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REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

SECOND GENERAL COUNCIL

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN ALLIANCE,

CONVENED AT PHILADELPHIA, SEPTEMBER, 1880.

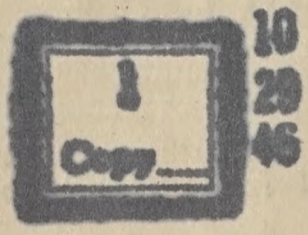
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as a test of doctrine, or a protection against error. The formula of subscription "*for substance of doctrine*" may be a relief to a scrupulous conscience, or it may also be a convenient refuge from the unwelcome pressure of an orthodox creed. The phrase itself is too indefinite and ambiguous to fix a man's theological status, or the position of a Church in which such a form of subscription prevails.

It is not, then, by reducing creeds to the brevity of a few undefined general articles, nor yet by modifying the terms of subscription so as to destroy all the significance and value of the act, that we are to avoid the extreme of a too rigid enforcement of the obligations of an accepted creed. In point of fact, that extreme is seldom reached, and in these days the danger in that direction is rather a theoretical possibility, than a matter of actual apprehension. Ecclesiastical martyrdom now lies oftener in the path of those who insist upon the obligations of an honest subscription.

The truth is, that where creeds are not imposed but accepted, the practical difficulties of subscription recede almost to the vanishing point. A man is not obliged to confess in the words of a creed which does not express the faith that is in him. But to whatever creed he does confess, thereto he is bound until lawfully discharged from that obligation. Moreover he is bound to that confession not with indefinite reservations, but *ex-animo*, and in the historical and commonly received meaning of its articles, as held by the Church whose creed it is. If he has scruples or doubts concerning this or that paragraph, or proposition, it is for the authority requiring the confession to decide whether these excepted propositions are necessary to the integrity of the creed, as a system of doctrines. An honest man will make these scruples known *in limine*, and he will always find provision made for their due consideration. He will find, too, that their treatment is liberal and generous: more generous sometimes to the individual than just to the denomination represented.

The REV. TALBOT W. CHAMBERS, D. D., of New York, read the following paper on

BIBLE REVISION.

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| 1. It is Needed. | 7. Conservative. |
| 2. Has Improved Text. | 8. Uniform. |
| 3. A Proper Origin. | 9. Deliberate. |
| 4. Unsectarian. | 10. Reverential. |
| 5. International. | 11. Optional. |
| 6. Unhampered. | 12. Conclusion. |

The authorized version was first printed in 1611, and in the course of a single generation succeeded in displacing all its rivals and in becoming the acknowledged English representative of the original Scriptures. This position it has maintained until the present time. Yet during the last two centuries many attempts have been made to alter or to

supersede it in whole or in part, both by individuals and by companies of men, and no small amount of time and pains has been employed in these efforts. None of them, however, has succeeded. Neither the character nor position of their authors, nor the degree of learning, judgment and taste they have displayed was able to give these amended versions anything more than a partial and temporary circulation. They soon passed into entire oblivion, or were consulted only by scholars, while the old book daily acquired a stronger hold upon the confidence and affection of English-speaking Christians. Hence many have been led to believe that it would be always impossible to make a change, and when they point to the unbroken experience of two hundred and fifty years, it seems hard to resist their conclusion. Yet an organized effort for a thorough revision has now been carried on for ten years, and so far as the New Testament is concerned, has nearly finished its work. Nor is there any doubt that within a few years the Old Testament will in like manner be completed.

Will it succeed? That is, will it gain popular favor, and in the course of time supplant the existing Bible, so as to be recognized by different lands and variant communions as the proper English expression of God's most holy word? Of course such a question cannot be decided in advance, the wisest of men not having the gift of prophecy. Yet there are several circumstances which encourage a favorable view of the prospect. The object of this paper is to set forth these with as much fullness as our limits permit.

