

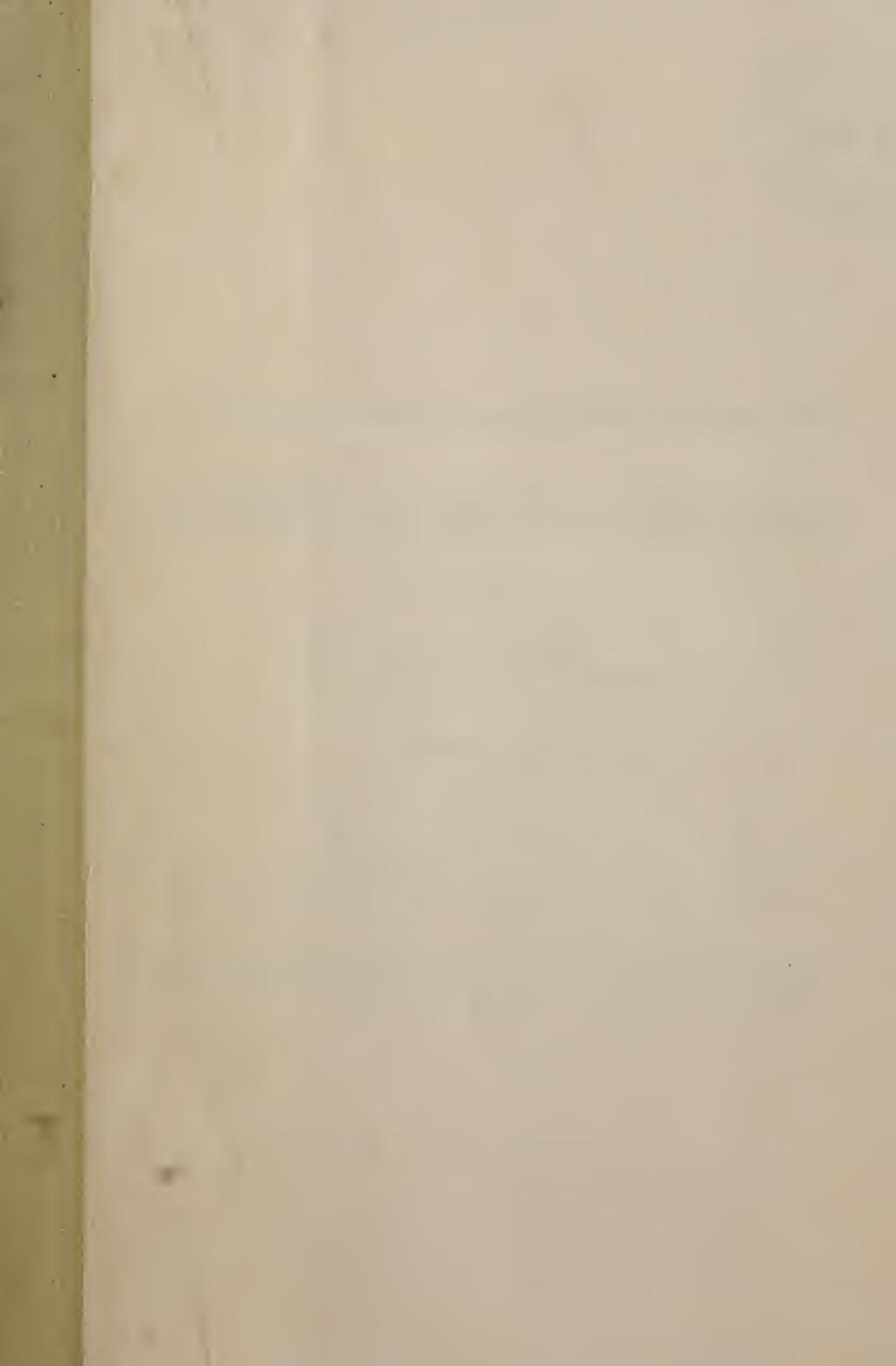
E.W. Gilman

Revision of the English Bible

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REVISION OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE,

BY

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BANGOR, MAINE.

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From the New Englander for February, 1859.

ARTICLE V.—REVISION OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE.

On the authorized Version of the New Testament, in connection with some recent proposals for its revision. By RICHARD CHEVENIX TRENCH, D. D. Redfield: New York. 1858.

The Gospel according to St. John, after the authorized version. Newly compared with the original Greek and revised. By Five Clergymen. London: John W. Parker & Son. 1857.

The New Testament, Translated from the original Greek, with Chronological arrangement of the sacred books, and improved divisions of chapters and verses. By LEICESTER AMBROSE SAWYER. Boston: John P. Jewett & Co. 1858.

Statements and Documents concerning the recent action of the Board of Managers of the American Bible Society, touching the standard edition of the English Scriptures as circulated by that Society. Published by members of the late Committee on Versions. New York. 1858.

