

Hebrew text. The same is true now. Versions, in the vernacular, are the nearest approach to the original that can be made by the masses, and if no Authorized Version were made, but the work were left to individuals or particular schools of theological thought, the various methods of translation, the different meanings given to the same word or phrase of the Hebrew original, would tend to confuse the mind and weaken the faith of the multitudes.

No Act of Parliament could command a version now to be used in Protestant churches, but when a version is made by competent men, representing various phases of ecclesiastical opinion in Britain and America, and the scholarship of the age, it goes forth, stamped with the authority of the highest learning, and is the result of all the progress of the age in criticism and acquirements.

The Revised Version is such. It is, however, by no means a finality. With increased knowledge in Assyrian, Egyptian and other cognate languages there will be better means of solving difficulties in the text. The results of future discoveries in archæology, topography and other kindred departments, cannot fail to throw much light on obscure passages.

The Old Testament company have relied almost entirely on the Massoretic Text, and only in the most limited degree have admitted the authority of the ancient versions. The Massoretic Text of the Old Testament has come down to us in MSS. which are comparatively modern, and which belong to the same family or recension. The position of the revisers regarding the Massoretic Text is stated thus :—"The revisers have endeavored to translate what appeared to them to be the best reading in the text, and where the alternative reading seemed sufficiently probable or important, they have placed it in the margin. In some few instances of extreme difficulty, a reading has been adopted on the authority of the ancient versions, and the departure from the Massoretic Text recorded in the margin. In other cases, where the versions appeared to supply a very probable, though not so necessary a correction of the text, the text has been left and the variation indicated in the margin only."

This position includes (*a*) the acceptance of the Massoretic Text almost exclusively as the oracles of God ; (*b*) that the ancient versions have extremely little authority in determining the text. The