1. The work is *Needed*. The excellence of the authorized version is very great, as is shown by the fact of its early, wide-spread and long-continued acceptance by those for whom it was made, and by the result of a careful comparison with any other version, ancient or modern. Still it is not perfect, nor so nearly perfect as it might be, as may be seen by turning the pages of any even moderately critical commentary, where every chapter shows corrections judged necessary in order to bring out fully and fairly the sense of the original. This fact is not owing to any want of learning in King James's translators (as has sometimes been ignorantly said), or to dogmatic prejudices or party spirit. They were among the most learned men of a learned age, and represented among themselves all the phases of Protestant faith which then prevailed in England. But many of the most valuable and helpful of the ancient versions of the Scriptures were inaccessible to them, and others were possessed only in a very uncritical and unsatisfactory form. And they labored under other disadvantages peculiar to the period in which they lived. The science of Biblical criticism was unknown; and modern philology had only begun that advance which has been so extraordinary. Sacred geography and archæology were in their infancy; and lexicography was far from the rigidly scientific form it has of late assumed. And there were very few severely critical commentaries. It was, therefore, not possible in the nature of things for the men of that day, however learned or acute or pious, to make as exact a determination of the meaning of the

Hebrew and Greek as is at the present time within the reach of much inferior men. To deny this, is to deny that any actual benefit has accrued to exegetical knowledge from the labors of scores upon scores of scholars throughout Christendom prosecuted for generations in the zealous search for truth. Moreover, the changes of our language, although less obvious than in any other book of the same period, are still many and sometimes annoying, so that King James's version is by no means to us what it was to its first readers. Some words have become obsolete, and others have altered their meaning, in several instances (such as "let," "by and bye," etc.), so much so as to signify the exact opposite of what they once expressed. These archaisms are not offensive to the scholar, because they are at once understood by him, and are interesting in themselves as memorials of a past age; but to the common reader they are unintelligible and therefore injurious, making the Bible an unknown book, or what is worse, misrepresenting its meaning.

It is apparent, then, that there is a real and not a fancied need in the case. The English Bible should represent the present state of the language, and the present stage of critical and exegetical investigation. The ordinary reader should be placed as far as possible on a level with the scholar in consulting its pages, at least so far as that end can be reached by accurate and idiomatic translation, and especially in the numerous cases in which there is substantial agreement among the learned, both as to the incorrectness of the common version and as to the way in which the proper correction should be made.

2. The revision will be based upon an *Improved Text*. The text employed by King James's translators was derived from few manuscripts and those of late date, and abounds with admitted imperfections. These it has been the province of Biblical criticism to discover and remove, and for centuries the labors of learned men have been devoted to this end. It is estimated that there are about four hundred cases in which the sense of a passage is affected by the reading that is taken; but comparatively only a few are important. Still it is desirable that we should have as pure a text as possible, and the common reader should have a reasonable assurance that the book he reads is free from corruptions. An immaculate text is of course out of the question. But critical helps have become so abundant that in a majority of cases men are able to conclude with a good degree of confidence what was originally written. The revision will exhibit therefore what, in the concurrent judgment of its authors, is the nearest possible approach to the very words which holy men of old used in declaring the will of God. Some have opposed the movement on this very ground, claiming that the matter is still too uncertain for any such course, and that the part of wisdom is to wait for further light. But considering what has been done in this field, what rich materials have been gathered, how carefully the comparative value of authorities has been estimated, how far the principles of textual criticism have become settled, and how general is the agreement of the ablest critics on the

more important questions, there is small reason for apprehending any discoveries in the future which will throw the past into the shade. The most interesting and momentous recovery of the present century was the Sinaitic manuscript, and too much credit can hardly be given to its discoverer and editor, Tischendorf; yet the chief use of that precious uncial has been not so much to furnish new readings of any portion of the text, as to give evidence in favor of one or other of the readings already known, and occasionally where the existing evidence was balanced, to add enough to turn the scale.

