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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

THE
CHURCHMAN

APRIL, 1881.

ART. I.—THE REVISION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

I.

THREE hundred and fifty years have elapsed since Bishop Tonstall, in the presence of a large assemblage of the citizens of London, committed to the flames a considerable number of copies of Tyndale's New Testament, which he had recently procured from Antwerp.

"This burning," says Bishop Burnet, "had such a hateful appearance in it, that people from thence concluded there must be a visible contrariety between that book and the doctrines of those who handled it." In a document issued shortly afterwards, under the authority of King Henry VIII., Archbishop Warham, and several of the Bishops, it is stated that the King, "taking into consideration all circumstances, thinketh in his conscience that the divulging of the Scripture at this time in the English tongue to be committed to the people, should rather be to their further confusion and destruction than the edification of their souls."

Undeterred, however, by the opposition of his powerful enemies or by the dangers which threatened his own life, Tyndale persevered, alike through evil report and good report, in the noble task to which he had consecrated his life; and he lived to complete a translation of the Pentateuch, the Book of Jonah, and the whole of the New Testament, before he was called to seal his testimony with his blood at Vilvorde, near Brussels, in the year 1536.

The dying prayer of Tyndale: "Lord, open the eyes of the King of England," was registered on high. It seems, indeed, that we may regard that prayer as an apt illustration of the fulfilment of the words of the inspired prophet: "Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear." For it is evident, from some of the title-pages still extant, that

Coverdale's Bible had already issued from a press at Antwerp, previously to the death of Tyndale; and although there is no sufficient evidence that it received any distinct royal sanction, nevertheless, between 1535 and 1537, three editions of the English Bible appeared in England with a dedication to King Henry VIII., and on the title-page of the edition of 1535 the King is depicted receiving the Bible from the Bishops and nobles who are kneeling before him.

Coverdale's Bible did not profess to be a translation from the original languages. On the contrary, it is stated, on the foreign title-page, to have been "faithfully and truly translated out of Dutch (German) and Latin into English;" whilst on the title-page, which is printed in English type, it is merely said to be "faithfully translated into English."

There has been considerable difference of opinion, in regard to the translations of Tyndale, as to the extent to which they were derived from original sources. Professor Westcott, who has examined the evidence which bears upon this question with much care, arrives at the conclusion that "all external evidence goes to prove Tyndale's originality as a translator;" a conclusion which he supports by the external evidence of Spalatinus and of Tyndale's opponent, Joye, and also by the steady confidence with which Tyndale himself deals with points of Hebrew and Greek philology.¹

From the time of the appearance of Coverdale's Bible, in 1535-6, the history of the English Bible is a history of successive revisions. Our space will not admit of our dwelling at any length upon details respecting Matthew's (Roger's) Bible, the Great Bible, that of Taverner, the Genevan Bible, and the Bishops' Bible, all of which appeared between that of Coverdale in 1535 and the so-called Authorized Revision of 1611. The point with which we are mainly concerned in the present article is to trace the gradual approximation of the successive Revisions to a faithful translation from the original sources. It was commonly believed that, in addition to the Pentateuch, the Book of Jonah, and a few detached pieces from other parts of the Old Testament, Tyndale had left behind him, in manuscript, a version of the books from Joshua to 2 Chronicles inclusive, which came, as Professor Westcott tells us, into the hands of his friend, John Rogers. Rogers, with the help of Thomas Matthew, who probably furnished money for the work, put together a composite Bible, made up partly of Tyndale's translations from the original Hebrew and Greek, and partly of one of Coverdale from the German and Latin. This work appeared in 1537, with a dedication to Henry VIII. and the Queen Jane; and at the

¹ See "History of the English Bible," p. 173. Macmillan & Co. 1868.

bottom of the title-page are found the following words: "Set forth with the King's most gracious license." In the early part of the year 1538 Crumwell appears to have applied to Coverdale to undertake the charge of a new edition, with a more complete critical collation of the Hebrew and Greek texts. This Bible, commonly known as the Great Bible, was finished in April, 1540, and two other editions followed in the course of the same year. It is worthy of observation that no attempt appears to have been made to substitute the Psalter of the Bishop's Bible for that of the Great Bible, which appeared in the first Prayer-Book of King Edward VI.; and when, at the Revision of the Prayer-Book in 1661, it was agreed that the Epistles and Gospels should be taken from the Authorized Version of 1611, a special exception was made in regard to the Psalter.