THERE are many things to indicate that an unusual interest has been lately excited in the question, how “the mind of the Spirit” in the Word of God, can best be made known to the millions who speak, and the hundreds of millions who are to speak, the English tongue. For some years past a society has existed whose energies have been, and still are, devoted to the revision of the English Bible, and two of the most eminent and competent scholars connected with the Baptist denomination are now engaged in their employ, with the responsibility of carrying the work through to its consummation. Within twelve or fifteen months, there has been no little discussion concerning even the limitations and powers of the American Bible Society, and the course pursued by its Managers in preparing a standard edition of the version in common use, purged of obvious errors, and with new modifications of the chapter headings which form no part of the version. In England, Dr. Trench has written a small volume on the subject of a revision,

which had already been urged in Convocation and in Parliament and elsewhere, and five clergymen of the Established Church, by way of feeling the public pulse, have printed the Gospel of John and Paul's Epistle to the Romans in an amended form; while on this side of the Atlantic, the Rev. Mr. Sawyer, a Congregational minister, with flaming pre-announcements has challenged attention to his re-translation of the New Testament, for the first edition of which his publishers have expected to secure a circulation of no less than ten thousand copies. It is also stated, as a well known fact, that Dr. Newman is appointed to prepare a new Romish version of the Scriptures, while in Holland a revision of the Dutch Bible is in progress, under the supervision and authority of the synod of the Reformed Church.

The subject is not indeed altogether novel. Even in the time of Oliver Cromwell the parliamentary committee for religion had the subject of a new translation under consideration, but before any definite plan was adopted, the session of parliament came to a close, and the matter was dropped. Purver, (1764,) Geddes, (1797,) Boothroyd, (1824,) and others, have translated the whole, or parts of the Bible anew, or have proposed modifications of our common version. Such attempts have been made, sometimes to secure greater accuracy of expression and fidelity to the original text, sometimes to remove objectionable words and phrases, sometimes to favor certain doctrinal views, but never, probably, unless in the case of Dr. Noah Webster's revision, with the hope of supplanting in the pulpit, the family, and the closet, and in the hearts of the people, that version which is so thoroughly incorporated with the literature of the English language, and which at this day is more widely disseminated, more warmly cherished, and more extensively read, than ever before. As the years have rolled on, the Christian public generally have settled down to a state of contentment with the Scriptures as we have them, and we might fill pages with the highest commendations of our version, from men of every age and calling.

And though we have pointed out some indications of a different feeling, and even of dissatisfaction with the authorized

version, the subject of a revision seems to have been prematurely urged upon public attention, and we have no idea that the people desire or are ready to receive any substitute whatever for the Bible which their fathers have left them. The stringent law of usage requires a minister, in his public ministrations, to use the royal version, instead of the older ones, or of any improvement which his own knowledge of Hebrew and Greek might enable him to make. It is "appointed to be read in churches" by a law more potent than any edict of King James. Let a minister even quote a text with some modification that brings it nearer to the original, and the scholars of his Sabbath school will prick up their ears, and charge him with forgetfulness, while some of his congregation will fear that he deals craftily, or handles the word of God deceitfully. And if he ventures on such an indiscretion before an association of ministers, some brother will be sure to remind him that he is not exact in his quotations, and to prescribe the habitual use of the concordance as a security against error. To some even, the old chapter-headings, introduced by Bilson and Smith, and so far as we know without the sanction of the translators, have a godly ring, and are counted sacred; and to most people our English Scriptures are the inspired word of God, as sacred in their eyes as the Vulgate to the Romanist, the ultimate appeal in argument, the end of all strife, to alter which is sacrilege.

If, then, it were simply a question whether the readers of the Bible generally are prepared for a change, the whole subject of revision might soon be dismissed. But a broader question cannot be lost sight of: whether any change is practicable by which more fully, exactly, and readily to convey the meaning of the Scriptures to those who read them in our language alone. There are some things that have a bearing on this question, to which a ready assent will be given.

1. It is the right of the people to know exactly what is the Word of God, and to have the Scriptures in the form best fitted to their understanding. This, with Protestants, is a fundamental principle, in constant antagonism with the Romish theory, that the people are not to have access to the Scriptures in their own tongue. This is the principle on which our mis-

sionaries and Bible societies have acted from the days of Eliot until now. What can be more available to the saving of souls, say our translators, than to deliver God's book unto God's people in a tongue which they understand ?

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God.” All scripture! But what is scripture? Not the version of King James's translators; nor the Genevan, nor Cranmer's, nor Coverdale's, nor the Vulgate. These were not inspired, but were severally open to improvement. They were lenses through which alone the people could look on the truth. And surely, if any lens can be constructed which will more clearly exhibit the object under examination, it should be put into their hands, with instructions how to use it. He who can shed light on the meaning of scripture is under obligation to do it, and he may do it without casting any disparagement on those who preceded him. How our translators understood this is seen in their apologizing for labors which some, they fancied, would consider needless. “As St. Augustine saith: *A man had rather be with his dog than with a stranger*, (whose tongue is strange unto him.) Yet for all that, as nothing is begun and perfected at the same time, and the later thoughts are thought to be the wiser, so, if we, building upon their foundation that went before us, and being holpen by their labors, do endeavor to make that better which they left so good, no man, we are sure, hath cause to mislike us; they, we persuade ourselves, if they were alive, would thank us. * * * Let us bless God from the ground of our heart, for working this religious care in him [the King] to have the translations of the Bible maturely considered of and examined. For by this means it cometh to pass, that whatsoever is found already, the same will shine as gold more brightly, being rubbed and polished; also, if anything be halting, or superfluous, or not so agreeable to the original, the same may be corrected, and the truth set in place.”