It is reasonable, therefore, to suppose that little could be gained by delay. Something no doubt may be acquired in the course of the next century. But meanwhile it is surely of profit to use what has already been settled, and to make our Bible represent in some degree at least the achievements of modern Biblical criticism. In the main body of the work the requisite corrections can be introduced, while in all the more important cases a statement of the rival text can be added in the margin where it is of equal or nearly equal value. In this way the unlearned reader may be taught how the case stands in any given passage, and can have upon it the opinion of a large number of British and American scholars. In many cases he will be saved from the danger of taking the mere mistakes of transcribers for the words of evangelists and apostles, or even of our Lord himself, while in others he will discern a new beauty and vigor in the turn given to an important utterance by the alteration or addition of a very few words. He may regret to part with passages such as the well-known text of the Three Witnesses in 1 John; but the loss will be abundantly compensated by gains in other directions.

3. The *Origin* of the enterprise will commend it to public favor. Previous efforts in the same direction have been due to individuals, or to small companies of men acting without any official or ecclesiastical sanction. Hence they were naturally regarded with distrust, and often failed to secure the degree of attention to which their merits entitled them. In the present instance the source of the movement challenges, not to say commands, universal respect. It comes from the larger of the two provinces of the Church of England, the eldest daughter of the Anglican Reformation and the lineal descendant of the devout and learned scholars who came together at the call of King James. The way had been prepared by numerous discussions in books and periodicals, and the conviction was gradually diffusing itself among the reflecting upon both sides of the Atlantic, that the time had come for a new and thorough revision of the English Scriptures. Still there was hesitation and uncertainty as to the mode of procedure, and it was not obvious at a glance who should assume the initiative. At this juncture the Convocation of Canterbury took the matter up, and after due deliberation settled upon a plan of action marked with great wisdom and a very catholic spirit. Then it became apparent that a great point had been gained, for, although the Convocation of York declined to co-operate, still the enterprise had a sanction of the

highest character, one that precluded at the outset any idea of local, petty, or selfish aims, and gave assurance that whatever was done would be of such a nature as to merit the most careful and candid consideration. Of course no one supposes that all wisdom on this subject is confined to the province of Canterbury; but it is undeniable that the position, prestige and relations of the Convocation of that province make it the most fitting of all religious bodies in English-speaking Christendom, to inaugurate a work of such difficulty, delicacy and importance. And when the revisers, whether British or American, are asked by what authority they assumed the duty they have taken upon them, they are able to give a very prompt and satisfactory answer. It is not strange, therefore, that the Christian public give to the effort far more attention than has ever been shown to any like undertaking in former years, and are disposed to anticipate a favorable issue. And this the more because, while the revision originated in the Church of England, its execution is by no means confined to that branch of the Church catholic. On the contrary every precaution has been used to render it—

4. *Unsectarian.* Members of all the leading bodies of Protestant Christians have been invited to take part in the work, and are found cordially and actively co-operating in its accomplishment. Churchman and Dissenter, Prelatist and Presbyterian, Independent and Methodist, Baptist and Pædobaptist, the Anglican, the Lutheran and the Reformed, they who emphasize divine sovereignty, and they who put the stress on human freedom, they who see only unity in the Godhead, and they who recognize plurality as well as unity, appear alike in the lists of the men employed. However widely differing in other respects they agree in regarding the Bible as God's most holy word, the one rule of religious faith, the one norm of human duty; and their single aim is to make the version the most exact reflection possible of the thought, the spirit and the expression of the original. Their work, therefore, cannot bear the stamp of a sect or party. It will not be colored by the views of any particular school. In its freedom from scholastic or denominational prejudices it will resemble, or even excel, the noble simplicity of the authorized version. I say excel, for even that great work was tinged, no doubt, unconsciously, by the familiarity of its authors with the Latin Vulgate; but in the present case the concurrent action of so many revisers of different names is a security, that even accidental error of this kind will be guarded against, and that whatever other faults may be found, there will be none due to sectarian bias. If this be so, the revision will retain what has long been the glory of the authorized version—that it was the one bond of union among all Protestant Christians, and the common standard of their faith. It is quite true that there will be some disappointment. Corrections of the text, or amendments of the translation, will occasionally deprive a controversialist of some passages to which he has been accustomed to appeal in support of his particular views, and he will feel like a man whose supporting staff has suddenly

been wrenched from his hand. But it is likely that what is lost in one direction will be regained in another, or even if this be not so, the evil will not be confined to any one class, but extended to all; so that in the general result each man will find himself as well able to establish his own views from the revision as he was from the authorized version. In any event he will be sure that whatever disadvantage he may suffer is not from any intentional obliquity on the part of the revisers.