Although the constitution of the English Church and the remoulding of her service books appeared to be of more urgent importance during the reign of King Edward VI. than a further revision of the Bible, the latter object did not escape the attention of Archbishop Cranmer; and after the appointment of Fagius and Bucer to professorships in the University of Cambridge, they were charged by that prelate to devote their attention to a "clear, plain, and succinct interpretation of the Scripture according to the propriety of the language," Fagius being charged to undertake the Old Testament, and Bucer the New. Although nothing was said expressly of an immediate revision of the Great Bible, it is obvious, from the tenor of their instructions, that the thoughts of the Archbishop were turned in this direction.

The death of Edward VI. changed the whole of the ecclesiastical condition of the kingdom. During the reign of Queen Mary no English Bible was printed in this country and, although no special measures appear to have been adopted by authority for the restriction of the private use of the Scriptures, their public use was necessarily forbidden, and copies of the Bible which had been set up in churches during the previous reign were burnt. In the year 1557 the Genevan version of the New Testament appeared, which was the work of some of the English exiles who had fled to the Continent during the reign of Mary. A thorough revision of the whole Bible was shortly afterwards taken in hand by these exiles, and continued for the space "of two years and more, day and night;" and although the accession of Queen Elizabeth in 1558 partly broke up the English Society at Geneva, the work was still carried on, and the whole Bible appeared in 1560 with a dedication to the Queen.

The Genevan Bible was, in many respects, much better adapted for common use than any of its predecessors. It ap-

peared in the shape of a quarto volume of moderate dimensions, instead of the unwieldy folios which preceded it. The text was printed, for the first time, in Roman type; and the division of the chapters into verses, which was marked in the margin of Stephens' Greek Testament of 1551, was now first introduced into an edition of the English Bible.¹

The basis of the Genevan Bible, as regards the Old Testament, was the Great Bible. It seems to have been the object of the revisers to alter the rendering as little as possible, but, as Professor Westcott has observed, "there is abundant evidence to show that they were perfectly competent to deal independently with points of Hebrew scholarship;" whilst, in regard to the New Testament, "it is little more" (as the same writer observes) "than the record of the application of Beza's translation and commentary to Tyndale's Testament in three successive stages: first in the separate New Testament of 1557, next in the Bible of 1560, and lastly in the New Testament of L. Tomson in 1576."² Amongst other indications of the scholarly instinct of the Genevan revisers, reference may be made to the fact that, in the edition of 1560, there is not only a conformity to the Hebrew in the spelling of the proper names, but the Hebrew accentuation is also noted—as, *e.g.*, in the words Jaakób (Jacob), Izhák (Isaac), Abimélech.³

Shortly after the accession of Queen Elizabeth, royal injunctions, similar to those of King Edward VI., were issued, in which it was ordered that every parish church should be provided with a copy of the Bible of the largest volume—*i.e.*, the Great Bible. Soon afterwards the Queen granted a patent for seven years to John Bodley for the printing of the Genevan Bible; and whilst the Great Bible remained upon the desks of the parish churches the Genevan Bible became, for the most part, the household Bible of the land.

¹ The division of the Old Testament into chapters appears to have been introduced in the thirteenth century, and is traditionally ascribed to Stephen Langton and to Hugh de St. Cher. It was introduced into the printed Bibles by Felix Pratensis, the editor of Bomberg's first Rabbinic Bible, which was printed in Venice in 1516-17. The division into verses was of a much earlier period, inasmuch as the Talmudic versicular division corresponds with that of the Masorah. As regards the New Testament, the division into chapters was that which was introduced in the thirteenth century, as above; whilst as regards the verses, the division now adopted was introduced by the elder Stephens, who is said by his son, Henry Stephens, to have accomplished the work *inter equitandum*. It was first introduced into the Greek Testament of 1551.

