

ARTICLE X.

THE "AUTHORIZED" VERSION OF 1611.

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OWING to the three hundredth anniversary of the issue of King James's Version, there has been talk in some quarters, and writing in others, of the desirableness of a new revision; for it seems to be admitted on all sides to-day that the Revision of 1881 was unfortunate and overzealous, and indulged in a finality of judgment for which we were not prepared.

I desire to lift my voice against *any* revision at the present time. I feel that this cannot be successfully handled to-day. One man might do it tentatively, and do it rather happily, but no one person could be entrusted with this great undertaking; and a body of men would not (I fear) produce the results looked for. We are not far enough away from the scene of the attempt in 1870-81.

Since then, it is true that we have increased very considerably our critical materials. We have discovered Old Syriac versions and edited them; we have reëdited the Peshitta; we have found the *Diatessaron* in Arabic; we are reëditing important Latin texts; we have edited our Bohairic MSS., and Balestri has furnished us with an edition of some Sahidic MSS. [Mr. Horner has reëdited *sah* this year as to the Gospels.] We have also unearthed considerable fragments from Oxyrynchus (besides the Old Testament papyri at Elephantiné), and we have recovered the *Didachê* and the *Apology* of Aristides.

But we still lack the *Diatessaron* in the original Syriac

(which may easily turn up), Mr. Horner has not yet given us the complete edition of the Sahidic Version, and we know not what extraordinary papyri may underlie Herculaneum. Meanwhile other documents are reaching us, and one very interesting and important Greek fifth-century document is to hand, and is being edited by Professor Sanders, of the University of Michigan. So that our materials continue to grow, and many workers, as Dr. Souter and E. S. Buchanan, with White, Youngman, de Bruyne, and others, are giving up their lives to an examination of important Latin documents.

But what of our critical methods?

The trouble as to this is that we have not yet succeeded in agreeing upon a scientific working basis. Canon Cook's indictment of the methods of the Revisers, Dean Burgon's exposition of some of the fallacious reasoning of Dr. Hort, and the other strictures of less well-known but equally well-equipped churchmen, all stand to-day. Yet it is but slowly that modern scholars are freeing themselves from the yoke of a tiny group of fourth-century guides, and are taking a broader view of the matter.

If the body of men selected in 1870 could not live up to their instructions, can we be sure that others to-day will be content to do so and merely to remove plain and clear errors? I have spent the last twenty years in work which I hope will tend to show how to identify and remove the errors in our oldest documents. It may be said that I am talking of the underlying Greek text, and not of a simple revision of rendering which has been suggested. The trouble is that, in practice, it is next to impossible to dissociate these two matters entirely. However, even if we could do so, the question of *rendering* remains.

And I will cite one instance to show what happened under

the Revisers' no doubt well-meant handling. I refer to the Revisers' preference for the word *appoint* rather than the word *ordain*. Now the Greek words involved are many — *τίθημι, διατίθημι, ποιέω, συντάσσω, ἀναδείξω, κείμεθα* (1 Thess. iii. 3), *ἀπόκειται* (Heb. ix. 27), *καταστήσης* (Tit. i. 5), *καταστήσομεν* (Acts vi. 3), and several others.

I do not wish here to find fault with the Revisers' "appoint." Other good men have done that. It is a fact, however, that they have gone out of their way to displace *ordain*, even when the *laying on of hands* is distinctly understood, conveyed, or implied. I am merely speaking of the difficulty of handling these Greek words in any new revision.

For observe that the Revisers not only objected to the apostles' ordaining, but preferred *appoint* of OUR LORD'S ordaining: (*ποιέω*, Mark iii. 14; [Semitic] which we cannot render literally in English) and of the Trinity ordaining St. Paul (*προχειρίσασθαι*, Acts xxvi. 16; *προεχειρίσατο*, Acts xxii. 14). The R. V. here displaces the "make" and "chosen" of the A. V. for "appoint," and it may be said that it is merely in line with the modern scholarship and proper principles in connection with their use of *appoint* elsewhere.

Not so, however; for in seven places R. V. *retains* "ordained," rendering three other Greek expressions; viz. *ᾠρισμένος* (Acts x. 42), *προᾠρισεν* (1 Cor. ii. 7), *τεταγμένοι* (Acts xiii. 48), *τεταγμένοι* (Rom. xiii. 1), *διαταγείς* (Gal. iii. 19), *διέταξε* (1 Cor. ix. 14), and lastly *κεκριμένα* (Acts xvi. 4). Two of these are compounds of *τάσσω* and two plain forms of this verb. Elsewhere the A. V. had rendered this *appoint* (Matt. xxvi. 19; xxvii. 10; xxi. 6), where the R. V. followed.

