

**BENTLEII CRITICA SACRA, NOTES
ON THE GREEK AND LATIN TEXT OF
THE NEW TESTAMENT, EXTRACTED
FROM THE BENTLEY MSS. IN
TRINITY COLLEGE LIBRARY**

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Bentleii Critica Sacra, Notes on the Greek and Latin Text of the New Testament, Extracted from the Bentley Mss. in Trinity College Library by Arthur Ayres Ellis

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ARTHUR AYRES ELLIS

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BENTLEII CRITICA SACRA.

NOTES ON THE GREEK AND LATIN TEXT OF
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THE BENTLEY MSS. IN TRINITY
COLLEGE LIBRARY.

WITH THE ABBÉ RULOTTA'S COLLATION OF THE VATICAN
CODEX B. A SPECIMEN OF BENTLEY'S INTENDED EDITION,
AND AN ACCOUNT OF HIS COLLATIONS.

EDITED, WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE MASTER AND SENIORS, BY

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VICAR OF SPOTFOLD, RECTOR, LATE FELLOW AND JUNIOR DEAN OF TRINITY COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE, AND DIVINITY LECTURER IN CHRIST'S COLLEGE.

WITH APPENDIX CONTAINING SIX LETTERS OF BENTLEY.

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INTRODUCTORY PREFACE.

“UTINAM nobis contingat esse tam felicibus ut Editionem “Bentleii, thesaurum desideratissimum, e tenebris in lucem pro-
“ductum conspiciamus”.

When Wetstein concluded his notice of Bentley's projected Edition of the New Testament with these words, he could hardly have expected that more than a hundred years would elapse before any attempt should be made to gratify so reasonable a wish. Nor is it at all likely that the valuable materials of Criticism, which Bentley left behind him at his death in 1742, would have thus been consigned to oblivion, had they passed at once into the keeping of Trinity College.

But the ceaseless quarrels which embittered the last twenty-five years of his life and the animosities which they kindled within the College walls, while they robbed him of the leisure required for the completion of his great work, probably made him disinclined to commit it unfinished to the charge of the Master and Fellows. At any rate he cherished the hope that his nephew Dr Richard Bentley, Fellow of Trinity College, might turn his materials to account, and therefore bequeathed them to him. “But this gentleman never edited any posthumous works of his Uncle: and returned the money of the subscribers to the New Testament”.

Thus the Collations and Notes which

¹ *Wetstenii Prolegomena in N. T.* p. 156.

² *Monk's Life of Bentley*, Vol. II. p. 412, 8vo ed.

Bentley had prepared lay untouched at Nailstone Parsonage in Leicestershire till the year 1786: when, by the will of Dr Richard Bentley, they became the property of Trinity College. From that day to this they have remained in the Library, the admiration of every Greek Testament Scholar. A list of some of the principal volumes may be found in Mr Dyce's edition of Bentley's Works¹, and many interesting particulars concerning them are mentioned in the notes to Dr Wordsworth's valuable Collection of Bentley's Correspondence: but no attempt has hitherto been made to publish any portion of these remains, or to appreciate the services rendered by Bentley to this department of Sacred Criticism.

Mill's Edition of the Greek Testament was given to the world in 1707. Its publication constitutes an era in the history of the Printed Text. Until then the Elzevir Edition stood unassailed: and what at first was a text 'received' by controversialists began to be regarded as the text 'received' by Scholars. But when Mill appended to the text the fruit of thirty years' labour in foot-notes containing the readings of MSS. and Versions collated by himself, the religious world was appalled by his boldness: and the first Edition of the text of the New Testament which appealed to authority for its support encountered a storm of opposition. Good men, like Dr Whitby, were alarmed, lest the authority of Scripture should be impaired if the true state of the MSS. was allowed to be known: and bad men, like Collins, were only too happy to hear that the text of the New Testament was unsettled by the discovery of 30,000 various readings². Bentley was in his 46th year when this happened, and his reply both to Whitby and Collins exhibits all the vigour of his prime. Under the feigned name of *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis* he vindicated the Edition of Mill from the attacks which were made upon it, and established the Criticism of the New Testament upon a sure and lasting basis. Since

¹ Dyce's Bentley, Vol. III. p. 483.

² Remarks on a Discourse of Free Thinking, Dyce's Bentley, Vol. III. p. 347.