² "History of the English Bible," pp. 287, 288.

³ This peculiarity was pointed out to Professor Westcott by Dr. Aldis Wright, the learned and accomplished scholar who has acted throughout as the Secretary of the Old Testament Revision Company.

Early in the reign of Queen Elizabeth a bill was drafted for reducing of diversities of Bibles "to one settled vulgar, translated from the original."¹ This work was undertaken by Archbishop Parker, who allotted it to some of the bishops and other learned men—amongst whom were Sandys, Bishop of Worcester, and Guest, Bishop of Rochester.²

This revision appeared in 1568 with a Preface, in which the revisers expressed their sense both of the importance of their undertaking and also of the provisional character of the work. The popular title of the work, "The Bishops' Bible," appears to have arisen from the fact that eight of the revisers were bishops, and that Archbishop Parker was the person mainly responsible for the revision. There is no direct evidence that the Queen gave her license, or any public recognition to this revision; but it was ordered in the Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical of 1571 that "every archbishop and bishop should have at his house a copy of the Holy Bible of the largest volume, as lately printed in London;" and it was also enjoined that each cathedral should have a copy; and the same provision was extended, "as far as it could conveniently be done," to all churches.

The history of the Rhemish New Testament and the Douay Bible must be dismissed in few words. The translators professedly adopted the current Latin Vulgate, not the original Hebrew and Greek, as the basis of their translation; and they did not hesitate to express their conviction, in regard to the New Testament, that the Vulgate was "not only better than all other Latin translations, but than the Greek text itself in those places where they disagree." The same view is adopted in regard to the Old Testament, the Hebrew text of which is alleged to have been "fouly corrupted by the Jews." The New Testament was printed at Rheims in 1582, and the Old Testament at Douay in 1609.³

¹ See Dr. Stoughton's "Our English Bible," p. 208, an admirable work, of which free use has been made in this Article.

² It will appear, from two incidents recorded by Professor Westcott, how little the duties of a faithful translator were understood at this time by some of those who were engaged in this undertaking. In returning the Book of Psalms which had been sent to Bishop Guest for correction, he wrote to the Archbishop in the following terms:—"I have not altered the translation but where it gave occasion of an error. As at the first Psalm, at the beginning, I turu the præterperfect tense into the present tense, because the sense is too harsh in the præterperfect tense. Where in the New Testament one piece of a Psalm is reported, I translate it in the Psalms according to the translation thereof in the New Testament, for the avoiding of the offence that may rise to the people upon divers translations." In like manner Bishop Cox writes thus, "The translation of the verbs in the Psalms to be used uniformly in one tense."—WESTCOTT, *History of the English Bible*, pp. 132, 133.

³ This revision, notwithstanding its secondary character as not being made from original sources, is nevertheless, as Professor Westcott has

Shortly after the accession of King James I., and before he had been recognized as king by Parliament, he summoned a conference on ecclesiastical matters at Hampton Court, on which occasion the Authorized Version of the Bible was brought forward as one of the things "amiss in the Church." Although this conference proved ineffectual in all other respects, it is to it that we owe the present Authorized Version of the Holy Scriptures. The result of the conference, as regards this subject, was that His Majesty expressed his wish that "some special pains should be taken for an uniform translation," in order to which end he desired that the work should be taken in hand "by the best learned in both Universities, after them to be reviewed by the bishops and the chief learned of the Church; from them to be presented to the Privy Council, and lastly to be ratified by his royal authority, and so this whole Church to be bound unto it and none other." It is not known in what manner the scholars who engaged in this work were selected. On the 22nd of July, 1604, however, the king wrote to Bancroft, Bishop of London, stating that "he had appointed certain learned men, to the number of four and fifty, for the translating of the Bible," and requiring the bishop to take measures whereby he might be able to recompense the translators by Church preferment.

