

to these Greek manuscripts, we have many manuscripts of ancient versions; those of the Latin Vulgate alone exceed eight thousand. Besides manuscript evidence, we have the important connecting link of the early church fathers, a number of whom included citations of the New Testament in their writings. Let us note six of these writers, the first five of whom died before AD 255, and the sixth died in AD 340. The number of citations of the New Testament included in each of their writings is as follows: (1) Irenaeus, 1819; (2) Clement of Alexandria, 2406; (3) Origen, 17,922; (4) Tertullian. 7258; (5) Hippolytus, 1378; and (6) Eusebius. 5176.

In this great mass of evidence for the text of the New Testament there is also a large number of variations, as was the case for the Old Testament. In regard to these, Benjamin B. Warfield, in his *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, calls attention to Ezra Abbott's view that 19/20ths of the variations in the New Testament text "have so little support that, although they are various readings, no one would think of them as rival readings; and 19/20ths of the remainder are of so little importance that their adoption or rejection would cause no appreciable difference in the sense of the passages where they occur."<sup>9</sup> Warfield goes on to state that

the great mass of the New Testament ... has been transmitted to us with no, or next to no, variation; and even in the most corrupt form in which it has ever appeared, to use the oft-quoted words of Richard Bentley. "the real text of the sacred writers is competently exact; ... nor is one article of faith or moral precept either perverted or lost ... choose as awkwardly as you will, choose the worst by design, out of the whole lump of readings."<sup>10</sup>

It should be noted, in connection with the matter of textual criticism, that the great question which liberal scholars raise is not that of whether the text which we have accurately represents the autographs, but rather that of the value of the autographs themselves! For them the autographs are not the Word of God, but the word of man; and amazingly accurate copies of the word of man do not overly excite them! Their problem appears to lie in their doctrine of revelation itself, and behind that problem stands the even greater problem of their doctrine of the nature of God.