

A LECTURE  
ON THE  
REVISED VERSION  
OF THE  
NEW TESTAMENT,

—BY—

D. B. WILLSON,

PROFESSOR IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH, ALLEGHENY, PA.



PITTSBURGH:  
MYERS, SHINKLE & CO., PRINTERS AND BINDERS, 145 WOOD STREET.  
1881.

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\*GENTLEMEN OF THE THEOLOGICAL CLASS:—I greet you this evening on behalf of the professors, as you come to engage with us in theological study. You are looking forward to an honorable work, the leading of men in the light and power of the word of God, to a higher and a better life—a life only begun here, and to continue throughout eternity. You study, that you may the better serve your generation; and when the end comes for you, as come it must, no regret will ever cross your soul that you gave yourselves to this work. Our charge against ourselves will be, that we have so feebly and defectively labored for God.

It devolves upon me, this evening, to speak to you on some subject related to your studies. Three years ago, I delivered the opening lecture in course, and spoke of Our English Bible. Four months have elapsed since the New Testament has been put before the world in a new form; and it seems to me, that, however common this subject has become, this also is the place and the time to discuss the Revised Version.

The revision of our New Testament was committed by the Convocation of Canterbury to seven of its number. This committee invited from the Established and other churches twenty-five persons in all, to co-operate with them. Changes by death, the declining of the service and resignation brought the number down, so that for the greater part of the time there were but twenty-four serving on the committee. Bishop Ellicott was chairman, and, during all these years was never absent from his place. They met for the first time on the 22d of June,

\* The opening of the session of 1881-2, of the Theological Seminary, September 20th, 1881.

1870, and held in all 407 sessions, the average attendance being 15.8 members. The last meeting ended at 5 P. M., November 11, 1880. After delay, an American committee was selected, consisting of fifteen members. Of these, one declined and two resigned. The following died: Dr. Hadley, in 1872; Dr. Hackett, in 1876; Charles Hodge, in 1878: and then Dr. Washburn. The original committee added five to its number. Dr. Woolsey was the chairman. Their labors began in October, 1872. The persons selected were chosen on the ground of their attainments and denominational relations. In the last article he wrote, contributed to the *Times*, Dean Stanley says of the English Company: "The Company was composed and intended to be composed out of the widest circle. Dean Alford, in a memorable speech, vindicated the admission of even Jews into the ranks of the Revisers. Roman Catholics were invited in the person of Cardinal Newman, who courteously refused on the ground of his not having paid any special attention to the subject; but every other school of opinion gladly responded to the call." The American Company included a Unitarian—a distinguished Cambridge professor. After all, the revision was in continuation of the labors of John Wickliffe and William Tyndale, whose pious wish it was, to give *saving* knowledge to their countrymen. Wickliffe wrote in his Preface to Luke, "A poor caitiff (captive) let (hindered) from preaching for a time for causes known of God writeth the Gospel of Luke in English to the poor men of his nation, who know little Latin or none." William Tyndale is said by Fox, to have been "moved and stirred up of God, to translate the Scripture into his mother tongue, for the utility and profit of the simple people of the country." Whatever service they may render who are not Evangelical, there is need for aid from on high. There was need, then, constantly for prayer, to God the Father, to grant all needed help, gifts and graces, through the merits of his Son our Saviour. Such Companies should be so made up, as to unite in soul in their desires, seeking them by the same channel and on the same ground.

The English Company initiated the changes, as a rule, and the American Company with these before them made up and forwarded suggestions and proposed alterations. The action taken on these in England was made known to the American Company, who yielded or not as the case might be, the latter course being taken in quite a number of passages as the Appendix shows. Mutual concessions reduced what would make an octavo volume of about 400 pages of American suggestions and points of difference to the small compass of the present Appendix.

The Revised Version is, then, the fruit of the labors of able scholars, on both sides of the Atlantic, who have given as much time and mental toil as can reasonably ever be looked for to be expended on such an