When the necessary preliminaries were arranged, the translators, who appear to have been only forty-seven (not fifty-four), in number, were divided into six companies, of which two met at Westminster, two at Cambridge, and two at Oxford; and the whole of the work, including the Apocrypha, was divided into six portions, in such manner that the two Cambridge companies undertook the middle portion of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha; the two Oxford companies the latter portion of the Old Testament and the Gospels, Acts, and Apocalypse; and the two Westminster companies the early portion of the Old Testament, and Romans to Jude inclusive of the New Testament. It has been noticed by Professor Westcott as one of the indications of the extent to which Hebrew learning was cultivated at this time, that Boys, who was especially famous for Oriental learning, was originally employed upon the Apocrypha.

Bishop Burnet, in his "History of the Reformation," gives the fifteen rules which are said to have been laid down for the guidance of the revisers. It is impossible to say to what extent these rules were adhered to, except in so far as internal evidence

remarked, "of considerable importance in the internal history of the authorized text, for it furnished a large proportion of the Latin words which King James' revisers adopted; and it is to this rather than to Coverdale's Testaments that we owe the final and most powerful action of the Vulgate upon our present Version."—*History of the English Bible*, p. 321.

is afforded in the revision itself. It is important, however, to take notice of the following points—viz., (1) that the Bishops' Bible was to be followed, and "as little altered as the truth of the original will permit," but that the following translations—viz., "Tyndale's, Matthew's, Coverdale's, Whitchurch's, Geneva"—were to be used when they agree better with the text than the Bishops' Bible; (2) that when any one company had despatched any book, after separate translation and emendation by each of the members, and common deliberation and agreement thereon, they were to send it to the rest, "to be considered of seriously and judiciously;" and (3) that when "any place of special obscurity" was doubted of, "letters were to be directed by authority to send to any learned man in the land for his judgment of such a place."¹

Little need be said on the present occasion as to the manner in which the important work thus undertaken was carried out, and, after an interval of seven years, published in the form of a well-printed but somewhat ponderous and unwieldy folio volume.

However violent the attacks which were made upon the Authorized Version of 1611 by Broughton and others, at the time of its publication, the sound scholarship of King James' revisers is now almost universally allowed by all competent witnesses. It is not too much, we think, to allege that it is called in question by those only who are unable to form any just estimate of the difficulty of the task, or of the qualifications necessary on the part of those who were engaged in it. It must be remembered that the revisers of 1611 were destitute of a large number of those appliances which are within the reach of modern scholars, and that whilst the defects and inaccuracies which undoubtedly exist in their work are due, in great measure, to the peculiar circumstances of their position and to the prevailing state of learning in the age in which they lived, the vast superiority of their revision over that of any of their predecessors entitles them to the just homage and to the unfeigned gratitude of the English-speaking people of all after time, and, we may add, of those numerous races, belonging to distant parts of the world, to whom the knowledge of the Holy Scripture has been imparted by translations which have been made chiefly or exclusively from the Authorized Version of 1611.

In the immediate prospect of the publication of the Revised

¹ "These directions will be read with additional interest when they are compared with the resolutions which are said to have been adopted by the two Revision Companies which have been engaged for the last ten years and upwards in a similar undertaking."—See Dr. SROUGHRON'S *Our English Bible*, p. 293.

New Testament, which has been the result of the combined labours of many accomplished scholars during the last ten years it may be well to state briefly the chief causes of the imperfections of the present Authorized Version of the New Testament, and the grounds on which it may reasonably be anticipated that the new Revision should be found to be in closer conformity than any of its predecessors to the original text.

And (1) as regards the state of the Greek text. It is well known that the revisers of 1611 had no trustworthy Greek text before them. The principal editions which had then been published were those of Erasmus, which were five in number (1516-1535 A.D.); of Robert Stephens, four in number (1546-1557 A.D.); of Beza, four editions in folio, and five smaller editions (1546-1598 A.D.); and the Complutensian Polyglot (1522 A.D.). The edition which the revisers of King James followed appears to have been the fourth edition of Beza, which was published in 1598, an edition which varies but little from the fourth edition of Stephens, which was published in 1557, and of which a nearly exact reprint was published by Mill in 1707.

