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## **ANCIENT N.T. GREEK MSS.**

In our last issue we found fault with a contemporary's desire to set aside the first chapters of Matthew and Luke, and showed that its claim that the authenticity of these chapters was questioned by scholars, was untrue – which we repeat. We said that these chapters were recognized by the very best authority, viz., the three oldest Greek MSS. of the N.T. – the Sinaitic, Vatican and Alexandrine – whose value and age is in the order mentioned; the Sinaitic being the oldest and most complete.

Replying to this, our contemporary, still attempting to set aside Matt. 1, and Luke 1, endeavors to cast discredit on the entire N.T., as well as these chapters. It attempts to show that these three most reliable MSS. are widely at variance, some omitting whole passages and books which others contain, and no two omitting the same chapters, verses and books, giving on the whole the impression that the whole matter is so mixed that it is totally impossible to reach any satisfactory conclusion as to what was, or was not written, by the Apostles. To prove this confusion of testimony, numerous quotations are made from the preface of Tischendorf's New Testament.

We shall not consume our space with extracts from Tischendorf's preface, for, as promised, we shall arrange shortly that all who desire shall have opportunity of procuring these various readings and the explanatory preface complete.\* Suffice it for the present for us to say that our contemporary so quotes and so argues as to give a false impression in this matter. If this is done knowingly it is a crime against truth – if done ignorantly it is a shame.

\*The New Testament, with various readings of these oldest MSS., will be duly announced in the TOWER as soon as ready. Some have already ordered and sent money for it. Please do not do so until it is ready and announced.

Mr. Tischendorf favors the Sinaitic MSS. His claim is that the Sinaitic MSS. is not only the oldest, but also the only old MS. of the New Test. which is "perfect, without the loss of a single leaf." In proving this he refers to the Vatican MS., and says that from Heb. 9:14 to the end, the N.T. is missing from it. Referring to the next oldest MS., he shows the superiority of the Sinaitic over it, also, by calling attention to the fact that it is imperfect also, parts of the MS. parchment having been lost or destroyed during the twelve hundred years preceding its bringing from Alexandria. He shows that all of Matthew up to chap. 25: verse 6, is missing; also about two chapters in John, and nearly eight chapters in Second Corinthians. But he is not showing that these MSS. contradict each other, which is our contemporary's object, but that these chapters are missing; and hence he proves the Sinaitic most valuable, since not a single leaf of it is missing. It is truly remarkable that MSS. of such an age should be so well preserved.

We repeat, then, that the narrative of Jesus' miraculous conception as recorded in the first chapters of Matthew and Luke, has the very best and oldest Greek MSS. to support it. The Sinaitic and Vatican, the oldest and best, contain both chapters, and the Alexandrine MS. contains the account in Luke; that in Matthew was missing – not omitted.

The doctrine of the "Immaculate Conception," as held by papists, relates not to Jesus, but to Mary, his mother. Papists claim that Mary was immaculate (pure), free from Adamic sin, by reason of her mother's miraculous conception of her. It is one of the strong evidences of the purity of the old N.T. MSS. and of God's care in their preservation, that they are free from the doctrines peculiar to the "Mother of Harlots" – even though unwittingly one of them was hid in the "Vatican Library."

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