

Three principal reasons may be given as justifying the now completed work of revising the version of King James's day:—More, and more ancient, manuscripts have been brought to light and edited than the earlier translators possessed—this remark applies almost entirely to the N. T.; therefore we have a text more thoroughly representing the original, e.g., it appears to be pretty well established that Acts viii. 37 formed no part of Luke's record. Common honesty demanded change in such cases. A more critical reading of old versions has also enlarged the sphere of correct knowledge. Recent discoveries, and a more thorough acquaintance with ancient literature, have put modern scholars in a more favourable position for exactly rendering difficult passages. Compare in the two versions such passages as the following: Isa. ix. 1-5; Acts xix. 2; also Matt. xvii. 24, where the reference to Ex. xxx. 13 is made plain in the revised; our Saviour, claiming no exemption from the Law's requirements, paid his half-shekel; also Ps. lxxxiv. 4-6, xvi. 1-4. Another class of passages under this heading is where a limited knowledge of history allowed wrong renderings, as Num. xxiii. 22 "wild ox" for "unicorn"; 2 Kings xxiii. 6 (compare xxi. 7), "asherah" for "grove" also "tent of meeting" (Ex. xxv. 22) for "tabernacle of the congregation"; e.g., Ex. xxix. 10.

Then in the flight of years language undergoes change; "*prevent*" in 2 Thess. ii. 7, 8, being better represented now by "*restrain*." These are examples taken almost at random for simple illustrations.

Comparing the O. T. with the N. T. revision, the former appears to be much the more conservative of the two. A comparison of different sections from each of equal length indicates the ratio of changes to be as of one to two. This in some measure is due to the changes required in the Greek text of the New Testament. The more complex character of the Greek language also gives greater room for more exact renderings. Added to which, as from the New Testament the doctrines of Christianity are specially drawn, the revisers of the New Testament version have endeavoured with more unvarying uniformity to represent the same Greek word by its corresponding English term, as, e.g., the unvarying "eternal" to the exclusion of "everlasting" (Matt. xxv. 46), thus putting

the English reader as far as possible upon similar vantage-ground to the Greek student; for which reason the rhythm of the sentences is not always equal to the older and freer rendering, but the translation is much more literal. Besides all which, the criticism to which the N. T. version was subject, has doubtlessly strengthened the more conservative members of the O. T. company, though the next generation will more highly esteem the great thoroughness of the N. T. version. Yet some radical charges have been made on the O. T. version, e.g., Gen. xvi. 13. Hag. ii. 7, where the question is not what sounds the pretiest, but which is correct.

The revised version is thoroughly representative and cosmopolitan. It is not the version of a sect or sects. The entire Protestant world of the Anglo-Saxon race has been drawn upon for its scholars, not even excluding Unitarianism from the circle. In this respect it is presumable free from sectionalism and bias. As all final revisions were carried by a two-thirds vote some instances might be given where good scholars would differ from individual renderings; nevertheless the version, with its marginal renderings, and its appendices of readings preferred by the American company, affords to the ordinary reader a rendering of the sacred text beyond which existing scholarship can scarcely hope to go; and being the work of loyal, loving hearts, we may rejoice in a version thoroughly faithful to the spirit of the original. One great lesson we may lay to heart in receiving and using. Many cherished words are changed, and truthfully so. It is not the form, but the living truth we need. The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life. Our faith has a firmer basis than a mere text, our doctrines depend not on mere words. The entire tenor of Scripture is our guide, and all individual passages must be read in the light thereof. The version is a gain if it only breaks us from a letter worship, and a text dogmatism.

The measure of our opportunity is the measure of our obligation. Since the earlier days of Christian life no such clear presentation in common speech of God's revelation in the Scriptures of truth has been in the hands of any people. Indeed the Bible in its integrity is before us as never people possessed it before. That future research may still further throw light upon its words we may expect, leaving,