It is true that Erasmus and Beza had some early and valuable MSS. which they might have followed, more especially that which is known as D, or the Codex Bezae of the Gospels and Acts, and the Claromontane MS. of the Pauline Epistles, but of these they appear to have made but little use. It is worthy of remark that in regard to the Apocalypse Erasmus had only an inaccurate transcript of a mutilated MS., and that he actually supplied its defects by translating from the Latin Vulgate into Greek.

At the present time we have many MSS., varying from the fourth to the tenth century, of the highest value, one of them, the Sinaitic, containing the whole of the New Testament, and another, the Vatican, containing the greater part of it, both of which may be assigned to about the middle of the fourth century. In addition to these we have the Alexandrian MS. and the Codex Ephraem, which probably belong to about the middle of the fifth century, and a very large number of other MSS. of later date, some of which, by reason of their agreement with the most ancient authorities, are entitled to be regarded as of equal or even greater value than those which are anterior to them in point of date. After an enumeration of ten of the most ancient and important MSS., of which eight have been published "in such a manner as to make it not only possible but easy for the student to read and study the text *in its sequence and connection*," Bishop Ellicott remarks as follows:—

When we pause to think of our present critical treasures, and the easy access that is thus afforded to them, and remember that of the

great manuscripts above alluded to, only one was in any degree used, and that in the most imperfect manner, by those on whom our revisers had to rely for their text, it would seem impossible to doubt that, even if we had no additional reasons, it is now an imperative duty on all faithful scholars to combine in making available to all, the results of a cautious and intelligent revision of the text of our English Testament.¹

(2) In regard to the ancient versions. It is true, as Bishop Ellicott has observed, that we still lack a full knowledge of the ancient versions. On the other hand, "great advance has been made," as the same writer observes, "in our knowledge of the Latin versions, whether the old Latin or Vulgate, by the publications and collations of Tischendorf and others. In the Syriac versions a great and critically important addition has been made by the discovery and the publication of the singular, and sometimes rather wild, Curetonian Syriac version."² Other versions—as, *e.g.*, the Gothic, the Coptic, the Ethiopic, and the Armenian—have also been to a greater or less extent laid under contribution; and although much yet remains to be done in regard to all of these, it cannot be denied that the revisers of the present time are placed in a very different position in respect of versions as well as of MSS. from that of their predecessors in the days of King James.

(3) In regard to critical apparatus. A glance at any comprehensive catalogue of theological and critical works bearing upon the study of the Greek language generally, and of the criticism of the New Testament in particular, will suffice to satisfy the inquirer that almost every important work of reference which is now in the hands of the New Testament scholar has been published within the last two hundred and fifty years, and the greater part of them in the course of the present century. As regards the New Testament itself it will suffice to refer to the critical editions of scholars such as Griesbach, Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles; whilst, as regards grammars, lexicons, concordances, and critical commentaries, it would be difficult to name many which were published above fifty years ago—we might almost say to name any which much exceed that date—which are still in general repute amongst Biblical students at the present time.

It will be obvious from the facts which have been now alleged that it is but reasonable to expect that we should find a closer approximation to the original text in the Revision which is about to be put forth than in any of its predecessors. Those who are acquainted with the vast strides which textual criticism has

¹ "Considerations on the Revision of the English Version of the New Testament," p. 41.

² *Ib.* p. 41, 42.

made during the last twenty years, with the increased attention which has been directed to the subject of philology generally, and with the fact that amongst the body of men who have been engaged upon the work of the New Testament Revision during the last ten years, there are scholars who are confessedly entitled to rank amongst the most distinguished textual critics and philologists of their age, will take up the volume which will shortly be put into their hands with a conviction, amounting almost to certainty, that the high expectations which they have been led to form are not doomed to meet with disappointment.

Before we conclude it will be desirable to add a few words which may help to dispel the anxiety which many devout students of God's word are known to entertain, lest the changes which must necessarily be found in any future Revision of the English New Testament should tend to weaken its authority, or to throw doubt upon any of those fundamental doctrines of Christianity which have been the common heritage of the faithful in all generations.

