

DOCTRINAL EFFECTS OF THE REVISED
VERSION.

WHATEVER may be the defects in the English of the Revised Version—and it is often stiff, pedantic, and unmusical to a quite unnecessary degree—no one, if at least a few unreasonable and intemperate fanatics be excepted, can fairly deny that, both in the text it follows and in the rendering of that text, it is much more exact and brings us much nearer to the Original Scriptures than any Version which has preceded it.

But though the New Version is a truer Version, and therefore a safer guide, than any we have had before, that is no reason why we should hide, either from ourselves or from others, the number and importance of the changes it has introduced. On the contrary, it is those very changes which are its most conclusive vindication; for, if many and important changes had not been imperative, why should we be required to exchange the Old Version, endeared to us by its noble phrasing and musical rhythms, as well as by its sacred associations and familiar use, for a New Version which, however exact it may be, must long offend us by its unfamiliar collocations, its lack of happy idioms and sweet stately music? To say or imply that there is no great difference between the New Version and the Old, while yet we are asked to give up the Old for the New, is to demand of us a most painful sacrifice for no worthy or sufficient end.

Yet, on all hands, there seems a disposition to minimize the changes that have been made, to say nothing about them or as little as possible, lest the English *fear* of change should be aroused; insomuch that many will be surprised, if not dismayed, to hear that, while there are nearly eight thousand verses in the New Testament, there are not eight

hundred of them into which the Revised Version has not introduced some alteration, though of course most of these alterations are very slight; that sixteen verses wholly disappear from the New Version, and that, besides these, a hundred and twenty-two sentences or parts of sentences are omitted from it; while only ten new passages, mostly very brief, are added to it.¹ And yet why should they be rendered uneasy, and much less be dismayed, by such statistics as these, if, as is undoubtedly the fact, all these changes, omissions, additions, or most of them, bring our New Testament into closer correspondence with the New Testament written by Apostles and Evangelists?

This is the true comfort for those who fear even the changes which lapse of time and the advance of scholarship have rendered imperative. They need no other, and least of all certain fallacious consolations which have been freely offered them. It has been very generally said, for example: "None of these changes in any way affect *the doctrines* taught in the New Testament. Numerous and important as they are, they will not compel us to revise or modify any of our conceptions of the truths most surely and commonly believed among us." That, however, is a very questionable statement; and, to some of us, it would be very questionable comfort, if it were true. Of course these changes will make no difference to scientific theologians familiar with the Greek Testament, and therefore not dependant on any Version, old or new. But the large majority of those who profess and call themselves Christians *are* dependant on the Translation they use; and many of them distrust the theologians, and draw their conceptions of doctrinal truth solely from the Version put into their hands, as explained by the leaders and teachers of the sect to which they are attached. And that being so, there can be little doubt that,

¹ I am indebted for these figures, as well as for some valuable hints, to a correspondent whose name has unfortunately escaped my memory.

should the Revised Version ever come into general use, the popular conceptions of Christian doctrine will be largely, and in some respects happily, changed. Let the Authorised Version once fall out of use and be forgotten by all but scholars—as half-a-dozen older translations have already done; for who now reads Wickliffe's Version, or Tyndale's, or the "Bishops' Bible," or the "Breeches Bible," or the "Treacle Bible"?—and the New Version be generally accepted, and the alterations in it will, I believe, inevitably induce grave changes at least in the *popular* theology.

Doctrines are but abstract statements of the truths taught in Scripture? How then can you touch the Scriptures without touching doctrine? The changes you make in the one must sooner or later be reflected in the other. And when our Version is largely and seriously modified, how can there fail to ensue a large and serious modification of our doctrinal conceptions? They must and will ensue, and that both in directions which will be very welcome to some of us, and in directions which will be no less unwelcome.

I propose, in the present essay, to indicate only two of these inevitable doctrinal modifications, one of which is likely to be welcome, and the other unwelcome, to many among us.

1. Whether we like it, or dislike it, there can be no doubt that the New Version gives greater prominence to *the devil* than the Old Version did, although of late it has become a fashion to ignore, if not to deny, his very existence. Of course we must all admit that, in any and every Version of it, the New Testament affirms his existence, and attributes to him a vast and sinister influence over the souls of men; for this is the teaching of St. John, St. Paul, St. Peter, St. James, and of our Lord Himself. In whatever else they differ, or are supposed to differ, they agree in this. And no one who has looked into the ques-

tion can for a moment doubt that the New Version gives a more decided prominence to this teaching, and a keener emphasis.