undertaking, and their work is now laid before the English speaking Christian world. I do not see, how fault can be found with the privacy with which the revision was carried on. It would not have been well to put forth a trial revision from time to time for public criticism. The New Testament has come now as a whole before the Christian world in a revised form. Many say, accept the new Version at once without question. The Companies, who have made the revision, are so far superior to the individual, that the faith they command should lead to the unhesitating acceptance of their work, as a better version of the New Testament, than that which we have. An able Greek scholar, Professor Tyler, of Amherst College, has thus expressed himself upon it: "It is not, indeed, the unanimous but the harmonious result of the best scholarship of the different denominations of Christians in Great Britain and the United States, working separately and independently, yet in one spirit and with one result, for a decade of years; and, although, like all human works, it is not without its imperfections and blemishes, (and some will count any emendation a blemish and every change an offence), although an angel from heaven could not produce a translation which would please all or even any one in all respects, yet I have no hesitation in saying that the new revision represents the true and original Greek Testament much more faithfully than the Authorized Version, or probably any other version that has been made in modern times. It expresses the thought and language of the inspired writers in better, because more idiomatic and more recent English. It is not only more acceptable to scholars, but more intelligible to common readers; and it promises to give a new impulse to the reading and study of the New Testament, new life and power to Christianity in every part of the world where the English language is spoken." (*The Independent*, June 30, 1881.) To this unqualified approval I was also at first inclined, and have so expressed myself. But the question has been complicated for the Christian public by the Revisers themselves, for we can hardly call their work a "harmonious result." The whole subject was in fact thrown open by the Revisers, when an Appendix was asked on one hand and conceded on the other. The matter has passed out of the Revisers' hands, and the final shape the new version is to assume has been opened up. If less than a score of American scholars put themselves in opposition to the judgment of the English Company, the decision of the English speaking Christian world is thereby invoked. Some of the American Company have, therefore, written apologetically. One says, "It will be observed by those who reflect upon the subject that the Appendix is only of the nature of an enlargement of what is commonly called the "Margin." Again, this writer says, "Now, the Appendix, of which we are speaking, is clearly of the same nature as the marginal renderings and is designed for the

same purpose. It might well have been distributed to the several passages which it concerns, and there inserted in the margin; but the bringing together of what it contains does not change its character, and, if the extending of marginal translations so far as to include the matter now found in the Appendix would be justifiable, the presenting of this matter to the reader in the Appendix itself is also to be justified."—*(Rev. Dr. Dwight.)*

And yet, if the Version had been presented without this difference of judgment between the two Companies, the question would not be materially changed. The well known writer "Vidi" thus forcibly states the claim of the Christian church: "The revising committee is to submit proposals rather than to announce decisions. A thing so comparatively unimportant as the revision of a political constitution would never be entrusted as a finality to any committee or even convention. I hold, then, that the revision of our version of the New Testament is only initiated, not completed, by the ten years' labor of the American-assisted British committee. I submit that such committee, no matter of whom composed, is not the highest available authority, nor by any means a proper authority for a step so serious as the introduction of a change in the Bible of the people. It seems to me evident that the general *consensus* of the churches, to be in some way deliberately ascertained after perhaps five years' discussion, is the only rightful authority, and at the same time immeasurably the highest mind, to which the several proposals of the revision can be submitted. Though there be not outside the committee an individual living whose opinion ought to weigh against that of certain of its members, still it remains true that no committee's agreement can weigh against the collective common sense of the Christian world in the light of all the facts and arguments to be produced."

It appears then, that the Revised Version is necessarily before the Christian public for criticism. It is to stand or fall on its merits. No ecclesiastical authority, no civil authority bolsters it up. So it was with the present version. Though called in England the Authorized Version, it came forth with no power behind it to press its acceptance. It competed with the versions in use, and supplanted them. Nor is this great jury—the Christian public—altogether unfitted for the task now laid upon it. The many can judge of the English of the Version; and as to the rendering, there are great numbers that can and will judge of it, and a new Concordance, prepared by Dr. Robert Young, a most elaborate work, places it still more in the power of the studious to judge somewhat of this. Even as to the various readings, the problem is not what it once was. The leading manuscripts, those that have called imperatively for certain changes in the text, have been published, and the testimony can be laid before a large jury, not altogether incompe-

tent for the work of judging. A few months rightly seem a short period within which to form a judgment of the fruit of years of toil, yet it may not be amiss to give an opinion now, if supported by reasons, even though time may modify the verdict now given.

