

## WESLEY'S "NOTES" AND THE NEW REVISION.

It may be a trite remark that John Wesley was far in advance of his age, but nevertheless it is one which is continually receiving fresh illustration. Its latest confirmation may be found in a comparison of his "Notes on the New Testament," published in January, 1754, with the Revised Translation just issued. Of course there are in the latter a great number of emendations which it was not possible for him to have given or even to have considered. The progress which Biblical criticism, and above all, the study of the text of the New Testament, has made in a century and a quarter which has elapsed since Wesley wrote his Notes, is altogether without parallel in Church history. And this assertion involves no disparagement of the noble activities of former periods, such as that of the pre-Reformation translators, for the simple reason that they could not range as widely as their successors, nor even enter fields that then lay still undiscovered. But bearing in mind that the critics and translators of to-day have access to a vast mass of authorities unknown to Wesley, it is very interesting to observe in how many instances he has agreed with and indeed anticipated their alterations and improvements of the Authorised Version. A few instances follow, but the list is of necessity very incomplete. The Revisers have given Theophilus his proper title in Luke i. 3; so had Wesley. They have changed "deputy" into *proconsul* in Acts xiii. 7 and 12; Wesley had anticipated them. In the same chapter John is described by both as the "attendant," not "minister," of Barnabas and Saul, while both again substitute "hearken," in the commencement of Paul's address in the Synagogue, for the authorised "give audience." Both replace "watch," in Matt. xxvii. and xviii., by "guard," and both discard "army" from the account given by Claudius Lysias of

the riot in the Temple Court, Acts xxiii. 27. Wesley replaces it by "soldiery," and the Revisers by "soldiers." Both read "strain out" for strain at a gnat, Matt. xxiii. 24. In the new revision, "fetched a compass," Acts xxviii. 13, is altered into "made a circuit;" Wesley rendered it "coasting round." Wesley had adopted the reading "fruit of the light," in Ephesians v. 9, as the Revisers have now done. With them he has struck out "in the night," from 2 Peter iii. 10. He also reads, "I am the way *and* the truth and the life," in John xiv. 6, a rendering the evidence for which is now admitted as decisive. In the two instances in which we have hitherto found "Jesus" instead of "Joshua" (Acts vii. 45 and Hebrews iv. 8), the Revisers have very properly corrected the reading; Wesley had done the same. The "living creatures" described as joining in the heavenly worship—Rev. v. 14—are so termed both by Wesley and the Revisers; it will be a real relief no longer to read, "The four beasts said, Amen," in that most sublime passage. "Let hitherto," Romans i. 13, becomes "hindered," in the new Revision, as in Wesley's. But turning from emendations which merely discard archaisms or obsolete phrases, to those which have a distinct doctrinal significance, we find the same view holds good. The Revisers have struck out the intended words, "any man," from Heb. x. 37, and substituted "I"; Wesley had done the same; there is, perhaps, no other passage in which the Calvinism of the good men who prepared the Authorised Version so evidently biased their rendering as it did in that verse, turning a solemn caution into hypothesis for the sake of supporting a theory. In John x. 16, the new Revision reads, "One flock, one shepherd." Wesley had expressed his disapproval of the Authorised Version here more forcibly than was usual with him; he terms the read-