5. The *International* feature of the work is another ground of encouragement. The enterprise was begun beyond sea in 1870, but in the next year an American committee of co-operation was organized; and, since 1872, the two committees have been at work in constant correspondence with each other, having the same principles and pursuing the same objects. The advantage of this arrangement is obvious. It gives the American people a direct participation in the authorship of the work, so that, when completed, it will not come to them burdened with any prejudice, as the sole product of a foreign land. On the contrary, America will be able to welcome it as a re-revision, in the preparation of which its own children have borne an honorable and useful part; for it cannot be in vain that from twenty to thirty additional laborers have been engaged in the work, and the less so, as the joint conclusions of one committee have constantly been compared with those of the other. In this way, the workings of different minds, and repeated revisions of the results obtained, have greatly diminished the chances of error. Indeed, the larger the number of persons employed, provided they have opportunity to meet and compare their results, the less the likelihood of their work being disfigured by one-sided views or individual caprice. It is true that this advantage of personal conference has been purchased on our side of the water at the cost of limiting the selection of revisers to those persons whose residence was within easy reach of New York, where the sessions of the committee are held, thus excluding not a few scholars whose co-operation would have been very desirable. Still, the gain has been worth its cost.

The international character of the revision has been an advantage also in respect to the language employed. There are found in Britain and America certain differences of usage which obtain among all classes, even the most cultivated. For example, the word *corn* here always denotes maize, but in Great Britain it is used as precisely equivalent to what we call *grain*. In all such cases, it lies with the American committee to bring forward the fact of the variant usage, so that, if possible, ambiguities may be avoided, and a version secured which shall express the same thing to the British and the American reader. In the case of those words in which one usage must be sacrificed to the other, it is not easy to say beforehand which should give way; but it is certain that, whatever conclusion is reached, it will not be through ignorance of opposing claims, or lack of due consideration. The interests of the fifty millions on this side of the Atlantic

will not be lightly disregarded; nor, on the other hand, will the heirlooms of the language, as preserved in the country of its birth, be surrendered without reason. Of course, entire satisfaction to both parties is hardly to be expected, but it is certain that no effort will be spared to do justice to all claims. And if this can be made apparent to the impartial observer, he will be inclined to welcome a revision which is not only undenominational, but also international, and suited for every meridian around the globe where the English language is spoken.

6. The work of the revisers is *Unhindered* in every respect. The translators of the authorized version were restricted by authority in regard to certain terms which had become consecrated by long usage. No such restriction is laid upon the persons now engaged. The entire volume, from beginning to end, is put before them, and they are at liberty to use their best judgment in relation to every part of it, including the text, the division of the parts, and the marginal renderings. They are expected to study the versions ancient and modern, and especially the various English translations; but ultimately the inspired original is to be the guide, and the first requisite in all cases is fidelity. The revisers are responsible to God, and not to any man or set of men; nor have they any concern with consequences, as to the way in which the revisions may affect any Church or party. Their duty is to put the reader in possession of the truest, fairest, most idiomatic English expression of the living oracles. They need call no man master, nor bear allegiance to any school or tradition. They work in no fetters of any kind, and are dependent only upon that good Spirit, without whose influence no permanent service can be rendered to the cause of truth. This fact will give weight to the final result, since it will be regarded as the conclusion of various minds working independently on the same great theme, and at last, by free conference, coming to a representation in which all can heartily unite. This, indeed, is no guarantee against the existence of any error, but it certainly does cut off what, in all previous translations of the Scripture, has been a fruitful source of imperfection, and sometimes an impassable barrier against any improvement.