2. Were the translators appointed by King James to meet again at this time for the same work, they would find a preliminary question demanding their attention, which seems to have given them but little embarrassment. The first thing to be done is to determine the Greek and Hebrew text, and in

this department of criticism great progress has been made since their day. In the whole New Testament, for example, they indicated in the margin twelve or fourteen cases where they considered the true reading uncertain; while now there are but few chapters in the New Testament, in which the number of variations from the *textus receptus*, adopted by one or another of the latest critics, does not exceed the whole number marked doubtful by the translators. Many of these variations, it is true, are imperceptible in a version; others are unimportant except for the sake of accuracy; while some remove, or essentially modify words and classes which no devout spirit would dare to alter, unless constrained by the clearest evidence.

3. It is also true that two centuries and a half have witnessed some progress in the science of interpretation. It were idle to suppose that the scholarship of this day is less competent for the work of translation than that of 1609. We have all the means then enjoyed, and more. How much have modern researches in geography and history contributed to the right interpretation of the Scriptures! What vast stores of learning have men of different generations and lineage accumulated in commentaries, grammars, lexicons, and philological treatises, with which he who aspires to preach the word, must make himself familiar! One of the most remarkable illustrations of this point is the modern discovery of the nature and spirit of Hebrew poetry. Our translators, having no idea of the law of parallelism, translated the poetical parts of the Bible as if they were so much prose. The discovery of that law by Bishop Lowth, a little more than a hundred years ago, was as essential for a correct rendering of the Scriptures, as a knowledge of the law of gravitation to a true system of natural philosophy. In this respect our version fails to do justice to the original, and now one needs to avail himself of the contributions made to sacred literature by Lowth, Michaelis, and Herder, as much as to study the lexicon, and the grammar of Gesenius.

4. It must also be admitted that the version in common use is not free from positive errors and mistranslations. It may be said without disparagement to those who made it, and without detracting from the general excellence of their work,

that they sometimes erred. It is unnecessary to cite examples which may be found in every commentary.

5. Changes in the English language have also been going on since our translation came into use, really and constantly, though slowly and retarded, perhaps, as Dr. Trench suggests, by the hold which the Scriptures have upon the hearts of the people. "In many cases, no doubt, our authorized version, by its recognized authority, by an influence working silently but not the less profoundly felt, has given fixity to the meaning of words which otherwise they would not have possessed, and kept them in their places; but the currents at work in language have been sometimes so strong as to overbear even this influence."

Dr. Trench suggests and comments on the following examples of this change of signification as specially noteworthy. (Pages 24-30 :)

Matt. vi, 25: "*Take no thought* for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink;" an expression which, among the older English writers, meant *be not anxious*.

Luke xiii, 7: "Why *cumbereth* it the ground?" To *cumber*, in its present signification, is too weak and negative an expression for the Greek: but formerly, as in Luke x, 40, it meant to vex, annoy, injure, trouble.

Acts xvii, 23: "*Devotions*." A word *now* abstract, and signifying the mental offerings of the devout worshiper; but once concrete, meaning the outward objects to which these were rendered, as temples, altars, images, shrines and the like; and it was these objects of worship that Paul beheld.

Acts xix, 37: "*Robbers of churches*;" that is of temples, since 'church' is in constant use in early English for heathen and Jewish temples, as well as for Christian places of worship.

Acts xxi, 15: "After those days we *took up our carriages* and went up to Jerusalem." 'Carriage,' says our author, is a constant word in the English of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for 'baggage,' being that which men carry, and not, as now, that which carries them. The Genevan has it correctly, though somewhat quaintly, "trussed up our fardels."

(In I Sam. xvii, 22, where also our translators introduce the word, "And David left his *carriage* in the hand of the keeper of the carriage," the Genevan reads, "And David left the things, which he bare, under the hands of the keeper of the carriage," explaining the last word in the margin, "*Ebr. vessels.*")

Ephes. iv, 3 : "*Endeavoring* to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Not as a hopeless formality: the Greek word means "giving all diligence," and 'endeavoring' meant no less, two centuries and a half ago.

I Tim. v, 4 : "Nephews," a term that once indicated lineal descendants, and is here used to denote grandchildren.

Many other words might be put into this category, beside a number which instead of changing their meaning, have simply gone into disuse: and in employing these terms, the Scriptures, as we circulate them, convey no idea, or one very different from that intended by the translators. In many cases, even, we should gain by going back to the Genevan version, which was in common use when the version of King James was published. 'Love' certainly is preferable to 'charity,' in I Cor. xiii. 'I wot not,' Phil. i, 22, is antiquated; but the Genevan has 'know,' as it has also in Rom. xi, 2, and Acts iii, 17. Instead of 'blains,' Ex. ix, 9, 10, the Genevan has 'blisters.' For 'letteth,' II Thess. ii, 7, it has 'withholdeth;' for 'leasing,' Ps. iv, 2, v, 6, it has 'lies;' for 'Jewry,' Luke xxiii, 5, John vii, 1, it has 'Judea;' for 'Easter,' Acts xii, 4, 'the passover;*' for 'take no thought,' Matt. vi,

* Dr. Trench (p. 34) speaks of the retention of 'Easter,' and 'Jewry,' in these places, as an oversight; but this oversight was the more remarkable, inasmuch as the Genevan translators had uniformly adopted, in their Bible, 'Judea,' and 'the passover;' a fact that seems to have escaped the notice of the critic. He also fails to do justice to the Genevan version, in quite a number of cases. It had *anticipated* King James's version in substituting 'separate' for 'depart,' ("depart us from the love of God,") at Rom. viii, 39, (p. 31.) and had used 'murmuring,' instead of 'grudge,' in Acts vi, 1, (p. 34.) Commending our translators for their discrimination in using 'idolaters' for 'worshippers of images,' I Cor. x, 7, and 'idols,' for 'images,' II Cor. vi, 16, and I John v, 21, he says, (p. 168,) "in the *latter* passage, indeed, the Genevan had anticipated this correction." It had done so in all of them. On page 103, he says, "'Whited