We will not attempt to disguise the fact, that the result of the careful collation of the numerous MSS. which have already come to light has been the discovery of variations of the text, which are reckoned not by hundreds, but by thousands. Neither will we contest the truth of the assertion that this discovery is, at first sight, calculated to awaken within the mind of the Christian a certain amount of apprehension. He may not unreasonably fear that this great variety of readings may affect some important doctrine of our common faith, or may tend to excite doubts and misgivings whether words which have been commonly regarded as inspired by the Spirit of God may not prove to be nothing more than the words of weak and fallible men. Now it may be well, in the first instance, to remind those who are exposed to this temptation of the words of one of the most distinguished scholars and critics of a past generation (we mean the illustrious Richard Bentley) as being equally applicable—perhaps even more so—to the results of the far more extensive and more elaborate collations of the present time. That distinguished scholar and critic did not hesitate to express his conviction, in regard to the various readings which had been discovered in his own time, that not “one article of faith or moral precept is either perverted or lost in them—choose as awkwardly as you will, choose the worst by design—out of the whole lump of readings.”

It would be easy to show, by various illustrations, that if, by its removal from its place in the text of a passage such as 1 St. John v. 7, the upholders of the doctrine of the Trinity may be deprived of an argument which has been employed in

its support, additional evidence of the truth of that doctrine is furnished by readings which were unknown to the revisers of 1611, and which are equally, or better, entitled to a place in the text than those which were then received. But whilst it would be quite competent for us to fall back upon this ground in reply to those who allege that the foundations of the faith are jeopardized by the results of modern textual criticism, we should betray a lamentable ignorance of the real strength of our position were we to rely for its defence on so insufficient an allegation. For, independently of the consideration, which should be ever present to the mind of the believer, that the glory of God can never be promoted by our lie, and that we are alike guilty of unfaithfulness to the deposit which has been committed to our guardianship, whether we consciously add to, or whether we consciously take from, the words which are written in the Book, the real fact is, as Professor Roberts has observed, "that it constitutes the security of our faith as Christians, that such a vast collection of various readings could possibly have been formed."¹ This statement may at first sight appear to savour somewhat of paradox. It will be found, however, on reflection, to have a firm basis of truth.

Let us take, by way of illustration, one or two of the various readings to which Bishop Lightfoot has directed our attention in the valuable work to which previous reference has been made, "On a Fresh Revision of the New Testament." Now one of the divergent readings which occurs in St. John's Gospel (i. 18), and which appears to have existed as early as the second century, and soon after the middle of that century, is that of the *only begotten God* in the place of the *only begotten Son*. We do not refer] to this various reading in support of the remark which we made above in regard to the counterbalancing effect of divergent readings on the doctrine of the Trinity, valuable as it is when thus considered. Our reference to it, in the present instance, is made with a different design. It is well known that some of the most powerful assaults of modern scepticism have been directed against the genuineness and the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel, to which a date is assigned much later than that of the most advanced period of the life of St. John. Now it is a fact which admits of no dispute, that the existence of divergent readings is, of itself, a proof of a certain amount of antiquity, as belonging to the writings in the various copies of which those readings are discovered. If, then, divergent readings existed in different copies of the Fourth Gospel soon after the middle of the second

¹ "The Words of the New Testament," Milligan & Roberts, p. 22. T. & T. Clark. Ed. 1873.

century—as Bishop Lightfoot tells us was actually the case in regard to St. John i. 18—the date of the composition of that Gospel is carried back, by an almost irresistible weight of evidence, to a period earlier than that to which modern scepticism has assigned it.

