

of the Spirit in all its purity, and finding that they cannot convey a meaning of a large portion of the Gospels without short explanatory notes, they therefore desire them. Why not print, with the Gospels sold, notes which shall be at once more accurate, more helpful, and more abiding than those which a travelling preacher can probably give to a hundredth part of his purchasers.

After the appeal of the Conference of 1877 nothing was done for years in the way of supplying the desired notes. It looked as though the end had been reached when, in 1890, one of the Bible societies "so far burst the bands of a too rigid conservatism" as to print an annotated Gospel of Mark. This was only temporary, however, for, owing to doctrinal elements having crept into some of the notes, and other notes being too voluminous, the venture was vetoed by the home board. Later the Central China Tract Society printed an annotated copy of the same Gospel with a map. Finally, in November, 1892, after an abridgment of the notes and the appointment of two committees of investigation, the directors of the National Bible Society of Scotland unanimously adopted the following report of the joint committee :

1. The committee feel deeply the importance of the constitutional principle that the Bible must be issued by the society "without note or comment."

2. This has long been understood to permit the issue of marginal readings and marginal references in English Bibles, the object of which has been not comment, but explanation of the meaning of the words used.

3. The marginal readings and references demanded as indispensable by the missionaries in China can be issued by the society, only provided that they be confined to such explanations.

4. Without infringing the constitutional principle above referred to, such explanations may be somewhat fuller than those in the English Bible.

5. Such explanations must be prepared in China by those who shall fairly represent the mind of the missionaries on the subject, the society reserving its right to judge of such proposed issue, in translation, before committing itself to it.

Ultimately it was agreed, in view of the urgency of the case, that the society should immediately publish a tentative edition of St. Mark's Gospel with the annotations which had been already submitted to them, giving the Shanghai Conference Committee on Notes an opportunity of offering any suggestions they may think desirable in view of future editions. Consequently an annotated Gospel of Mark is now published (and sold at one half cent each) by this society, with an introduction, chapter headings, sufficient explanatory notes to aid the heathen mind, and with a tri-colored map of Palestine. The annotations are made with great caution and skill. They are placed in smaller characters in the body of the text, a method which is both Chinese and wise—Chinese, as the classics are thus annotated; wise, for, if printed at the head of the page, the unaccustomed reader might puzzle himself considerably, as some have been known to do, by reading all the notes together and afterward the text.