We object, however, to "ordained" for *τα κεκριμένα*. That is, we object to the Revisers' using it here. In these seven

places the A. V. also has "ordain," but *why* the Revisers should insist upon *ordain* for *τα κεκριμένα* (the passage is, "And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were *ordained* of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem"), when casting out *ordain* for *χειροτονήσαντες* (Acts xiv. 23), we fail to see. The Revisers allow the apostles and elders to ordain *things* rather than "*decree*" or "*appoint*" them, but object absolutely to the same apostles and elders ordaining *men*.

My point is, that once commence to attempt revision, and matters are apt to become worse rather than better, because we are to-day over-proud of a nicety of scholarship, which proves in practice to break down just as easily as that of our forerunners.

Our Bible of 1611 is so precious — obtained through fire and sword, blood and much tribulation — that we cannot safeguard it enough. Dear old Wiclif was often so happy, that, apart from Tyndale (and from Wiclif much credit due to him is often withheld), we have a heritage there which we *must* preserve. Thus Wiclif, I believe, gave us our "God forbid" for *μὴ γένοιτο*, which has survived throughout, although, remember, he was translating the Latin *absit*.¹ Wiclif is the only one to retain Greek and Latin *order* in that wonderful thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. He says: "I am made as bras sownynge or a cymbal tinkynge," instead of "I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." Tyndale, translating from the Greek *γέγονα χαλκὸς ἢ χῶν ἢ κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον*, lost this, nor has it since been regained.

But let us pass on.

¹ In Wiclif's first issue, "God forblid" is not present, but it obtains in his *second* issue. It is therefore his deliberate emendation, or that of Purvey or one of the other assistant Revisers. At any rate, it was fixed in the English Bible before 1400.

There are very few things which it is *necessary* to change in our Authorized Version of 1611. Very few. The rest are academic.

Among these few the most outstanding is in St. John x. 16, where FOLD stands erroneously for FLOCK. St. Jerome is alone responsible for this. No other Version and no MS. reads *fold* in the second part of the verse. St. Jerome explains that *αὐλή* and *ποίμνη* are practically the same, but of course this is not so.

Wiclif, following his Latin, impressed this on our first English version of 1380.

Tyndale corrected it. Coverdale let Tyndale's correct translation stand. And it was not Rheims which put "*fold*" back first, but our Great Bible of 1539 (Cranmer), which was followed by the Bishops' and the Genevan — very naturally occurred in the Rhemish Version — and was allowed to remain in the A. V. of 1611. The verse should read:—

"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold [*αὐλή*]; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one *flock* [*ποίμνη*] and one shepherd."

Now the difference here is very great, and only the supposed exigencies of a rather narrow ecclesiastical position would wish to translate the second word "*fold*," for the first part of the verse distinctly implies more than one *fold*, just as the second part of the verse emphasizes one *flock*.

This I consider to be the only matter of any great consequence which must be emended in *any* revision, but as everybody knows about this, it is not likely to mislead, except the very ignorant and simple. On the other hand, such an exaggerated number of fundamental changes (of readings as well as renderings) were made by the Revision of 1881 that we have lost our A. V. in the process. The A. V. of 1611 was an

evolution, and a beautiful one. It was the intention of Convocation of 1870 to continue the evolution on very conservative lines. But the Revisers seem to have acted contrary to instructions in the matter, and the result was chaos.

Now, as I have said, better no revision than such an one where we lose, or are in peril of losing:—

“Blessed art thou among women” (Luke i. 28);

“But by every word of God” (Luke iv. 4);

“Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you”
(Matt. v. 44);

“But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in Heaven, forgive your trespasses” (Mark xi. 26);

“This is my blood of the covenant” (—new) [against Jer. xxxi. 31] (Matt. xxvi. 28);

The precious verses about our Lord’s bloody sweat (Luke xxii. 43, 44);

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”
(Luke xxiii. 34);

“And saith unto them, Peace be unto you” (Luke xxiv. 36);

“And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet” (Luke xxiv. 40).

Better, I say, no revision than such excision as this, for these are not “plain and clear errors,” but very debatable omissions indeed, supported by a very small “cloud of witnesses,” and upheld by the Church, geographically entire, led by Justin Martyr and Irenæus.

And as regards translation, I will cite but one instance, so as not to occupy too much space.

Luke ii. 49 A. V.: “I must be about my Father’s business.”