We will refer to another illustration of our position, for which, as in the previous case, we are indebted to Bishop Lightfoot. The genuineness of the Epistle to the Ephesians, which has been received from the earliest times as one of the undoubted productions of the Apostle Paul, has been called in question during the present generation; and there is, in Bishop Lightfoot's opinion, "one formidable argument, and one only," in favour of the view which it has been reserved for modern scepticism to propound. The Church of Ephesus was one of those churches towards which the Apostle Paul stood in a peculiar and unique relation. He had resided in the city of Ephesus for about three years; and he had lived on terms of the closest intimacy with its members; and when we recall to mind the local allusions which we find in other Pauline epistles, and the special salutations which are addressed to the individual members of the churches to which the Apostle wrote, it seems strange, and to some almost incomprehensible, that there should be nothing definite and personal in this Epistle, but that, on the contrary, it should be the most colourless of all the Epistles which the Apostle wrote.¹ Now it is here that textual criticism comes in to our aid, and is found not only effectually to meet and remove that objection to the Pauline origin of the so-called Epistle to the Ephesians, but also to afford a probable key to the solution of the difficulty which has perplexed many Biblical students respecting the "Epistle from Laodicea" which the Colossian Church was enjoined to read (Col. iv. 16). This Epistle has been commonly supposed to have been lost; whereas it seems to be a fair inference from the omission of the words *at Ephesus*, and from the fact that the preposition employed is *from*, not *to*, Laodicea, that the reference of the Apostle is not to some Epistle which has been lost, but to that which is now known as the Epistle to the Ephesians. The facts are as follows.

¹ We are not disposed to attach the *same* amount of importance which Bishop Lightfoot does to the absence of personal references in this Epistle, inasmuch as whilst the Epistle to the Romans, a Church which the Apostle had never seen, abounds most in personal greetings, we find no such salutations, as Dean Alford reminds us, in the Epistle to the Philippians, who were "the joy and crown" of the Apostle; nor in that to the Galatians, of whom he was in labour till Christ should be formed in them, nor in those to the Thessalonians, who were patterns to believers in Macedonia and Achaia. At the same time we attach a greater amount of weight to it than is allowed by Dean Alford.

We find that in the two oldest MSS.—*i.e.*, the Vatican and the Sinaitic—the words “at (or in) Ephesus” (Ephes. i. 1) are wanting. They do not appear to have existed in the copy which was used by Tertullian; and Basil the Great, writing in the fourth century, tells us that they were not found in the oldest MSS. in his time. This testimony is confirmed by that of Jerome. “The circular character of this letter,” writes Bishop Lightfoot, “fully explains the absence of personal or historical allusions. Thus textual criticism in this instance removes our difficulty; but its services do not end here. It furnishes a body of circumstantial evidence which, I venture to think, must ultimately carry irresistible conviction as to the authorship of the letter, though for the present some are found to hesitate. For these facts supplied by textual criticism connect themselves with the mention of the letter which the Colossians are charged to get from Laodicea (Col. iv. 16), and this mention again combines with the strong resemblances of matter and diction, so as to bind these two Epistles inseparably together; while again the Epistle to the Colossians is linked not less indissolubly with the letter to Philemon by the references to person and place and circumstance. Thus the three Epistles form a compact whole, to resist the assaults of adverse criticism.”¹

It must be observed, further, that whilst, on the one hand, textual criticism brings to light the fact that some passages which were originally inserted, as seems most probable, as marginal glosses, have in the course of time crept into the text, it serves to establish the genuineness of words which were previously deemed doubtful or spurious. Thus, *e.g.*, it is found that the second clause of 1 St. John ii. 23—[*but*] *he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also*—are printed in the Authorized Version in italics, as resting upon doubtful or insufficient authority. Now these words, though omitted in some uncial MSS., are found in the three oldest and best MSS.—*viz.*, the Vatican, the Sinaitic, and the Alexandrian; also in the early versions and in the writings of several of the ancient Fathers. The cause of their omission also in some MSS. is accounted for in a satisfactory manner. Both clauses of the verse end with the same three words in the Greek. The eye of the scribe doubtless caught the three words of the second clause, and finding that the same three words were already transcribed, thought that he had copied the whole of the verse; and instead of transcribing the second clause proceeded at once to the verse which follows.