7. Yet the revision is *Conservative*. With all its freedom from arbitrary restrictions, it is a revision, and not a new translation, of the Bible. It gladly accepts as its basis the authorized version, whose excellencies are so many and so great; and it has for its fundamental principle the rule to make no change except such as is required by conscientious fidelity to the original. And when such change is made, it is to be, as far as possible, in the language of the period when our version appeared. It would be proper to adopt this course as a mere matter of policy; for no thoroughly new translation, no matter how skilfully made, could ever expect to supersede a book so dear to the hearts of the people, and so enshrined in precious memories as the old Bible. Every such attempt is foredoomed to failure. But even if this were not the case, if the book stood only upon its intrinsic

merits, without regard to any ancestral recollections, the proper course would still be the same. For, by common consent, the language of King James' version is wholly unequalled in its simplicity, strength, ease, elegance, and rhythm. It has long been a standard of grave and reverend speech, compelling the admiration even of those who had no sympathy with its contents or its aim. No improvement here is deemed desirable, or even possible. The aim, therefore, of the revision is to leave untouched all that makes the glory and attractiveness of the existing Bible, and only to remove the defects which have in any way arisen, whether from original oversight; or from the imperfect state of criticism and exegesis at the time; or from the gradual changes to which every living tongue is liable. The plan, therefore, is conservative, in the best sense of the term, retaining all that ought to be retained, and amending only what imperatively requires amendment. The new book will produce no unpleasant jar in the reader or hearer, since, in form and tone and rhythm, it will be the same as the old, and the two can be used side by side without inconvenience. The only difference will be that corrections and explanations, in which the majority of the learned now agree, will be put into the text instead of being left to be made by the oral exposition of the pulpit, or by the innumerable printed helps and commentaries which are to be found everywhere. The same guarantee against any extravagance in this direction, is the fact, that among the rules laid down for the revisers, is one which requires that in the final action of the committee no change from the common version shall be carried, unless by a vote of two-thirds.

8. The Revised Bible will be distinguished by its *Uniformity*. In this respect the authorized is sadly deficient. In many cases the same proper name is spelled in two or even three different ways, and the reader is bewildered if not seriously led astray. Or, again, the same Hebrew or Greek word is variously rendered when there is no reason, rhetorical or logical, for the variation, and sometimes when the force or the elegance of the passage depends upon the preserving of uniformity. This is owing partly to the fact that King James' revision was executed by six different companies, whose results were not carefully co-ordinated; partly to the feeling of the translators, that identity of words would "savor more of curiosity than of wisdom;" and somewhat, also, to their habit of following the preceding revisions made at different times, and by different persons, in regard to proper names and old ecclesiastical terms. All this is changed in the new revision. The aim of its authors is so to regulate the work as neither to confound things that differ, nor to create differences where they do not exist. They therefore seek in all cases where anything depends upon the matter, to render a Hebrew or Greek word by the same English term, and, if possible, not to employ one English word to render two different words of the original. If this be successfully carried out, an English concordance will be far more trustworthy than it now is or can be, for it will enable the unlearned reader to trace

the history and use of a word with great certainty. The revisers are the more likely to accomplish this because, instead of being divided into six companies, they are divided into only two—one intrusted with all the Old Testament, the other with all the New. Thus, the same men critically examine the entire Hebrew or Greek text, and are enabled continually to watch the process of the revision, and see that uniformity of phrasing is maintained, unless there be good reason for a contrary course. Besides, having before them the authorized version, and the long train of criticisms to which it has been subjected on this ground, they will be the better able to guard against a similar error in their own work. Even in this way they may not attain perfect exactness; but, beyond doubt, they will make a very near approach to it, and thus greatly facilitate the efforts of the mere English reader in ascertaining the mind of the Spirit.