First, then, as to the external form of the text. No. 7, of the Principles and Rules agreed to by the Committee of Convocation in 1870, was, "To revise the headings of chapters and pages, paragraphs, italics, and punctuation;" so that it was long known, that the external form of the text was under review. It was expected that the verses would be changed; but it was not known, for a time, that the headings of pages and chapters would be *revised away*. The committee have divided the text into paragraphs. The New Testament is thus put into better shape, because the division of chapters is faulty, as at the close of Matthew 19, Mark 2, Mark 8, Acts 7, &c.; and the division of verses, as they now stand, is more objectionable, as all know. The Revisers have not, in my opinion, made enough breaks to supersede the necessity of further division, and this will be called for. In using the Revised Version, one has often need to refer to our present version to determine the separation of the verses, as the figures on the margin are not a sufficient guide. The omission of certain verses, especially in the Gospels, called for a renumbering. This has been attended to at I. John 5: 7. I see no reason why the committee could not have completed this work, and have revised the titles and the verses. This may well be attended to, before the Revised Bible is issued, as a whole. Fault has been found because the Revisers did not discard italic letters to denote words not in the Greek. This is so familiar and acceptable a feature of our present version, that it is well it was not discarded, and this part of their work has been carefully done. It is easy, however, to criticise. For example: In I. Cor. 12: 29, we read "Are all *workers of miracles?*" Our version has, "Are all workers of miracles?" Strictly, both should be united, "Are all *workers of miracles?*" Nor is uniformity always maintained. For example: Luke 15: 12, reads, "Father, give me the portion of *thy* substance that falleth to me." Our present version has, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." *To me* is a supply, as our version has marked it, and *thy* in the Revised Version is a rendering for the Greek *the*, while in I. Cor. 1: 1, for instance, the Greek *the* is rendered "our," not italicised, however, while it is so in our present version. Again, in I. Tim. 1: 2, the Revised Version has, "Unto Timothy, my true child in faith." Our version has, "my own son." There is no word for "my," not the article, so that our present version is correct, if we descend to particulars. I take it, Luke 15: 12, should be, "Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me."

I pass now to speak of the internal form of the text, and first of the

translation of the Greek, that is, the rendering of what is taken to be the text. Here I note, first, that the Revisers have failed to make changes in many places, where no objection would have been made to the change, as the expressions retained are not in use. I might group with this the positive statement that they have inserted archaisms, where they did not find them in our present version. The American Company have put their objection to this course on the part of the British Company under Classes of Passages, VII, in the Appendix, "substitute modern forms of speech for the following archaisms, viz: "who" or "that" for "which," when used of persons; "are" for "be" in the present indicative; "know" "knew" for "wot," "wist;" "drag" or "drag away" for "hale." The Appendix also notes at Luke 23: 23, the retention of "instant," though displaced in other passages. An example of the insertion of archaisms may be seen at II. Thess. 2: 13, "for that" in place of "because," a rendering adopted on a principle to which I shall shortly refer. Most noteworthy is the insertion of "shamefastness" in I. Tim. 2: 9, which is in fact an older word than "shamefacedness," the word displaced. This is an effort to revive an obsolete word.

The conservatism that uses these words acts rather capriciously in view of the many changes otherwise made; and to this I pass now, and note in the second place, that the Revised Version is seriously injured by the multitude of unnecessary changes. This would of itself delay the acceptance of the version, because it makes it strange to the reader. Here seems to be a falling into Scylla in avoiding Charybdis. Much has been made of the variety of renderings given by the translators of our present version to the same Greek word. The Preface of the Revised Version quotes the Translators' rule, in order to criticise it, "When a word hath divers significations, that to be kept which hath been most commonly used by the most of the ancient fathers, being agreeable to the propriety of the place and the analogy of the faith." Of this rule, the Revisers say, "There are numerous passages in the Authorized Version, in which, whether regard be had to the recurrence (as in the first three Gospels), of identical clauses and sentences, to the repetition of the same word in the same passage, or to the characteristic use of particular words by the same writer," the Translators have not been faithful. In such cases, they say, they have not hesitated to introduce alterations, even though the sense might not seem to the general reader to be materially affected.

But further, the Revisers have made changes *by consequence*, "that is, by reason of some foregoing alteration." The cases "are numerous." "Sometimes the change has been made to avoid tautology; sometimes to obviate an unpleasant alliteration or some other infelicity of sound; sometimes, in the case of smaller words, to preserve the familiar rhythm; sometimes for a convergence of reasons," and then a case is

