Introduction by Marsh, vol. i. p. 4-54 ; Cook's Enquiry into the Books of the New Testament ; Taylor’s Essay on the Transmis­sion of ancient books to modern times ; Schott, *Isagoge,* p. 518- 542.

Sect. IV.—*Integrity of the Sacred Books.*

Closely connected with the question of the genuineness of the Scriptures is the question of their *integrity,* or *uncor-rupted preservation.* Infidels have often asserted, that ex­tensive and important changes have been made upon the original documents, especially upon those of the Old Tes­tament. But,

1. Of this there is no proof. It is a mere unsupported assertion on their part, resting upon nothing but certain *a priori* conclusions to which they profess to have come, as to the *probability* of such a thing. To prove it, we should require some competent historical testimony to the fact, or an articulate comparison of the alleged interpolations with the original text.

2. Such interpolations could have been perpetrated only by universal consent on the part of all possessing these do­cuments. Had one man altered his own copy, and publish­ed his alterations, the only result would have been certain discrepancies between the readings of that family of manu­scripts of which his copy was the parent, and those of other families, unless he could have persuaded the whole nation of the Jews, or the entire body of the Christians, as the case might be, to adopt his innovations,—a supposition plainly impossible.

3. Had extensive alterations taken place, the harmony of Scripture would have been destroyed. A number of sepa­rate books are written by different persons, for the purpose of unfolding under different aspects and modifications one harmonious system of truth. The result is a harmonious work. But some person, for purposes of his own, sets about interpolating these books. Is it conceivable that this should have been accomplished with such exquisite skill and adroit­ness, that the original harmony of the work should have been preserved, and all vestiges of a spurious intermixture concealed ?

4. It is morally certain, that previous to the Christian era, the Jews did not alter their sacred books. For this we have sufficient security in the habits and circumstances of the people. The Bible was their national statute-book ; on it the whole of their civil economy, and all their political and judicial procedure, rested. They were in the habit of giving the utmost publicity to its contents; kings were required to study it continually, priests were appointed to teach it to the people, and fathers were enjoined to incul­cate it upon their children, so that the idea of connivance among the members of any class in the community for the purpose of falsifying it is entirely precluded. Their law con­tains a solemn prohibitory statute against any, the slightest, alterations of these books, Deut. v. 2, xii. 32. The rival sects which arose among them after their return from Ba­bylon served the same purpose, by acting as mutual checks upon each other. And, finally, in the absence of any cen­sure by our Lord upon the Jews, whose crimes he faithful­ly exposed, for their treatment of the sacred text, and in his continual references to the Old Testament in the state in which it was then extant, as containing an accurate re­cord of God’s will, we have the best assurance that no li­berty affecting its perfect integrity had been taken with it previous to his advent.

5. Since the commencement of the Christian era, it is equally certain that no intentional corruption of the Old Testament Scriptures can have taken place. The *Jews* have not corrupted them, for they have ever shown too deep a reverence for every word and letter of these books to have done so; they have been too much scattered and disunited to have agreed upon any such attempt ; they would not

have left so many statements condemnatory of themselves and favourable to Christianity had they set about altering their own Scriptures ; and they have since that time been so much under the eye of Christians, that any such attempt on their part would immediately have been detected and denounced by the latter. *Christians* have not done it ; for, to say nothing of the fact, that hardly any Christian has been sufficiently master of the Hebrew language to execute skil­fully any such alterations, the attempt on their part to do such a thing would have been immediately discovered and exposed by the Jews.

6. As impossible is it that any corruption has taken place in the Christian Scriptures. It is plain that this could not have occurred during the lives of their authors, nor whilst the autographs of their works were extant. But in some cases before, and in others immediately after, the death of the inspired writers, copies of their writings were multiplied to a great extent, and disseminated over the whole Chris­tian world. It could only therefore have been by the ge­neral consent of all Christians, that any material alterations could have been made on these writings ; for if one sect or party had interpolated their copies, this could not have af­fected the copies of others, and would have been detected and denounced by them. But the idea of a general consent of Christians in all parts of the world to falsify their own documents, is one too extravagant to be admitted.

7. The agreement of versions and of manuscripts, both of the Old Testament Scriptures and of the New, is a cor­roborative evidence of their integrity. The number of early versions is considerable, and among them so great a har­mony prevails, that it is undeniable they must have been made from a common original, and that that original must have been the same as we now possess. The same conclu­sion is attested by the agreement of the manuscripts. Of these nearly 1150 containing the whole or parts of the Old Testament, and about 700 containing the whole or parts of the New Testament, have been collated, without any ma­terial discrepancy having been elicited (1) ; a fact which is utterly irreconcileable with the supposition of any designed interpolations having been so much as attempted by any class or party, either of Jews or of Christians (2).

1 Rosenmüller observes respecting the codices of the Old Testament, “ Ii qui hodie exstant codices omnes ita inter se conspirant, ut ex aliquot centenis variis lectionibus vix una deprehendatur quœ sensum mu­tet. Circa unam duntaxat vel alteram litteram, Vocalem vel Accen­tum versantur. Quod quidem argumento est, Veteris Testamenti li­bros, prouti eos nunc legimus, ex unius, quam dicunt, recensionis codicibus ad nos transmissos esse, atque omnes codices, antiquiores æque qui perierunt, ac recentiores quos habemus tanquam a com­muni fonte fluxisse.” *(Proef. ad Edit. Steτeοtypam Hahnii Bib. Heb.* p. iv.) Language no less strong may be justly held regarding the New Testament.

2 See Horne’s Introduction, vol. i. pp. 100—108; Michaelis's In­troduction, vol. i. ; Walton, *Prolegom.* vii. ; Nolan’s Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate, London, 1815 ; [Bentley’s] Remarks on Freethinking by Philoleutherus Lipsiensis, No. xxxi.-xxxiii ; Dr. J. Pye Smith’s Answer to the Manifesto of the Christian Evidence So­ciety, 4th ed., and Rejoinder to Taylor, 2d ed. London, 1830 ; Ernesti’s Principles of Biblical Interpretation, translated by Charles H. Terrot, vol. ii. pp. 1-24, Edin. 1833.

Sect. *V.—Credibility of the Sacred Scriptures.*

That these books, in their narrative parts, contain state­ments of actual facts, is sufficiently established by various considerations.

1. The things narrated are such as their writers were fully competent to attest. For the most part they were eye and ear witnesses of what they record ; and where this was not the case, they were placed in circumstances the most favourable for gaining information from first sources as to the facts they narrate. They are, in fact, with one or two partial exceptions, what very few of the ancient historians are, annalists of their own times.