We have endeavoured to show that if, on the one hand, a new Revision of the New Testament may excite some natural apprehensions lest the hold which our own Authorized Version has

¹ “On a Fresh Revision of the New Testament,” pp. 21, 22.

taken upon the national mind should be, in any measure, relaxed; we must not lose sight, on the other hand, of the counterbalancing gain which will accrue to the cause of Christianity by the removal of the stumbling-blocks which unauthorized insertions or omissions cast in the way of the candid inquirer, and of the occasion which they supply to the unbeliever of calling in question the genuineness and the authenticity of writings for which a divine original is claimed.

We may reasonably hope, moreover, that although for a time some may be perplexed by finding that words which they have been accustomed to regard as divine can no longer be regarded in any other light than as marginal glosses which, at some remote period, crept into the text, either through the inadvertence or through the pious but indiscreet zeal of early transcribers, and also by finding that the meaning which they have hitherto been accustomed to attach to some passages is not that which the words of the original were designed to convey, the result will be to awaken the dormant energies of slumbering minds to break through the crust of that dry formality with which the Bible is too often read, as though the very act of reading operated like some magic spell, and to excite a more earnest and intelligent desire to grasp the hidden meaning which the outward covering of words was designed to convey; remembering always the solemn warning of St. Paul, "The letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. iii. 6).

The history of past Revisions abundantly justifies this anticipation. Those of our readers who are familiar with the history of the great work of Jerome will not need to be reminded of the great and apparently insuperable obstacles which were thrown in his way, and that, not only by the unlearned and the narrow-minded, but by men possessed of piety at least as fervent as his own, and of equal or greater theological attainments.¹

And although the fact that for the last two hundred years and upwards the Revision of 1611 has been identified with all that is best and greatest in our history as a nation, and with all

¹ Nor is it uninteresting (as Bishop Lightfoot has reminded us) to observe that the very point on which his contemporaries laid the greatest stress in their charges against him, has come to be regarded by ourselves as his most signal merit. To him we owe it, that in the Western churches the Hebrew original, and not the Septuagint version, is the basis of the people's Bible; and that a broad and indelible line has been drawn once for all between the Canon of the Old Testament as known to the Hebrew nation, and the later accretions which had gathered about it in the Greek and Latin Bibles. . . . The Articles of the English Church still continue to quote St. Jerome's authority for the distinction between the Canonical and Apocryphal books, which the Council of Trent did its best to obscure.—*On a Fresh Revision of the New Testament*, pp. 15, 16.

that is highest and holiest in the lives of its individual members, it well behoves us to remember that that Revision did not attain all at once to its high standard of excellence, but was itself, as has been already pointed out, the result of many successive Revisions.

The object proposed in the Revision which is now being carried on is identical with that which was proposed by the revisers of King James, and which is expressed in the following words :—

Truly (good Christian reader) we never thought from the beginning that we should need to make a new Translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one; . . . but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones one principal good one, not justly to be excepted against; that hath been our endeavour, that our mark.

In exact proportion, then, as we prize the Bible as the message of God to man, should we labour to possess it ourselves, and to present it to the eyes of others, in its purest form, and purged, so far as in us lies, from all extraneous accretions. The debt of gratitude which we owe to the untiring zeal and energy of those who have gone before us should stimulate us to carry on, and, so far as may be, to bring to perfection the work in which they so nobly engaged, and to which they were content to sacrifice not only their time and substance, but, if God so willed, as in the case of the illustrious Tyndale, their own lives also. Some temporary inconveniences may, and doubtless will, be the result of the general adoption of any other than that (so-called) *Authorized* Version of the Bible which is now in use: but if the forthcoming Revision shall prove to be a more faithful exponent of the mind of the Inspiring Spirit, if it shall be purged from some of those errors, whether of greater or lesser importance, which have crept into the text in the course of successive generations, if it shall be found to present more correct renderings of many obscure and difficult passages, and to substitute words and phrases which shall be understood by the people in the place of those which are now almost universally unintelligible, or which convey an erroneous meaning; that Revision will, we submit, have a substantial claim upon the gratitude, not only of our own nation, but of the whole English-speaking people, and will form, as Archbishop Trench foretold respecting any future Revision which should combine these results, “riches and strength to the end of time.”