R. V.: “I must be in my Father’s house.”

The Greek is, *ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς μου δεῖ εἶναι με*. The ripe scholarship of 1871–81, it seems to me, made a fatal blunder of rendering here, purely idiotic (I use the word in its primary sense) and well-meaning, no doubt, but contrary to the spirit of the two rules cited further on. Canon Cook says:—

“I cannot think that the Revisers were justified in altering ‘about my Father’s business’ of the A. V. and substituting for it ‘in my Father’s house.’ This may be the true meaning of the Greek, but it is far from certain. With their own marginal alternative, and their somewhat awkward rendering of the Greek, before them, it seems a bold thing to condemn the Authorized Version as being *a plain and clear error*. In fact ‘in the things’ is a very awkward rendering. [Canon Cook referred to the margin of R. V., which reads, “Or *about my Father’s business*. Gr. *in the things of my Father*.”] The Greek is ambiguous, and I believe it is purposely chosen *as a comprehensive expression*. Our Lord used words which implicitly declared *the whole purpose of His life on earth* [the italics are ours]; but that was to be ‘about His Father’s business,’ engaged in His Father’s affairs, certainly not simply to be in His Father’s house, if by the house is meant the Temple.”

So far Canon Cook. Note that in the resolutions of the Lower House of Convocation, May 10, 1870, section 4 said, “That in such necessary changes, the style of the language employed in the existing Version be closely followed.” Rule IV. of the 1611 “evolution” was better yet: “When a word hath divers significations, that is to be kept which hath been most commonly used by the most of the ancient Fathers, being agreeable to the propriety of the place and the analogy of the faith.”¹

But our Revisers of 1870–81 knew so much better than all their predecessors! Observe that it had been said by

¹ See Irenæus, Tertullian, Ambrosius, *ad loc.*

Wiclif: "Wisten ye not that in tho thingis that ben of my fadir it behoueth me to be."

Tyndale: "Wist ye not that I must goo aboute my Father's busines."

Coverdale: "Wyst ye not y I must go aboute my fathers busynes."

Cranmer (1539): "Wist ye not that I must goo aboute mi fathers business."

Bishops' (1568): "Wyste ye not that I must go about my fathers businesse."

Geneva (1557): "Wyst ye not that I must go about my fathers business."

Rheims (1582): "Did you not know that I must be about those things which are my fathers."

A. V. (1611): "Wist yee not that I must bee about my fathers businesse."

Luther (1522): "Wisset yhr nicht das ich seyn mus ynn dem das meynes vaters ist."

The *French* of 1524: "Ne scauez vous point que il me fault estre es choses q sont de mon pere."

The *Gothic* long since (350): "Niu wisseduth thatei in thaim attins meinis skulda wisan."

Coptic: "Were ye not knowing that I must be in the (things) of my Father."

Canon Cook did not put his finger on the *source* of the Revisers' "house." It was the *Syriac* which first suggested this translation, and the *Diatessaron* has it. The Revisers found it in the *Peshitta* and in the *Cureton* Syriac (which latter was extant at this place) and thought it was a good idea. The *Syr. S.* and *Diatess. arab.* were also found later to have it. But, as a matter of fact, both Baethgen and Mrs. Lewis refuse to render "house" in translating. As a matter of fact, the Syriac is

indeterminate, as is shown by a variety of rendering by the different translators. Gwilliam and Burkitt are content with *domo*, Mrs. Lewis reads (legitimately enough) *with*. The Jerus. syr. cod. B reads "in THE *hand*." Now the Syriac "in the *hand*" and "*house*" can easily be confused, while the preposition *with* in Syriac and the word *house* have identical consonants. And, as regards *hand* — (perhaps the original here in Syriac) — a secondary meaning of this word is *opera*. So that it would seem that *opera*, or 'business' (*anglice*), convey properly the great underlying truth.

The Latin also refuses to be influenced by the Syriac here (although it agrees in numberless places), and all Latins give a close rendering of the ambiguous Greek. Thus, the Vulgate, all Vulg. codices, and the Old Latin *c d f h* got *Dimma Moling*, with *Iren.*, write:—

"quia (quoniam *d Iren.*) in his quae patris mei sunt oportet me esse";

a ff₂ q r δ, with *Tert.*, give:—

"quia (quod *q Tert.*) in patris mei (— his quae, — sunt) oportet me esse (esset *ff₂*, esse me *δ*)";

b and *Ambrose* write:—

"quia in propria patris mei oportet me esse";

and *e* =

"quia in re patris mei oportet me esse."

[Are wanting *i k r₂* at this place.]

The Jerusalem Syriac baulked at the translation; and of the three codices of this version one reads *ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ*, one *ἐν τῇ χειρὶ*, while the third writes *υἰὸς* for *ἐν τοῖς*!

The Philoxenian follows the Greek.

All this testimony of the ancients was swept away by the superior scholarship of the Revisers of 1881. Were they right? Are we the gainers?