9. The revision will be the result of *Mature Deliberation*. King James' Bible occupied between six and seven years in its preparation. For the revision, ten years were originally allowed, but it has become evident that this is not enough, and it is now likely that it will be fifteen years before the entire work is finished. Some have complained of the delay, and consider it a great trial of public patience; but reflecting people will hardly join in this opinion. In a matter of so great importance, so far-reaching in its influence, not only in English-speaking Christendom, but beyond it, the least excusable of all faults would be hasty and superficial treatment. There must be thorough study, patient thought, large research, and careful comparison of views. The work must not only be based upon sound principles and governed by judicious rules, but must be carried out with conscientious diligence and painstaking care. Less than this could not be endured for a moment. To supplant a book which has been venerated by high and low for nearly three centuries, and has entered into the heart and life of the people as no other volume has ever done, is not a thing to be accomplished on short notice or by a sudden burst of enthusiasm. So grave a procedure requires the utmost caution that no source of information be neglected, that no error fail to be guarded against, and that in every case the best rendering be adopted. Things which in the translation of other books would be of small importance here assume very great magnitude, because the matter in hand is the word of God—that word through which we are saved and by which we are to be judged. The great artist laboring for immortality excused himself on that ground for giving attention to what to others seemed trifles. Much more must all they who are engaged on what is the revelation of the infinite I AM spare no pains to render the version perfect in all respects. They may not succeed, but this is the end they seek. And the conviction that such a spirit has animated the present revisers, and that in consequence everything they offer has been patiently pondered with all the aid that could be gotten from any quarter, will go far to win a favorable reception of their work at the hands of the Christian public. For no other revision has

had anything like the amount of time and labor expended upon it which has been lavished upon this work on both sides of the Atlantic, both in the individual studies of its authors and in their joint meetings for conference.

10. The spirit in which the work has been conducted is *Reverential*. It has been a recognized canon of criticism that in order properly to expound any book a man must be in sympathy with its design and spirit; otherwise, he will go hopelessly astray, however well qualified he may be in other respects. And this is equally true in the matter of translation. The cold or indifferent translator will transfuse his own feelings into his work, while on the contrary he who is profoundly impressed with the dignity and preciousness of his task, and whose soul is responsive to the matter with which he deals, becomes alive to even its minutest peculiarities, catches almost without effort its dominant tone, and reproduces the foreign original in a faithful counterpart. It is this more than any other one trait that gave to Luther and Tyndale their matchless skill and enduring pre-eminence as translators of the Bible. Their whole hearts were in the work as one identified with the glory of God and the good of man; and their devout and reverential spirit impressed itself upon their pages. It is humbly claimed that the present revisers share largely in this important qualification. They have no fellowship with the disposition which of late years has appeared, among some who profess and call themselves Christians, to speak lightly of the Scriptures as a partial or imperfect record of revelation, and to lessen the force with which the Book lays hold of man's mind and conscience. On the contrary, they address themselves to their work with humility and awe as having to do with that which is of all things most sacred. They may have different theories of inspiration, but to them the Bible, the whole Bible, is the word of God, and as such separated by an immeasurable interval from every other book. Its constituent parts, therefore, are handled with tenderness and solicitude. There is no temptation to engage in hazardous speculations or seek after startling novelties, but the one thing to do is to render the meaning of Scripture accessible to the humblest reader in a form not inconsistent with its transcendent dignity and importance. The whole treatment is reverential, and the changes introduced are in exact consistency with this feeling. Recognizing the simplicity and majesty of the old version, they seek to perpetuate the same in the revision and to have the book in form and tone suited to the high and holy character of Him by whom it was given to men. They trust, therefore, that the devout reader will never be needlessly shocked at anything in the tone of the revised Bible, but find it still the same "sacred thing which doubt has never dimmed and controversy never soiled."

11. The adoption of it is *Optional* alike with individuals and churches. This was the case with King James' version. On the title page of that book it is said to be "Appointed to be read in churches;" but no authority for this statement is known to exist. No one has

ever shown an edict of Convocation, or an act of Parliament, or a decision of the Privy Council, or a proclamation of the King, to this effect. The work was left to win its way by its own merits, without physical or moral coercion in its behalf. So it will be with the Revision. Its authors have no power to enforce its use; nor would they use such power did they possess it. They will send it forth to pass under the judgment of the great Christian public from whose opinion there is no appeal. The scholars of the land will determine whether it has made the English Bible a more accurate and faithful interpretation of the original Hebrew and Greek, and the body of the people will decide whether it retains the gravity, ease, and idiomatic strength of the older version. Both parties will be left to settle these points by observation and experience; and there will be, as indeed there can be, no endeavor to forestall these decisions before they are made or to reverse them afterward. The question is one that belongs exclusively to the Church at large as an inalienable prerogative. This being understood, there is nothing to prejudice the minds of men; and they can come to their conclusion on the merits of the case.

