

*NOTES ON THE REVISED VERSION OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT.*¹

1 Cor. xiii. 11.—Is the rendering “I spake” right? I think not. Is the rendering “as a child” right? I think not. On what grounds? On grounds both grammatical and logical. First, the logical. St. Paul in this text is thinking of glossolalia, *i.e.* tongue-talking or utterance in unknown tongues. What were these unknown tongues? Were they foreign languages—Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Persian, Arabic? Not at all, nothing of the kind. Tongues they were not of this world; tongues supernatural, heaven-born, spirit-given, Paradisiacal, articulated they are in the Paradise of God. St. Paul heard them in his rapture to the confines of the third heaven, but he could not reproduce them on earth. He calls them “utterances unutterable.” They are called in Scripture “new tongues” because they are utterances of the new man latent in the old Adam, broken rudimentary utterances. How were they communicated? Thus: the human spirit of the ecstatic was filled with divine spirit, as daylight is filled with sunshine. What ensued to the ecstatic? Rapturous adoration, blissful experience, jubilancy—an inexpressible yearning to praise God. Why does not the ecstatic speak what he feels? He cannot; he is not in a position to articulate speech like a full-grown man; he can only utter broken voices, like a prattling infant. Why so? Because he is only in the infancy of the new man. This heaven-born tongue of Paradise, this spiritual language of the saints in the world to come, requires for its organ of articulation the spiritual body of the Resurrection. Now it is precisely this preparatory prattling, this rudimentary babbling, this

¹ From a lecture delivered in Leeds by the late Canon Evans of Durham.

alphabetical chattering, this broken utterance of the unknown tongues, that St. Paul illustrates in this text, which I venture to render, "When I was a babe, as a babe I talked, I prattled; I spake not as a man, but merely talked or lisped as an infant rattles."

Luke x. 18.—Is "fallen" right grammatically? I think not. Is "fallen" right logically? How can it be? Consider. There is a simile here: a comparison between Satan and lightning. In a comparison there is always a congruity between the thing compared and that to which it is compared. What we may predicate of the one we may predicate of the other. If it is correct to say "I saw *Satan fall* like lightning," it must also be correct to say "I saw *lightning fall*." By parity of reasoning, if it is correct to say "I beheld *Satan fallen* as lightning," it must also be correct to say "I saw *lightning fallen*." But it is not correct to say so; for we cannot see lightning *fallen*. We can see it *fall*, shoot, dart from point to point, from sky to earth; but *fallen* we cannot see it: when it has fallen, we see its effects in a blasted oak or a calcined cottage.

But I have been told that in some editions of the R.V., instead of *fallen* the new rendering is *falling*: "I beheld Satan *falling* as lightning." Really, if this be true, of the two errors which is the more eligible? of the two evils which the lesser? *Fallen* here, *falling* there: in this text the R.V., in assailing the A.V., is like a man who, in mounting a horse, first, faintly springing, fails to reach the saddle and comes to the ground *on this side*; then, renewing the attempt, bounding aloft, he overleaps the seat, and comes to the ground *on the other side*. He gets a fall in either case, yet a fall not in the same place. The fact is, the rendering of the A.V. is not only correct, but perfect: "I beheld Satan as lightning *fall* from heaven." The order of the English words corresponds to the order of the Greek: not *fall as lightning*, but, more vivid, *as lightning fall*. The

Greek for *falling* would be *πίπτοντα*; for *fallen*, *πεπτωκότα*; for *fall*, as in the Greek text, *πεσόντα*.

Matt. xii. 42.—When I read this new version in the margin, I exclaimed, “Really! ‘Behold, more than Solomon is here.’” Straightway came a voice from the Revised Version: “The Greek is *πλείον*, ‘more,’ not *μείζον*, ‘greater.’” “Oh, yes,” I reply, “I know that, O Revised Version: I know that *πλείον* means ‘more,’ and that *μείζον* means ‘greater.’” “Then why don’t you approve? Is it not correct?” “Oh, yes, it is correct.” “Then what does it lack?” “It lacks something. Let me tell you a tale, O Revised Version, a tale of the last century. Sir Joshua Reynolds was brought to see a great picture. The critic stood before the painting and said nothing. ‘Well, Sir Joshua, a grand picture?’ ‘Why, yes.’ ‘Very correct in its painting, Sir Joshua?’ ‘Oh, yes, very correct.’ ‘Is it not perfect? What does it lack?’ ‘It lacks this’—snapping his fingers. That snap of the finger indicated that the picture lacked that something without which anything, however correct, is nothing. That indefinite *something* would in Christianity be called charity, in a picture a touch of nature. In this new rendering it is the indefinite article ‘a.’”

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