25, 'be not careful;' for 'expecting,' Heb. x, 13, 'tarieth;' and for 'ear the ground,' Is. xxx, 24, 'till the ground.' It was no improvement for the translators to substitute 'reason' for 'meet,' in Acts vi, 2. 'Ere' is unusual, though not obsolete; but in John iv, 49, the Genevan has '*before* my son die.' 'Several,' once had the meaning of 'separate,' and so we read, II Kings xv, 5, 'and dwelt in a several house;' but the Genevan has, 'and dwelt in a house apart.' 'Strait' and 'straight' are often confounded; but for the former, the Genevan sometimes has 'strict;' thus, 'a strict commandment,' instead of 'he straightly charged him;' and so in Matt. vii, 13, 'the streichte gate.'

If these things are true, it follows that our common version of the Scriptures is not the best possible one, and does not convey to the English reader 'the mind of the Spirit' as distinctly and fully as a version might do. And furthermore, if it were now all that the Christian scholarship of the world might make it, there would be an inestimable saving of labor and misapprehension. The labor of preachers and of commentators would be greatly abated; many obscure passages would become clear, and stumbling-blocks without number would be removed. How many, e. g., have stumbled at "bare grain," (I Cor. xv, 37,) who would have no difficulty in reading "mere seed!" How many would be helped by some change of phraseology showing the connection of 'sin' and

sepulchers' is an improvement upon '*painted* sepulchers,' Matt. xxiii, 27, which *all our preceding versions had.*" But the Genevan has '*whited* tombs,' and Wiclif, in 1380, 'sepulcheris whitid.' On page 100, complaining of the rendering of II Cor. iii, 14, 'but their minds *were blinded*,' where he prefers *hardened*, as the better word, he says, "Wiclif and the Rheims, which both depend on the Vulgate, (*sed obtusi sunt sensus eorum,*) are here the only correct versions." Yet here the Genevan of 1568, says, 'are *hardened*,' as also in Rom. xi, 7; while in the former passage, Wiclif has 'but the wittis of hem ben astonyed,' and the Rheims, 'but their senses vvere dulled.' On page 104, he commends the translators for the rendering 'profane person,' Heb. xii, 16, which he says first appeared in the Rheims; in this, also, he is mistaken, for the Genevan had already given currency to it. These inaccuracies are probably due to a lack of discrimination between the Genevan *Testament* of 1557, and the completed *Bible*, which was first published in 1560, in which the translation differed in many respects. See English Hexapla, p. 134.

'a cart-ropes,' in Is. v, 18! How obscure the argument of Paul, in Rom. x, 16, 17, ("For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? *So then* faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,") until we adopt *some* rendering which shows that 'report' and 'hearing' are the same word in Greek, and that 'believe' and 'faith' are as nearly alike as 'believe' and 'belief'! How the darkness would be lifted from John xvi, 23, if the English reader recognized the difference in the two Greek words, each of which is translated 'ask'! Even the marginal renderings of the translators are sometimes better than those which they put in the text, though unfortunately omitted from so many of the most widely circulated editions of the Bible.

What then is to be done? It is easier to feel and to state difficulties, than to suggest appropriate remedies; but this is one of the great questions of the day.

There is a difficulty even in deciding in what way and with what modifications, if any, the original work of King James's translators can best be edited and published by the American Bible Society, restricted as it is by its organic law, to the version in common use at its organization. No one would be content to have the original of 1611 exactly and literally reproduced for daily use and general circulation. No publisher would hazard his capital in such a speculation. Various and important departures have been made from the original editions in both the text and its accessories, sometimes by accident and sometimes by design. The references and marginal renderings have been multiplied, the chapter headings and running titles have been abbreviated, enlarged, and otherwise modified, and in the text, capitals, hyphens, parentheses, punctuation marks, italics, and orthography, have been made to undergo innumerable modifications; so that a collator employed by the Bible Society in comparing the text of half a dozen copies of the Scriptures, from different presses, found that in these apparently trivial points the variations were between twenty and thirty thousand. And this matter, though apparently simple, is not one easily settled; it certainly is not to be determined by the accidents of proof reading, or a ma-

majority of copies examined. Every step needs to be taken with scholarship and care, for a capital letter may involve a comment, the position of a comma may have an important effect on the sense, and a chapter heading may prove to be explanatory, erroneous, or untrue. To the American Bible Society this matter has proved to be one of peculiar difficulty and embarrassment; and we wait with no little interest to see by what modifications of their recent standard edition the managers propose to silence the objections which were raised against it, after it had met with universal approval for quite a number of years.

It certainly falls within the province of the Bible Society, and indeed it has become a necessity for them, to decide what chapter-summaries, if any, shall be introduced into their editions of the Scriptures. For many years after its organization, these summaries were given in a very much abridged form, and even then not uniformly in the various editions, while such accessories as references and dates, and even the marginal readings of the translators, were entirely omitted, until the year 1830. About that time the society began to print the summaries more at length, but in preparing the standard edition of 1851, these were subjected to extensive alterations, with a view to freeing them from gross errors of grammar and of fact, and of removing inappropriate comments. It is understood to be the present policy of the managers to abandon all these changes and return to something of older date; a course which the Rev. Dr. Turner said, in offering his resignation as one of the committee on versions, "stamps certain heretofore printed accessories with an immense weight of authority, and sanctions their absolute perpetuity so long as this society shall last, or until it shall alter its constitution. And yet some of these accessories, so established, were made, nobody knows when or by whom; some of them are manifestly erroneous, and help to darken the meaning of the version; and some of them are misstatements, and contradictory to the very text of which they are professedly the index."*

* Statements and Documents concerning the recent action of the Board of Managers, p. 69.

