

## ART. V.—TWO PASSAGES IN THE EPISTLES THAT ARE EMBODIED IN OUR PRAYER-BOOK.

(Phil. iv. 7 and 1 Pet. iii. 1-6.)

Phil. iv. 7: ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἣ ὑπερέχουσα πάντα νοῦν, φρουρήσει τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν ("The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts.")

HOW familiar to us are these words! Yet the English is ambiguous, and is no doubt heard by many in a sense not meant originally by the Greek of St. Paul, though the Blessing in the Prayer-Book may include this sense, or even have been meant so by the framers of our Liturgy. For many hear in the word "*passeth all understanding*" (ὑπερέχουσα) simply this: "The peace of God, which is *beyond all human power to understand*—which cannot by man be fully understood." Whereas St. Paul almost certainly meant: "Which is above and better than all human understanding and knowledge." For look at his use of the same word in the same epistle, ch. iii. 8: ἡγοῦμαι πάντα ζημίαν διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ ("I count all things loss because of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus;" *i.e.*, the knowledge of Christ Jesus towers above, dwarfs by comparison, all else. Compare also ch. ii. 3: ὑπερέχοιτας ἑαυτῶν ("Let each think of her better than themselves"). Again, for the whole sense, cf. Ephes. iii. 18 and 19: ἵνα ἐξισχύσητε γνῶναι τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν τῆς γνώσεως ἀγαπὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ ("that ye may be strengthened to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge;" *i.e.*, which is better than human knowledge. *Love* is exalted as compared with *knowledge*, as in 1 Cor. viii. 1: ἡ γνῶσις φυσιοῖ, ἡ δὲ ἀγαπὴ οἰκοδομεῖ ("knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth").

It is true that in Ephes. iii. 19 the English is ambiguous. It might mean "beyond all power to know;" nor would the paradox involved, "to know the unknowable," absolutely discredit this interpretation. For the Christian is striving to comprehend and know that which is beyond mere human comprehension and knowledge. But a comparison of all the passages appears decisive for the other view, both of this passage and of Phil. iv. 7. And, on the whole, the Prayer-Book Blessing is best understood thus: "May the peace of God, which is better than all human understanding, keep your hearts . . . in the knowledge and love of God." The Blessing, thus understood, embodies the whole sense of Phil. iii. 8; iv. 7; 1 Cor. viii. 1.

1 Pet. iii. 1-6: "*Likewise ye wives . . . amazement.*"

The words "whose daughters ye are, so long as ye do well and are not afraid with any amazement" in our Marriage Service must have puzzled many newly-married brides. Why would they be Sarah's daughters by not being afraid and amazed? When did Sarah set an example of not being amazed? And why should it be suggested to young wives that fear and amazement are a likely risk in matrimony? Now all this perplexity arises from a faulty punctuation, and consequent misunderstanding of the Greek text, which punctuation is retained even in the Revised Version. Amend this, and all is smooth and reasonable. Put a full stop or colon after τέκνα ("whose children ye are"). To make it even clearer, a parenthesis might include verses 5, 6: "For after . . . ye are." Then the sense of the whole passage will run thus: "Wives, live in subjection to your husbands; not thinking of outward finery, but of inward worth. (For thus lived the holy women of old; such was Sarah, whose daughters ye are.) Live, I say, doing well, and so not put in fear by any terror."

To the participles in ii. 18; iii. 1, 6, 7 (ὑποτασσόμενοι, ὑποτασσόμεναι, ἀγαθοποιῶσαι, φοβούμεναι, συνοικοῦντες) is carried on the imperative sense from ii. 13, 17: "Submit yourselves, honour," etc. The whole confusion has arisen from not so taking ἀγαθοποιῶσαι. But, as interpreted above, the advice has a worthy close: "Do well, and you will have nothing to fear." A sense which is echoed in verse 13: "Who will harm you if ye be followers of that which is good?"

Even if it be argued that St. Peter was not writing chiefly for Jewish Christians (though I think he was); yet he may call those Sarah's children spiritually whom he terms in ii. 9, "a chosen race, a royal priesthood," etc.

Reading St. Peter's advice to wives thus, we are freed for ever from the foolish old scoff that "matrimony begins with 'Dearly beloved' and ends in 'amazement.'"

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## Notes on Bible Words.

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### NO. VII.—"TEMPTATION."

IN the N. T. "temptation" is πειρασμός (Vulg. *tentatio*), "to tempt" is πειράζω, and "the tempter" (Matt. iv. 3; 1 Thess. iii. 5) is ὁ πειράζων (Vulg. *tentator*).

The simple meaning of πειρασμός is a testing, putting to proof.

Compare the verb (*try whether a thing can be done*); Acts ix. 26,