given to illustrate. In fact, a uniform rendering of certain words was chosen, and then changes were made to carry out the principle. Dr. Newth, in his Lectures on Revision, shows how this was done—most thoroughly, it will be seen—"It was felt to be desirable to reconsider the Revised Version with exclusive reference to this single point; and the pages of a Greek Concordance were assigned in equal portions to different members of the Company, who each undertook to examine every passage in which the words falling to his share might occur, and to mark, if, in any case, unnecessary variations in the English had either been introduced or retained. The passages so noted were brought before the notice of the assembled Company, and the question was in each case considered whether, without any injury to the sense, the rendering of the word under review might be harmonized with that found in other places." The Revisers call this a "sound principle," and have carried it out. (The first of the Principles and Rules agreed to in 1870, is, "To introduce as few alterations as possible into the text of the Authorized Version consistently with faithfulness.") There is no call for examples under this remark. I would say, that however sound the principle of the Revisers is, it is only sound within limits and these limits have been far exceeded. In endeavoring to avoid one fault, they have fallen into another. It is indeed "a minor matter," as an English writer says in comparing the parable of the sower in the two versions, "whether the wicked one 'snatcheth' or 'catcheth away' that which 'was sown' or 'hath been sown,' whether it 'dureth' or 'endureth' for a while." Where does the question of faithfulness come in, whether we render a word *straightway*, *forthwith*, or *immediately*? There is no such iron rule in translating; and, besides, the very words of the passages have been even committed to memory by many, who know well the cadence of the verses, and the principle is not an excuse for breaking up so many familiar passages. Dr. Roberts, of the English Company, in the Companion to the Revised Version, intended as a vindication of it, in referring to the various readings of the Greek text, uses this language: "As in English the meaning is the same, whether we say, 'He went forth,' or 'He went out;' 'Let us go on,' or 'Let us proceed;' 'The enemy escaped,' or 'The enemy made their escape,' so it is very frequently in the Greek." And yet very many of the changes the Revisers have made are just as small, and made simply in deference to a principle of uniformity. The most of these I would willingly see unmade. That at Luke 2: 43, is unfortunate.

I may also group under this remark as to changes, many of the cases where the structure of the English sentences has been altered to imitate the order of the words in the Greek sentences. There was no need in many cases thus to follow the Greek tongue, rather than our own. I quote Dr. Roberts again as to the various readings, "It makes no dif-

ference in our language whether we say, 'Paul, the Apostle' or 'The Apostle Paul,' 'The poet Milton,' or 'Milton, the poet.' So too is it with a large number of those variations which occur in the text of the New Testament." (Companion, chap. I.) Yet in John, first chapter, we have "Isaiah, the prophet" for "The prophet Esaias (Isaiah,)" and in Matthew 6th, what has been severely criticised, "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth," for the smoother and familiar order, "Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven." Many of the changes are due to the Greek order.

I may also group here the changes made in the rendering of the tenses. Many of these have been made for good, but the same excessive spirit of uniformity marks the course of the Revisers here, as in the cases mentioned already. The aorist and perfect have been so carefully distinguished, that the English reader is struck with the unnecessary stiffness of the sentences. In March, 1857, a revision of the Gospel according to John was issued by five English clergymen, four of whom were in the Revision Company, Dean Alford being of the number. They put forth revisions afterwards of seven of the Epistles of Paul. Dr. Marsh said of their revision of John, what is true of this new version from their hands, "An American cannot help suspecting that the tenses are coming to have in England a force which they have not now in this country, and never heretofore have had in English literature."

I may also include here the undue attention paid to the Greek article. Many passages in our present version have been helped by rendering the article, but yet, what is gained by this change in Matt. 8: 12, "There shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth," for "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth?" If the article must go in, it should go in in both cases, "There shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth." Yet, Dr. Roberts must say, "There are, no doubt, cases in which the English idiom will not tolerate the use of an article, where it is found in the original." (Companion, Part II., Chap. 2.) It is also true that we need the article in some cases where the Greek does not have it. Yet in Romans, we have the notes multiplied by "a law," "works of law," "law," "through law," &c., while in Romans 1: 18, the margin gives "a wrath of God," for the text, "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven," &c.

The Revisers found even themselves that their ideas of uniformity had a limit. For example as to the uniform rendering of the same Greek word: though they give us in Matt. 18: 7, "Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling! for it must needs be that the occasions come; but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh!" in several passages they retain the word *offend*. *Stasis* is rendered "riot" in Acts 19: 40, displacing "uproar," while in Acts 23: 7 the translation "dissension" is retained. Why not retain "uproar"?

*Exousia* is rendered *authority* in Luke 10: 19, displacing "power;" in John. 1: 12 "right," displacing "power;" similarly in Rom. 9: 21; while in the 13th chapter, in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd verses, the rendering "power" is retained, where, if at all, *authority* is the idea, "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher authorities: for there is no authority but of God." Then as to the tenses: at Heb. 11: 28, they did not venture to render the perfect tense except in the margin, but retain "he kept the passover;" so, also, in the 17th verse.