It would be easy for the society to free itself from all difficulty about these accessories, by entirely dispensing with them, as the Rev. Dr. Stockton of Philadelphia has done, in an edition of detached books of Scripture in a paragraph form, which he has recently published at his own charges; but even then there would remain questions as to the proper mode of editing the text. Must we always print 'Jesus,' in Heb. iv, 8, when we know that 'Joshua' is meant? May we never correct any error of type and change 'at' into 'out,' in Matt. xxiii, 24? Shall I John v, 7, continue to be printed as it was by the translators, without a sign to indicate its admitted spuriousness? and in I John ii, 23, shall suspicion be thrown on the last half of the verse by the italics in which it appeared in 1611? What shall be recognized as authority in Ruth iii, 15? Shall we read "and *he* went into the city," as it was printed in conformity with the Hebrew in 1611, 1612, and possibly in 1613, or "*she* went into the city," as it appeared in *other editions of the same years*, and in all subsequent copies, so far as we know, until 1851? What shall be done with Judges ix, 53? "And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech's head, and *all to brake his scull.*" The translators knew what they meant by the form in which they put this last clause. But in the lapse of time it became unintelligible, and editors began to turn the finite verb into an infinitive, and print it, "all to break his scull." This reading, adopted by Dr. Adam Clarke, was pronounced by him "a most nonsensical version" of the Hebrew; and so other critics said that he was mistaken, and that "all-to" was equivalent to "altogether," denoting the completeness of the result. The committee on versions, following this hint and finding no corresponding word in the Hebrew, printed it in italics, "and *all-to* brake his scull." But from later investigations,* it appears that this expression is a solitary relic of a form once quite common in English writers, and found in the earlier versions of the Scriptures, as well as in Shakespeare and

* Gathered up and printed, but not yet published, in Dr. Joseph E. Worcester's new quarto Dictionary of the English language, 1859.

Milton, in which 'to' is joined to the following word as an *intensive prefix*, and that either with or without 'all.' Thus, in Wickliffe's version of Ps. cv, 41, "He *to-brac* the ston," but our version, "He opened the rock." So in Matt. xxi, 44, Wickliffe has, "But on whom it schal falle it schal *al-to* brise him;" Tyndale, "it wyll *alto* breake him;" Cranmer, "it shal *all* to grynd him;" and the Rhemish, "it shall *al to* bruise him."

These are a sample of the questions that must be determined in so simple a matter as editing the version in common use, and they must either be fairly met or carelessly evaded by every publisher of the Bible.

But the adjustment of these points does not meet the main difficulties we have proposed. These lie against the translation itself in its present form, and it is not the province of the Bible Society to remove them. And so it is a question what shall be done by others toward the work of giving the Scriptures to the people in the best possible form. Shall the results of critical study be confined to commentaries, grammars, lexicons, quarterlies, and theological seminaries, or shall they be made as common and popular as the Scriptures themselves? Shall we discourage every attempt to go behind the common version (our Vulgate) as if we were afraid of Greek and Hebrew, or shall we admit that the translation was the fruit of human skill, and not too perfect to be laid aside when we can make a better?

We are told that "the time has not come" to propose any substitute for the common version. Nor will it ever come in advance of efforts and plans to hasten it. The attachment of the people to the words which they have read from childhood, is too strong to be broken abruptly. They cling and will cling to the phrases with which their spiritual life and hope have been nurtured. They will frown upon every rash invasion of the field, and will be slow to accept even the most careful and mature fruits of Christian criticism. And yet we believe that the time has come for scholars to discuss this subject, and to begin the work. If scholars like Lachman, Tischendorf, and Tregelles may revise the Greek text, if the scholars of our own land may comment upon the sacred books, why may not

some one, without note or comment, transfer the most approved Greek text into the purest English, according to his own ability?

With all the obstacles that exist, we think Dr. Trench is right in saying, "however we may be disposed to let the question alone, it will not let us alone. It has been too effectually stirred ever again to go to sleep; and the difficulties, be they few or many, will have one day to be encountered. The time will come when the inconveniences of remaining where we are will be so manifestly greater than the inconveniences of action, that this last will be inevitable." Page 178.

But "the people will not adopt it." Then let the work "be burned," and the publishers "suffer loss." Criticism and revision will undoubtedly precede the adoption of any change as a finality; whatever is done will be done gradually; possibly with dissension and unkind criticism, but even that, we hope, would be overruled for good. In 1611, there were two different "versions in common use" among the English Protestants, the Bishops' Bible and the Genevan; the former used in churches, the latter more generally read in the homes of the people. But so long as that generation survived, the new version of King James could not supersede the one already dear to the people, and the Genevan version long continued to be a favorite, and so much to Archbishop Laud's dissatisfaction, that he made it "a high commission crime to vend, bind, or import them."* The fact that new editions of it were continually published, and two of these as late as 1644, shows that it was no easy matter for "the new version" to get undisputed possession of the field. And to this day "the Psalter" which forms a part of the daily service of the Established Church of England, as well as of the Episcopalians in this country, retains the version of Archbishop Cranmer, which is older than King James's, and older even than the Genevan. If, then, any future emendation does not come with such authority of scholarship, with such purity of expression, with such exactness of rendering, as to command and receive the

* Anderson's *Annals of the English Bible*, ii, 390.

assent of intelligent Christian men, after mature reflection, let it be anathema.