If they find that there is a gain over the old version in accuracy, in vigor, in uniformity, and at the same time no loss in simplicity, dignity and idiomatic purity, they will certainly give it the preference both in the closet and the pulpit; but if after trial they are constrained to say, "the old is better," then the labor and expense of the revision will appear to have been thrown away, excepting so far as they may benefit an individual here or there, or prepare the way for some more prosperous effort in the far distant future. But the question must be decided upon its merits, and it will be vain to attempt to settle it upon any other ground. The interest of the Christian people of Britain and America in the word of God is too serious and deep-seated to allow them to be influenced by extraneous considerations. Whatever they finally conclude to be the most faithful and accurate expression, in our tongue, of the lively oracles of God, will surely gain their suffrages and become their hand-book for daily and devotional use. Proving all things, they will hold fast that which is good.

12. Such are the considerations which render it likely that the attempt will succeed, and the revision take the place of the authorized version. But it is very certain that this change cannot be effected speedily. The time-honored book, which so long has been everywhere accepted as the English Bible, and which has been hallowed by so many venerable and precious associations, will not be lightly relinquished. The great majority of the adult people of the present generation will doubtless cling to the volume in the use of which they have grown up, and even if unable to answer the arguments offered in favor of the revision, will simply say that they are too old to change. Nor need these be harshly judged. The feeling which prompts such an utterance is not superstition and obstinacy, but rather the offspring of a sentiment that is praiseworthy—one that

cherishes old associations and feels peculiarly drawn to what has been endeared to men, in their deepest experiences alike of joy and sorrow, as a guide, monitor, comforter and friend. But the case is different with the younger portion of the community. They will have grown up with the knowledge that the present version was considered imperfect, and that deliberate measures had been taken to provide something better. They will thus be prepared to consider the matter more impartially when the work is done, and to yield as soon as they shall be convinced that the changes made are for the better, and not for the worse. The case will be stronger with those who come after them; for these will have had the old and the new before them from the beginning, and will therefore have no prepossessions which cannot easily be removed. If then the revisers have accomplished what they expected and attempted; if they have removed existing obscurities and infelicities without introducing any of their own; if they have put the English reader in possession of the chief important results of modern scholarship, and yet retained the warp and the woof of the common version; then may it be expected that, in the course of a generation, the same result will be reached as was seen in the days of King James, and the revision will quietly take the place of its predecessor in the closet, the school, and the pulpit. It will become the universal standard; and men will wonder why so great an aid and comfort in the acquisition of biblical knowledge was not attained at an earlier period.

Still, of course, it is possible that a contrary result may follow; and in regard to that it may be safely said that if the present effort to amend the English Bible should fail, it hardly seems possible that any other should ever succeed. When one considers the peculiar auspices under which this is prosecuted, the respectability of its origin, the moderation of its aims, the catholic character of its authors, the cordial union of the two countries chiefly concerned, the number and reputation of the scholars employed, the pains that have been taken and the time that has been employed, it may well be judged that such a combination of favorable circumstances is not likely to occur again, and if it should, would still give no more reason to expect a successful result than there is now. The failure of this attempt would therefore be tantamount to saying either that the English Bible is so good that it does not need any amendment, or that there is not sufficient learning and wisdom in the modern Church to make the requisite amendments in an acceptable manner. Painful as such a conclusion would be, it would be welcome as a guard against any future efforts like the present. It would prevent the waste of any more time and money in the vain endeavor after an impossibility; and it would lead the friends of Christ to consider whether there is any other way in which they could remedy the evils which flow from an inadequate and somewhat antiquated version of the Book of books.