In the third place, I have noted certain passages where I do not judge the Revisers have made a better rendering of the Greek. Without entering into a detail of the passages, I call attention to some of those that seem to me the most objectionable. Luke 1: 35, "That which is to be born of thee shall be called holy, the Son of God." There is no reason why the translation that makes *hagion* the predicate should have the place of the text. Acts 15: 23, "The apostles and the elder brethren." There is no ground for making *presbuteroi* an adjective, when the preceding verse, where the "elders" are mentioned, is looked at. Acts 16: 25, "But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God." There is no conjunction. Their praises were prayers, praying they sang; and psalms 102 and 146 and others show how this could be. In Acts 25: 8, I would object to the rendering *sinned*, when reference is also made to Cæsar. Our version is better, "offended." In the much discussed passage, Acts 26: 28, rendered "With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian," the Revisers have given us a gloss. The verb simply is "thou persuadest me," or the whole is, "In little thou persuadest me," and they have filled in from their idea (it may be a just one) of Agrippa. Rom. 3: 9, "What, then, are we in worse case than they?" is not in keeping with the context, and our version is. Another translation that I note is in 2 Tim. 3: 16, "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching," &c. The natural translation of the two adjectives, as placed together, is that of our present version, and that adopted by the Revisers should not have the place of the text. It matters not that Alford and Ellicott are agreed in this rendering. They oppose Chrysostom, Athanasius, Calvin, and the Geneva version, DeWette and Conybeare; and our text might well have remained and the revised text take the margin, for even Alford speaks hesitatingly. But their translation is no innovation. It is as old as Cranmer and even Tyndale. Most objectionable is the rendering in Phil. 2: 5-6, "Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God." Here certainly, as the Appendix has it, the margin "a thing to be grasped" was the term. It will be seen that some of the renderings I note as better are in the margin or in the Appendix, but this should not modify our condemna-

tion of the version. If this version be adopted, there will be editions, as there are of our present version, that will omit the margin and Appendix; and besides, the general reader of the future would not attend to them, but his thoughts would be formed by the text.

Thus much of criticism. And yet objection should not be made against the meeting of this new version in a critical spirit. The defects of our present version have been fully set forth during a long term of years, and at times in words quite harsh. For instance, the Companion to the Revised Version, referring to various renderings in our present translation, uses such terms as these, "almost unintelligible," "an utterly impossible version of the Greek," "this verse is spoiled in the Authorized Version," "unscholarly," "blundering," "the rendering is not only erroneous, but absurd," &c. And, on the other hand, the Revised Version has had its excellencies set forth not only by Dr. Roberts, and others of the English Company, but by several of the American Company, and widely by the President of the American Committee of Revision, in his able addresses to large audiences since the book was issued.

I indicate leading points of excellence. The first and most important one is the correction of the original text by the aid of the most ancient manuscripts. The chief of these were not accessible when the Greek text, on which our present version is based, was made up. The manuscript of the IVth century, in the Vatican, has all along been jealously guarded, and it is only of late that it has been published in a satisfactory way. The only other one, that may rank with it, now at St. Petersburg, was only discovered of late years. Their importance is seen by referring to Matt. 17: 21; 18: 11; Mark 7: 16; 9: 29, &c., where omissions are made on their authority, and all through the Gospels their influence is seen in clearing away accretions of the text, that arose from parallels. And yet they have not been blindly followed. Weight has been given to other authorities. In the following passages, one may see disregard of them; at Matt. 12: 47; Mark 3: 14; 10: 7, 21; John 9: 35, &c. One case is especially noteworthy. John 1: 18, reads in the new version as in our present version, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Here the weightiest manuscript authority, the Vatican and Sinaitic uniting with others, is disregarded, when they read "the only begotten God," and the fathers turn the scale against the oldest manuscripts. Among the men who have passed judgment on all these passages, are the leading biblical critics of the world. They have given us a corrected text. This amendment of the text is the great benefit of the work of the Revisers, and this, though they did not set out to produce a revised Greek text. Since the time of Griesbach, there has been variety in the published Greek texts. These were so

multiplied that the Textus Receptus had been put aside, as a thing of the past. Now we have a new Textus Receptus, for no such body of men as the British Company ever sat to fix the text, so far as possible, from ancient documents. This will take the place of the Elzevir text, and various readings now will be variations from this. The attention paid to the text by the Revisers is seen not only in the changes they have made after careful study, but in the notes. The 1611 Bible had 700, this Version has more than 2,000. Nearly 400, or about one in every six, are of a textual character. In the 1611 Bible, there were but 35, or about one in twenty, that were of this nature. The evidence the Revisers have sifted has been very perplexing in some cases, and in a few instances they have expressed doubt, as the notes tell us, at Acts 4: 25; Col. 2: 2; Heb. 11: 4; Jude 22; Rev. 2: 13; 13: 10. The Appendix contains some various readings, and Westcott and Hort, of the English Company, have lately put forth a text that varies somewhat from the Revisers' readings; and, yet when the Elzevir text stood for centuries, this Revisers' text will stand, it may be, till an international body of biblical critics can prepare a text. Years must elapse before criticism of the new text can have any effect.