But "it is hard to determine the text." But the question, what is the true text, has to be met by all the translators of the Scriptures into the languages of the heathen, and indeed by all who expound the Scriptures; and the difficulty is no more insuperable when the Bible is to be turned into English, than when it is to be put into Arabic.

But "no one has authority to do it." Then let it be done without authority; and let it be commended to the people by the authority of truth alone. The field is as open to individual enterprise as that of making hymn books or dictionaries; and no one should forbid one or more individuals to do what they can in the way of editing, revising, or translating. He is not to be set down as an Ishmaelite who ventures to print in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, or in a book, or a newspaper, what he conceives to be an improved rendering of any part of the Scriptures; but each one's work is to be judged by its own merits, and is to stand or fall thereby.

We do not propose to discuss the methods by which a revision of the Scriptures might be made. There are three methods, of which examples are now before the public. 1. A voluntary society, (the American Bible Union,) contributing and collecting funds to carry out a revision, employing men of scholarship to do the work, inviting criticisms of their labor while in progress, and reserving the final adjustment of difficult points until a future time. 2. Five clergymen of the English church, "from different Universities, of different habits of thought, and perhaps of different theological bias," carefully revising some portions of Scripture, entirely on their own responsibility, deciding each doubtful point by a majority vote, and sending forth their work "as a *tentamen*, a careful endeavor, claiming no finality, inviting, rather than desiring to exclude, other attempts of the same kind, calling the attention of the church to the many grave and anxious questions involved in rendering the Holy Scriptures into the vernacular language, and offering some help towards the settlement of those questions." 3. One individual, translating instead of revising,

extending his work to the whole Bible, expressing no doubt in respect to the text, or its interpretation, discarding entirely the old land-marks of chapter and verse, breaking away from all the forms of language which we have been wont to consider biblical, apparently mutilating the text by rigid adherence to one of the later editors of the Greek, appealing from the judgment of scholars to the judgment of the masses, and relying not upon a society, but upon the enterprise and tact of his publishers, to secure the circulation of his work, and a recompense for his toil.

Our limits do not allow us to speak particularly of the revision by the Bible Union, specimens of which have been in circulation for several years.

The "five clergymen" are John Barrow, D. D., George Moberly, D. C. L., Henry Alford, B. D., William G. Humphrey, B. D., and Charles J. Ellicott, M. A. A preface of sixteen pages states some reasons for their course and their principles of revision. They think that "no loss (except that of truth) could be more serious and fatal than that of the deep-rooted affection and earnest confidence of the people in that 'English Bible' which has been the guide and comfort of their Christian life from their childhood upwards." They do not attempt any *critical* recension, but follow the received text, revising, rather than retranslating, the authorized version. From that version they depart, where it has appeared to be inconsistent with itself, where the translators have mistaken the meaning of the Greek, or have failed of accuracy, where English words have undergone some change of meaning, and where they have been able to give additional force or a more exact rendering; aiming however to maintain, as far as possible, both the rhythm and the archaic form of words and sentences, by which the authorized version is characterized. The text and revision are printed in parallel columns, without comment.

Mr. Sawyer proceeds in a far more radical way. He adopts throughout, with three or four exceptions, the words of Tischendorf's text, as published at Leipsic, in 1850. Why that

particular edition was selected in preference to any more recent ones, he does not say. The peculiar strictness with which Tischendorf guarded his text, and the general want of familiarity with his editions among even the Biblical students of this country, have something to do with the unfavorable impression made by opening this new translation at random. The common reader will often think that Mr. Sawyer has been negligent or has "taken away" words and even sentences, for whose disappearance the editor instead of the translator is really responsible. By adopting an entirely new division of chapters and verses it becomes no easy matter for one to refer to familiar passages in this translation, and a comparison with other versions is impeded. The disadvantages of this course are much greater than the advantages. We need *paragraph* Bibles, but for reference it seems essential to retain in the margin the prevailing verse system. He has carried out also, (and we must say shockingly,) the adoption of "a thoroughly modern style, except in the prayers;" a course implying that men never had that reverence in speaking to Jesus which is expressed in their prayers to God. Hence, the leper says to Jesus, "if you will, you can cleanse me;" the voice from heaven proclaims, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased;" Saul cries out, "Who are you, Lord?" and in Hebrews, chapter first, we read, "For to which of the angels said he at any time, You are my Son, to-day have I begotten you?" Yet a little below he departs from this rule in the passage, "And to which of the angels said he at any time, sit on my right hand till I make thy enemies thy footstool?" Of course this surrender of the second person singular, is not made without a sacrifice of distinctness; as particularly in Luke xxii, 31, 32, "Satan has desired you, to sift like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not entirely fail, and when you recover yourself, confirm your brothers." Here the first pronoun is plural, 'hath desired you all;' but this is followed by the singular, 'I have prayed for thee, that thy faith,' &c.

It may indeed be said that the style of our Saviour must have

been that of common life, and that this should be reproduced in a translation ; but with two forms of expression before him, one of which is dignified, while the other, as addressed to the Saviour, sounds not only colloquial, but undignified and disrespectful, Mr. Sawyer chooses the latter: Would the writers of Scripture have made such a choice ?

