior to the fifth century, as well as the fact that it would contradict other Scriptures, which teach that the "Restitution of all things" is due at the coming of Jesus and before he shall finish his reign – prove the disputed clause to be spurious – an interpolation. (Acts 3:21.)

The Syriac-Peshito version of the New Testament (the mother tongue of Jesus and the Apostles) was written in the latter part of the first or early part of the second century, and is therefore of earlier date than any Greek MS. extant. This most venerable authority, also repudiates the disputed first clause of Rev. 20:5.

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