Another point of excellence in the Revision is in the translation, and appears, for example, in the precision they have given to parallel passages. This was a needed work. Compare for instance Matt. 26: 41 and Mark 14: 38, in the two versions. In both passages, we have in the new version, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak," the Greek being the same. The precision of the Revisers' work in such passages, and in a multitude of instances, including the proper names, can only be fully seen after years of handling of the version they have prepared. The change made for the better by a uniform rendering of the same Greek word in the same connection is seen in Romans, 7th chapter, "I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, finding an occasion, wrought in me through the commandment all manner of coveting. For apart from the law sin is dead." Perhaps also in II. Cor., first chapter, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound unto us, even so our comfort also aboundeth through Christ. But whether we be afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or whether we be comforted, it is for your comfort, which worketh in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: and our hope for you is steadfast; knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so also are ye of the comfort." Undoubtedly, however, in II. Cor. 3: 5, 'Not

that we are sufficient of ourselves to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God, who also made us sufficient as ministers."

There are, besides, the corrections of mis-translations in our present version; but these are not many or serious, as the translators had many guides in rendering the text. The Revisers have, for example, more truly translated the word in Matt. 14: 8, "put forward," as to the daughter of Herodias, rather than "*before instructed* of her mother." A little change has improved Matt. 15: 5, 6; 27: 52; Luke 16: 9; John 15: 5; Acts 19: 1; 25: 21; Heb. 13: 7 and 8; &c.

A vast number of the changes that have been made (they are numbered by thousands,\*) do not belong, however, to the classes, of which I have now given examples, but are included under the classes, examples of which I gave to show the strained uniformity of the Revision.

In conclusion, if I were asked if this Revised Version is a satisfactory work, as it is, *as a substitute for our present version*, I should say, after what examination I have been able to give it, that it is not. Besides what was required by faithfulness to the best obtainable text and its meaning, this Revised Version interferes needlessly with nearly every sentence in our present version by a studied uniformity of rendering where the word in our present version is a true rendering of the original, and by a constant deference to the Greek order of words. These two causes have marred the Revised Version, and place it in disagreeable contrast to our present Bible.

Is there any prospect of a re-revision, or of any modification? We have, first of all, the American readings to fall back on. It is made to appear; and this even by members of the American Company. It seems to me, however, a matter of regret that these were not all taken out of the way and the question simplified by an increase of marginal notes. The first agreement between the English and American Companies included the procuring of an American copyright. This idea the American Revisers abandoned, and the arrangement made after correspondence was as follows:

"The English Revisers promise to send confidentially their revision in its various stages to the American Revisers, to take all the American suggestions into special consideration before the conclusion of their labors, to furnish them before publication with copies of the revision in its final form, and to allow them to present, in an Appendix to the Revised

\*The Bishop of Gloucester stated, when the Revised Version first came out, that in the Gospels and the Acts there were about three alterations from the Authorized Version in every five verses—a total in the five books of 2,250. A correspondent of the London *Guardian* writes that he has counted the alterations, and finds the variations in the Gospels and the Acts to be 14,601. The grand total of changes in the whole volume reaches, according to this authority, 36,191.

Scriptures, all the remaining differences of reading and rendering of importance, which the English Committee should decline to adopt; while, on the other hand, the American Revisers pledge themselves to give their moral support to the authorized editions of the University Presses, with a view to their freest circulation within the United States, and not to issue a rival edition for a term of fourteen years."

The British presses have been well repaid, and can well make concessions to the American Company, or to the Christian public. Yet it may take the full term mentioned—fourteen years—before a conclusion will appear, that can be styled a verdict calling for well defined changes. But meanwhile, the American press has already issued, independently of the Revisers, editions with the American readings in the text, and the English readings in the Appendix. This work has been incorrectly done, because too hastily done, but in due time we shall have the American Recension as a candidate for the approval of the Christian public. Several of the American Company have written in favor of the American Recension. They hope for the adoption of this in place of the Revised Version as now published. Dr. Chambers, one of their number, says: "In nearly every case, as we suppose, the public opinion of our land will approve the Appendix in place of the text, and ultimately this will be the case in other lands."\* And so in the Supplement to the Companion to the Revised Version, "This Appendix is subject to the verdict of the American Christian community. If approved by public opinion, it will ultimately be incorporated in the text of the American editions." We see no benefit in countenancing such an edition. It is idle to hope it will prevail in other lands, and if adopted here, the uniformity that now exists would cease. I repeat, that it would be far better to transfer all the American readings to the margin; and let the decision turn upon the one book, whether to be adopted as it is, or to be amended before adoption. Then the two nations would have the one book still in the future, as in the past. The Appendix has already been compared to an extended margin by one of the American Revisers, as we have seen. The marginal notes could well be sifted to allow space for it. Many of these notes are full of instruction, in addition to those that represent various readings, as at Matt. 26: 49, Judas kissed the Lord much; Mark 3: 10, "catch" means to *take alive*; Col. 3: 15, "to rule" is to "arbitrate"—"Let the peace of Christ arbitrate in your hearts." Yet there are far too many. Such notes as Luke 17: 33, *soul* for "life," Gr. *healthy* for "sound," often in Titus, (and there are many of these,) could easily be spared.