With great show of exactness, the translator sets aside many words that have become familiar, and in their place transfers from the original others that are novel and unsatisfactory. So we are no longer to have the parable of the tares, but of the "poisonous darnel." The leaven was hid in "three sata [33 quarts] of flour." The householder agreed with his laborers for "a denarius [14 cents] a day." The widow "cast in two lepta, which is a quadrans, [4 mills.]" The lighted candle is not "put under a modius, [1.916 gallon measure,] but on a candlestick." The word 'gospel' is usually, though not always, replaced by 'good news!' the call 'to repent' is 'change your minds;' 'the inn' becomes 'the khan;' and 'Calvary' is 'Cranium!'

Some words, however, are changed for the better. The distinction between *gehenna* and *hades*, which our version confounds by rendering each of them 'hell,' is brought out by Mr. Sawyer by transferring the word 'hades.' So 'demons' and 'demoniacs' are used to designate spirits, and those possessed of them, while 'the devil' is used as the equivalent of *diabolos*. These are unquestionable improvements, and the use of them may clear up some difficulties in the popular mind. And in words of less frequent occurrence we might specify a large number of improved renderings. So also many times with *punctuation* ; as in I Cor. xiv, 33, 34 :

"God is not [the friend] of disorder, but of peace. As in all the churches of the Saints, let your women keep silence in the assemblies."

In Eph. iv, 11, however, the punctuation obscures the meaning, unless the translation itself is bad :

"And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints," &c.

Our translators put commas after 'some,' and colons after the

following words, indicating apposition. Mr. Sawyer, omitting the commas, seems to change the construction, and thus gives quite another meaning to the passage.

Our translators admonish their readers that "they have not tied themselves to *an uniformity of phrasing*, or to *an identity of words*," as some might wish they had done; and Dr. Trench (p. 72) exhibits the unfortunate results of this looseness, by the example of a word which occurs eleven times in the fourth chapter of Romans, and which is "the key-word to St. Paul's argument throughout, being everywhere employed most strictly in the same sense, and that a technical and theological. But our translators have no fixed rule of rendering it. Twice they render it 'count,' (v. 3, 5,) six times 'impute,' (v. 6, 8, 11, 22, 23, 24,) and three times 'reckon,' (v. 4, 9, 10,) while at Gal. iii, 6, they introduce a fourth rendering, 'account.' Let the student read this chapter, employing everywhere 'reckon,' or, which would be better, everywhere 'impute,' and observe how much of clearness and precision St. Paul's argument would in this way acquire."

We find another example of the same obscurity in John, chapters xiv and xv, where one verb occurring sixteen times is translated by five different English words; twice by 'dwell,' (xiv, 10, 17,) ten times 'abide,' (xiv, 16, xv, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10,) once 'being present,' (xiv, 25,) once 'continue,' (xv, 9,) and twice 'remain,' (xv, 11, 16,) while the corresponding noun is rendered 'mansion,' (xiv, 2,) and 'abode,' (xiv, 23.) The revisers have substituted 'abide' for 'continue' in xv, 9, for 'remain' in xv, 11, and for 'being present' in xiv, 25. Mr. Sawyer uses the word 'continue' throughout, except in xv, 11, where the Greek varies, and in xiv, 16, where (possibly for the same reason) he has 'be;' while in each case he translates the noun 'mansion.' It seems a pity, however, not to make the verbs and nouns correspond throughout, by such forms as 'abide' and 'abode,' or 'dwell' and 'dwelling,' (or 'dwelling-place,' as the Genevan has it.)

In John v, 35, Mr. Sawyer conforms to our version in using the word 'light' to represent two Greek words: the five revisers, with greater precision and beauty, say, "He was the

lamp, lighted and shining; and ye were willing to rejoice for a while in his *light*." In John x, 16, both have adopted the improvement "and there shall be one *flock*, one shepherd;" while in xvi, 23, 'ask' is retained by both as the representative of two different words. For the sake of comparison, we will print in parallel columns a few specimens of the revision by the five clergymen, and of Mr. Sawyer's translation, quoting from the Gospel of John :

THE FIVE CLERGYMEN.

I, 9. That was the true light which lighteneth every man coming into the world.

I, 14. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

IV, 29. Can this be the Christ?

V, 44. How can ye believe, while ye receive glory one of another, and seek not the glory which is from the only God?

VIII, 37. My word gaineth no ground among you.

VIII, 48. Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil?

XII, 24. Verily, verily I say unto you, except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth by itself alone.

XV, 2, 3. He cleanseth. * * Ye are clean already.

XVI, 18. They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we know not of what he speaketh.

XXI, 15-17. So when they had dined, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord: thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that

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I, 9. The light was the true [light] which lights every man that comes into the world.

I, 14. And the Word became flesh and tabernacled with us and we beheld his glory, a glory as of an only child with a father, full of grace and truth.

IV, 29. Is this the Christ?

V, 44. How can you believe, receiving glory one from another; and the glory from God alone you seek not?

VIII, 37. My word has no place in you.

VIII, 48. Say we not well that you are a Samaritan, and have a demon?

XII, 24. I tell you most truly, that unless the kernel of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it continues alone.

XV, 2, 3. He trims. * * You are now pure.

XVI, 18. They said therefore, What is this that he says, The little while? We do not know what he says.