The beautiful further evolution of our Bible was abruptly halted by these men.

I need not go into the matter in greater detail here. But it is a well-known fact that the margin of the R. V. is encumbered with many things which were better omitted, and fails to indicate many other things of greater importance.

Thus, in St. John's First Epistle (i. 1), the R. V. says "concerning the Word of life" in the text, and in the margin "or word," with a lower-case w. Is not this puerile in a work designed for popular circulation? Again, in chapter i. 4 they say, "that our joy may be fulfilled" in the text, but in the margin, "Many ancient authorities read *your*." The words *ἡμεῖς* or *ὑμᾶς* and cases occur *eighty-nine* times in this First Epistle, and are often interchanged by the "ancient authorities," yet in only one other place in the Epistle (iii. 25) does the R. V. margin notice a change. If they notice one they should notice more.

Again, Gal. i. 4, "that he might deliver us out of this present evil world" (margin, "or age"), where this should be reversed, and "age" (*αἰῶνος*) should be in the *text*, and "world" in the margin. For St. Paul knew perfectly well what he was doing when he wrote *age* here. He uses "age" thus in Eph. i. 21; 1 Cor. i. 20; ii. 6, 8; iii. 18; 2 Cor. iv. 4; 1 Tim. vi. 17; 2 Tim. iv. 10; Tit. ii. 12; Heb. vi. 5; while at Heb. i. 2 *ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν* is preferred, and *κόσμος* at

Phil. ii. 15: *ὡς φωστῆρες ἐν κόσμῳ*

Col. i. 6: *ἐν παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ*

ii. 8: *κατὰ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου*

ii. 20: *ἀπὸ τῶν στοιχείων τοῦ κόσμου*

while in Romans the predominant expression is *καιρῷ*. St. Paul is careful of his choice of *καιρός*, *ἡμέρα*, *αἰών*, or *κόσμος*, and I believe we should follow him strictly. For in Galatians

St. Paul used *αἰῶνος* advisedly in i. 4, varying the expression later in the same Epistle (iv. 3) to τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου.

Thus in Ephesians he says:—

i. 4 ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου while at i. 21 ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ and at ii. 2 he combines them: κατὰ τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ κόσμου.

And we have not yet exhausted St. Paul's vocabulary. For at 2 Cor. vii. 8 another word is used. What we translate:—

"Made you sorry though it were but for a *season*" is εἰ καὶ πρὸς ὄραν ἐλύπησεν ἡμᾶς, that is to say the word "*hour*" is used. There is really a most instructive and deep play here. Because St. Paul follows with νῦν χαίρω οὐχ ὅτι ἐλυπήθητε, ἀλλ' ὅτι. . . . as if while suppressing *καιρόν* and using ὄραν he yet played on *καιρόν* with the following χαίρω. So that he chose ὄραν deliberately here. And if here, why not equally deliberately αἰών, κόσμος, ἡμέρα, καιρός elsewhere?

As a matter of fact (this time true to their instructions not to disturb anything unnecessarily) the Revisers let *season* stand for ὄραν in 2 Cor. vii. 8 *without any marginal comment!*

Again the margin fails at Gal. i. 18:

R. V.: "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit ("to see" A. V.) 'Cephas ("Peter" A. V.) and . . ."

The margin says for *visit*: "or *become acquainted with*." The Greek is *ἱστορήσαι*. Neither "see" nor "visit" of the texts of A. V. and R. V. convey *ἱστορήσαι*. Nor does R. V. marg. "become acquainted with" convey all that *ἱστορήσαι* can mean. See Tertullian *ad loc.*: "cognoscendi Petri causa." This expression having caused a good deal of discussion in ancient times, would it not have been advisable to indicate in the margin that *ἱστορήσαι* also means "to inquire about" or "to learn by inquiry from Peter" or "to confer with Peter"? It seems to me that the margin should be silent or

very clear. So the word ἐπιγνώσκω is not rendered *recognise* by the Revisers, as it might have been.

Colossians i. 6 should be: "Since the day ye heard it and *recognised* [R. V. *knew*] the grace of God in truth."

Matt. xiv. 35: "The men of Gennesaret *recognised* Jesus."

vii. 16: "Ye shall *recognise* them by their fruits."

Acts xii. 14: "Rhoda *recognised* St. Peter's voice."

Much more, clearly, might be said. Revision may be a good thing, but not to-day, and not yet. Let us be a little more patient, and not strive for finality before we have examined our documents. We can revise the renderings, but we cannot revise our Greek text properly as yet.

Therefore I entreat that we may let the good old Authorized Version of 1611 serve its purpose, for better or for worse, for some years to come.