The questions concerned in this new version do not by any means have simply to do with the two recensions—English and American. Enthusiasm for the work of the Revisers of our own country will not

\*Presbyterian Review, July, 1881, p. 473.



suffice. Preferable as are many of their readings, they are not all preferable to those of the English Company. The *Commercial Gazette*, of Pittsburgh, thus notices the "American Version": "Whatever authority the Revised Version of the New Testament may possess is derived solely from the fact that its new readings were agreed upon by a select body of scholars of acknowledged ability. Of course they were not unanimous in everything, but in a body of which all the members are assumed to be equally capable, the rule of the majority is the only rule by which disputes can be decided, and propositions that were deliberately rejected ought to be allowed to drop. It was a stretch of courtesy to the American committee to print their rejected amendments as an appendix to the new edition. There is no objection to the American Version in itself, for everybody is entitled to make a version for himself if he sees fit, and Dr. Hitchcock's work is strictly in the line of private interpretation. But Biblical criticism is likely to become even more confused than it is now under such a system, and from a literary point of view the American Version is worse than the English. The only positive advantage in such experiments is that they will confirm the average reader in his devotion to the time-honored version of King James." Is there anything further? Rev. Dr. W. J. R. Taylor having said, "Personally, I venture the prediction that the entire work will require a second revision, if ever it is to take the place of the Old English Bible," Dr. Chambers, whom I have already quoted as to the American Recension, insists that the way is closed. He says: "The churches and their members are shut up to the existing claimants for their favor. If they reject, as they have a perfect right to do, the New Revised, they must fall back upon the Common Version. There is no *tertium quid* now existing or likely to exist for a century to come." And again: "It seems clear that the Revision as it now exists is a finality for this generation and the coming century. The public may take it, or they may leave it; but there is no third course open, and the talk of another revision, whether by the same parties or by others, is merely a delusion, which draws attention away from what is the real issue before the people." Professor Thayer of the American Company, who served also as Secretary, does not speak so positively as Dr. Chambers, to preclude all hope of change. After noticing faults in the Version, he says: "On several points our sympathies are with the American Revisers, as has been intimated, and we are inclined to think that in the two or three years yet to elapse before the Old Testament Company finish their work, the judgment of scholars will have been passed upon these and other minor differences with such unanimity that (as in the case of the Geneva Version) the New Testament in the completed Bible will exhibit minor improvements over the form in which it has now seen the light."

I conclude by giving some judgments and suggestions as to this version, and not from those who have hastily scanned the book. Mr. Spurgeon's judgment concerning the new version is summed up thus: "It is a valuable addition to our versions, but it will need much revision before it will be fit for public use." Rev. Dr. Simmonds, of New York, also a Baptist minister, says: "The revisers have done an invaluable work, but that this work will have to be revised in important particulars, there cannot be a question." Rev. Dr. Breed, of Philadelphia, says: "I fancy that the number of ministers will be comparatively small who will introduce the Revised New Testament in its present condition into the pulpit as a substitute" for the present version. The judgment pronounced by Bishop Bedell, of Ohio, is: "Our Authorized Version will retain its hold on the confidence and affection of the great majority of readers, and they will be content to place the changes to which they attach importance in the margin of the dear old Book."