XXI, 15-17. When therefore they had breakfasted, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these? He said to him, Yes, Lord, you know that I am a friend to you. He said to him, Feed my lambs. Again he said to him a second time; Simon, son of John, do you love me? He said to him, Yes,

THE FIVE CLERGYMEN.

I love thee. He saith unto him, Keep my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

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Lord, you know that I am a friend to you. He said to him, Feed my sheep. He said to him a third time: Simon, son of John, are you a friend to me? Peter was grieved that he said to him the third time, Are you a friend to me? and he said to him, Lord you know all things; you know that I am a friend to you. Jesus said to him, Feed my sheep.

In the rendering of particles, and in the careful observance of tense and number, we have thought the revision more worthy of praise than the new translation. It may not go far enough in revising our present translation, but it shows what can be effected by very slight modifications of the words and phrases which we have been wont to hear from childhood.

We can hardly open Mr. Sawyer's book without seeing new reasons to commend the severity of a criticism made upon it by one of the most frequent contributors to our pages;—the Italians have two words to express the act of translating. One of these is *vulgarizzare*, to vulgarize. The author of "Sawyer's Translation" has succeeded at least in accomplishing *this!*

Such a work we think not necessary as a substitute for the common version, though the very extravagance with which it is executed, may do something to prepare the way for a revision on more conservative principles, with which the people may be content. We shall be satisfied "if it cometh to pass that whatsoever is found already, the same will shine as gold more brightly, being rubbed and polished: also if anything be halting, or superfluous, or not so agreeable to the original, the same be corrected and the truth set in place."

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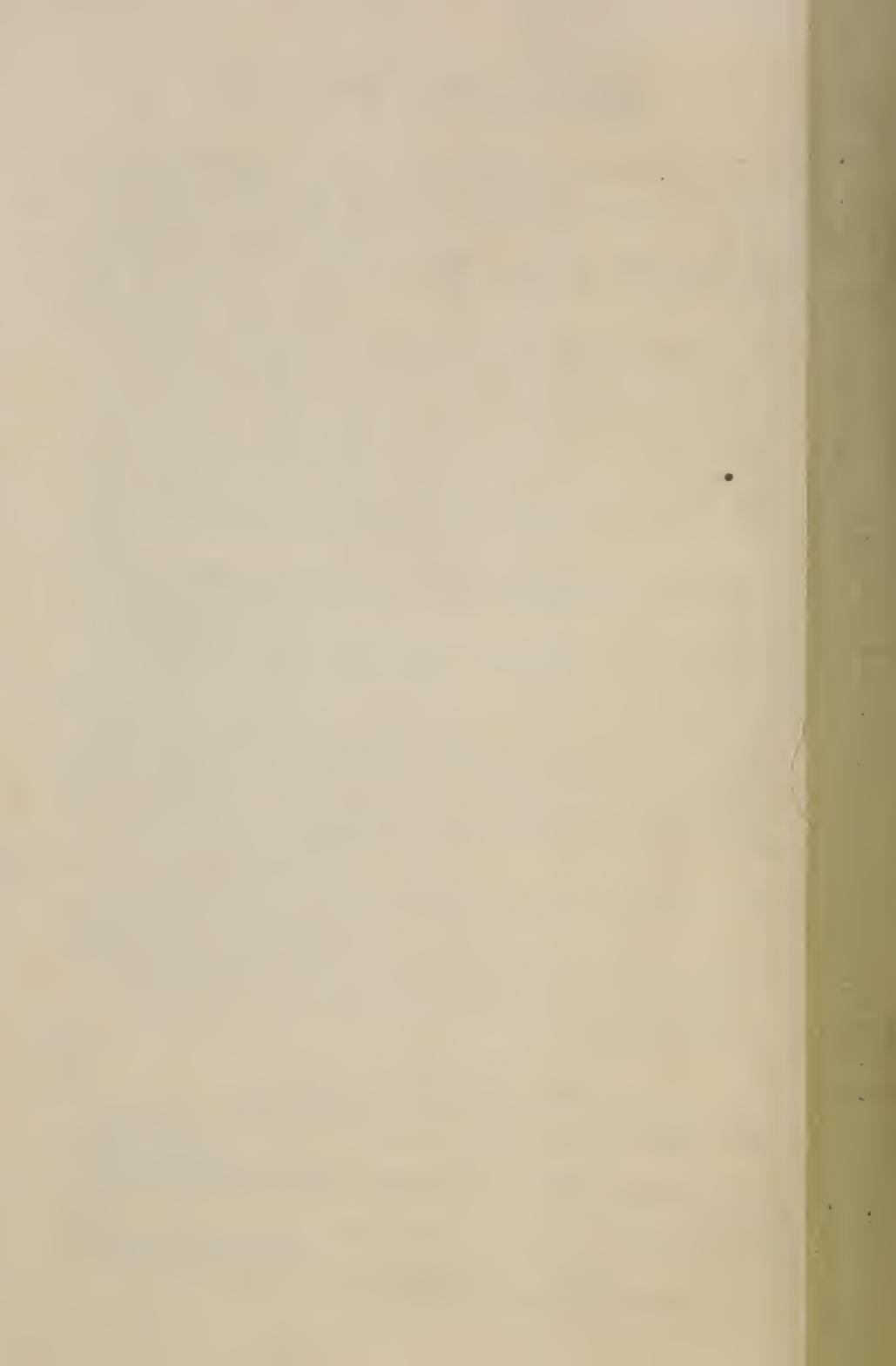
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