

WAS IT DOCTORED?

We desire to ask the attention of the readers of ZION'S WATCH TOWER to some considerations bearing on the authenticity of the New Testament Scriptures. It is claimed that the Roman Catholic Church, the "Mother of Harlots," having had in her possession exclusively, for a length of time, the original manuscripts, corrupted those manuscripts by interpolations and additions, in order to give an appearance of divine sanction to her corrupt doctrines and teachings. It is admitted, of course, that there are several passages in the New Testament which are marked as doubtful, and some, known to be spurious, have been rejected altogether; but it is not shown that those passages originated with a design to corrupt the original text. The explanation is offered (and there is nothing better, so far as we are aware), that those passages first appeared probably in the shape of marginal notes, and that ultimately, in the process of copying, either through carelessness, ignorance, or possible dishonesty, they were finally embodied in the text. But, be that as it may, we propose to show, by various considerations, how incredible, almost impossible, it is that any such attempts as claimed could have been made to corrupt the original text.

You are aware that the Roman Church teaches that Mary is "ever a virgin." It is one of her "infallible" dogmas that Jesus was her "only son." And, yet, with surprising carelessness, the manuscript doctors have allowed the text to read: "She brought forth her first-born son," implying, of course, that she brought forth other sons afterward. And, as if that were not enough, and to put caviling at rest forever, they permit the original text to tell about "his mother and brothers, and sisters." (See Matt. 1:25; Luke 2:7; Mark 3:31; 6:3.) All this, rendered into plain English, goes before the world, while the

infallible dogma of the Church is never so much as hinted in any part of the Book.

Again, the "infallible" Church teaches the doctrine of the Trinity. A recent writer said in his paper, endeavoring to show how she had corrupted the Word of God, "Where else than in the New Testament did she get her doctrine of the Trinity?" That writer ought to have known (for he has sufficient intelligence) that the doctrine of the Trinity is not to be found in the New Testament, that spurious passage in 1 John 5:7 not even directly affirming it, and that is the only text which has the faintest semblance of teaching the doctrine. But in view of the fact that those crafty manuscript corrupters took in hand to make the original text teach their dogma, what inconceivable blindness, on their part, to have allowed Jesus to say: "The Son is not able of himself to do anything!" (John 5:19), and "My Father is greater than I." (14:28.) And how could they have suffered an Apostle to testify that "he is the first-born of all creation," (Col. 1:15), and the Revelator to say, "he is the beginning, or chief, of the creation of God." Not to have stated their own dogma with any degree of clearness, and at the same time to allow such positive testimony in condemnation of their dogma to go out from under their hands was, certainly, bad work for the "doctors," wasn't it?

The Roman Church teaches the doctrine of "purgatory," but when they were tinkering the manuscripts they must have forgotten to put that in – the passage in 1 Pet. 3:18,19, read in the light of common sense, not giving the least countenance to such a notion.

Then, again, the old Mother teaches "eternal torment." But is it not wonderfully strange that when she was "corrupting the manuscripts" she should have left out so completely the very foundation doctrines of her system? For while she teaches eternal torment (not from the Scriptures of truth, but from tradition, and by unwarrantable interpretation of certain texts,) these very manuscripts

which she is said to have corrupted, are allowed to testify in the most unqualified terms that "death is the wages of sin;" and that the final punishment will be "everlasting destruction." (Matt. 10:28; Rom. 6:23; 2 Thess. 1:9.) So, also, her dogma of the immortality of the soul. Why did she not put that in manuscripts when she was "doctoring" them to suit her false teachings? You know as well as I know – and I know to an absolute certainty – that that pet doctrine of Romanism is not so much as named in the Scriptures, neither in Hebrew, Greek nor English: and yet we are asked to believe that that corrupt Church has so extensively tampered with the original manuscripts, in order to sustain her abominable system of falsehood, that it is usually unsafe to trust them; that they cannot be relied on at all to tell the truth! However, while she teaches that immortality is inherent in all men, they teach that immortality is a glorious prize to be sought for, and to be obtained only by the elect of God through Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 2:7; 6:23; 1 John 5:11,12; John 10:27,28.)

"The Church" prays to saints, while the manuscripts testify against her – "I, Jesus, am the way – no man cometh to the Father but by me;" (John 14:6) and "there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. 2:5.) So, also, in her teaching of the merit of works, the testimony of those manuscripts is directly against her. She teaches that the faithful, by their good works, may merit the favor of God, while they teach that works are entirely excluded, and men are "justified by faith." (Rom. 3:27,28; 4:1-8; Eph. 2:9.)

Illustrations might be multiplied. But from those already noted, it seems fair to conclude that, inasmuch as the "doctors" did not corrupt the text in those places which teach doctrines exactly contrary to their own teachings, the passages which are known to be spurious must be accounted for on some other hypothesis than a deliberate design to corrupt the original text.

It is certainly true that the teachings of the Scriptures in what are usually regarded as "fundamental" truths are in direct contradiction of the dogmas of the Roman Church, as well, also, as those of the Protestant sects. And it is no less certain that the teachings of the Scriptures are in full harmony with themselves throughout, from first to last. Take, for example, the story of the miraculous conception and birth of Jesus, which some in these days find so hard to believe. Compare the case of Sarah, (Gen. 18:9-14) [Is anything too hard? – wonderful – for Jehovah?] of Hannah, (1 Sam. 1:5-27,) of the Shunamite, (2 Kings 4:14-17,) of Elizabeth, (Luke 1:18,20,24.) In all of these cases there is the miraculous interposition of divine power, quickening the natural forces, where they had been dormant and inoperative, or entirely suspended; and it seems to us the miracle is not less notable in these cases than in that of Mary, where the same divine power attains its object, by its own energy directly applied, regardless of the usual operation of natural law. For, surely, He who established nature's laws, is able to act in any given case by other means, if he should see fit so to do. And that He did do so, is, as we have said, the testimony of the Book, in harmony with itself.

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