Dr. C. W. Hodge, of Princeton Seminary, has said: "That as a whole he heartily approves the new version. But there are one or two places where the Revisers have slipped up altogether, and there may be some revision before it is generally adopted." Among the slips he noted Acts 26: 28, styling it a paraphrase. Professor F. Gardiner, D.D., writing in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for July, says of the Revision: "That it is the work of most able and faithful scholars all know; that it will be a most valuable aid to the understanding of the true sense of the original, there can be no manner of doubt; but, as already said, it must necessarily be judged, like that which it proposes to supersede, not by its merits, but by its defects. If the old version failed sometimes in accuracy, the new not infrequently fails by that excess of accuracy which so precisely transfers instead of translates the Greek as to make almost unintelligible English. One who knows the Greek can detect, *e. g.*, in 2 Thess. 2: 11, what the Revisers meant by 'God sendeth them a working of error,' (*energeian planes*;) but to the ordinary English reader it conveys no idea at all. The English is also often faulty in elegance and in force as well as in clearness, and occasionally, as already said, it is ungrammatical. What will be the final result of this work, it is hard to foresee. On simple literary grounds we do not believe it will ever be allowed to replace the great classic of the English language, while nearly the same verdict is likely to be rendered also on devotional grounds. It continually reminds one of the French version. At the same time it rests upon a most admirable and well-considered Greek text, and in the nice, almost pedantic, accuracy of many of its renderings cannot but serve a most important purpose as a commentary. For this we most heartily thank the Revisers, even if we are scarcely prepared to surrender the noble English of the translators of 1611."

The London *Standard* has much to say of the English of the new version: "Whatever scholars may think of the labors of the Revisers, the impression produced upon the public mind is one of disappointment and dissatisfaction. It is deeply to be regretted that the Revisers, judging by the work just published, have apparently forgotten the conditions under which the task was intrusted to them. It is obvious that a great many of the alterations adopted have been approved for reasons of mere literary criticism, which make us rather skeptical as to the infallibility or even good taste of the Revisers. Where no material change in sense or substance of the Authorized Version has been shown to be required by the Revisers for the proper construction of the original, they have nevertheless thought themselves justified in mending the English and improving the grammar of passages which have struck deep root in the hearts and memories of the English people. Had they purged the sacred text of the errors which have crept into it, and placed, where it was necessary, the *variorum* readings in the margin, they would have performed useful and acceptable work. But in the effort to attain dry and merely mechanical accuracy of expression, they have so 'revised' the noblest book in the English language as to deprive it of much of its beauty, and they have destroyed many of its historical associations."

In conclusion the *Standard* writer says that: "It remains now for the Revisers to revise the text they have produced. If this new version is ever to be generally used and to supersede the Authorized Version many of the alterations that have been made must be discarded."

The London correspondent of the *New York Times* is quite severe: "The New Testament Revision is the result of eleven years' work. It seems to me that the failure of the commission's pedantic labors is sufficiently accentuated in the notable changes made in the Lord's Prayer, to render an elaborate criticism unnecessary. 'Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven,' familiar as it is simple in its flowing rhythm, is altered to 'Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth.' The truth is, our great Greek scholars, as a rule, are not efficient masters of English. When I was young I edited a newspaper in a university city. The most inelegant and ungrammatical contributions with which university dons favored me were those written by high-class Greek and Hebrew scholars."

The *New York Independent* suggests that it might be well "if the new text could remain for a few years in a state of flux, and be submitted to the criticism of a good body of English scholars, who should confine their work to the English merely."

The reviewer in the *British Quarterly* concludes his careful notice of the merits and demerits of the new version as follows: "If the very excellent version of the Westminster Revisers were now to be handed

over, first, to a committee of sensible country ministers, who would point out what expressions are likely to perplex the 'plough boys' for whom Tyndale wrote his New Testament, and were afterwards submitted to a committee of pure men of letters for their suggestions, we should probably get a perfect version of the New Testament." The *Edinburgh Review* is less favorable. A minute examination of many passages, is given, and the "unusual excellence" of the Revised Version in Rom. 7, 14-24 is pointed out. But the reviewer judges "there are grave reasons (which he gives) to believe that the Revised Version will not command the undivided reverence of the world, and will certainly not replace the immortal language of the English Bible." He says: "In conclusion, we reiterate our disappointment with this Revised Version as a whole. It will remain a monument of the industry of its authors and a treasury of their opinions and erudition; but, unless we are entirely mistaken, until its English has undergone thorough revision it will not supplant the Authorized Version. After all, the chief use of the present attempt will be as a work of reference in which the grammatical niceties of the New Testament diction are treated with labored fidelity. It will no more furnish an authorized version to eighty millions of English speaking people than any number of *memoires pour servir* will give them a standard history. The superior critical apparatus at the disposal of our scholars, and their advanced scientific knowledge of grammar, seem to have been rather impediments than aids, and we are left with another critical commentary on the New Testament, but not with a new version."

Ten years of toil will bear fruit, though the eagerness of some may be disappointed, as to the form it will assume, or the time it will take to mature. The names of the Biblical critics, Tregelles, Scrivener, Westcott, &c., and of the commentators Alford, Ellicott, Lightfoot, Trench, Schaff, &c., will be honored for this labor, and we may well pray the Lord of the harvest to send into his harvest men worthy to follow painstaking laborers, such as these.