There are at least six passages in which it introduces the devil for the first time. Thus, in Matthew v. 37 it reads, "But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of *the evil one*" (instead of "cometh of *evil*"). In Matthew vi. 13, and the final clause of the Lord's Prayer, we now read: "Deliver us from *the evil one*" (instead of "from *evil*"). In John xvii. 15 we read: "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from *the evil one*" (instead of "keep them from the evil"). In Ephesians vi. 16, the shield of faith is described as able to "quench all the fiery darts of *the evil one*" (instead of "the fiery darts of *the wicked*"). In 2 Thessalonians iii. 3, we are told that the Lord will "guard us from *the evil one*" (instead of "keep us from *evil*"). And in 1 John v. 18, 19, we are assured both that "the whole world lieth in *the evil one*" (instead of "in *wickedness*"), and that if we are begotten and kept of God "*the evil one*" shall not be able so much as to touch us.

Now the existence and ministry of the devil are not one whit more plainly taught in these passages than in a score of other passages which are common both to the Old Version and the New; but we should simply deceive ourselves were we to conclude that a Version which makes six additional references to his existence and ministry will not give him a greater prominence and stamp a deeper impression of him on the public mind.

Those of us who study the Greek Testament for ourselves, or who listen to the teaching of accomplished scholars, may doubt whether these references ought to have been made. We may say, as indeed Canon Cook has said with great force: "The Revisers were charged to make

none but necessary and inevitable changes, to correct only clear and plain errors. That this change of 'evil' into 'evil one' was not necessary is proved by the fact that, now it has been made, it is challenged and condemned by scholars as able and learned as those who made it." We may hold, many of us do hold that, though the balance of scholarship slightly dips in favour of those who maintain that the evil one is referred to in these passages, there is no such general consent, no such preponderance of competent opinion even, as to warrant the change that has been made. We may say this, and what we say may be quite unanswerable. But how many of the general public will hear what we say, or will pay much attention to it, especially when all we can say is, "*Perhaps* the change ought not to have been made, though very probably the word means what the Revisers take it to mean"? The impression on the public mind of the Church will be made by the Book itself, and not by our halting and dubious comments on the Book. And, therefore, as the New Version acquires authority, we must expect a more decided and general belief in the existence and power of the devil, on the part at least of those who bow to the authority of Scripture, than at present obtains among us. The *other* passages just cited might indeed be seldom read, and so might produce no very profound impression; but when, rightly or wrongly, the devil is brought into the Sermon on the Mount, and even into the Lord's Prayer, who can doubt that the belief in his existence, his enmity to all goodness, his strange and disastrous power over the minds of men, will become a well-defined article in the popular creed?

And why, after all, should we either fear or regret it? There is nothing irrational in such a belief; and, on the other hand, there is the gravest warrant for it. It is assumed by many, indeed, that the very existence of the evil one has been somehow disproved—disproved by science,

I suppose; and Carlyle used humorously to complain that in this trivial and scoffing age it had become impossible to believe in so much as the devil: while many who know that science never has, and never can, either prove or disprove any spiritual fact, have persuaded themselves that, in speaking of the devil and his works, our Lord and his Apostles simply adopted the current Jewish terminology, and intended nothing more than a warning against the power of evil and its manifold sinister influences on the life and history of man. And I confess, so repugnant is this doctrine to my natural instincts, that, once and for long, I myself held the view they still hold, and quietly assumed that when the New Testament said "devil" I might cancel the first letter of the word, and understand that nothing more, or, rather, that nothing *less*, than "evil" was meant. It is only a larger experience of human life and a deeper study of the Word which has compelled me to abandon that view. It sounds terrible to say, yet why should I not say, since it is true, that I believe I have *seen* men and women who were possessed and torn by an evil spirit, and who were impelled on the downward course by an energy other than and beyond their own.

And quite apart from this tragic experience, which happily is not common, any one who will read the New Testament for himself cannot fail to be struck with the serious simplicity and earnestness with which our Lord and his Apostles speak of the presence and activity of an evil spirit who is very potent with men who walk in evil ways, or to observe in what grave connexions they thus speak,—often when they are teaching the highest truths we know, or inviting us to the most plain and binding duties of the Christian life. As we read, and ponder what we read, it becomes very difficult, if not altogether impossible, to hold that they are accommodating themselves to any current

superstition, or using language which we are at liberty to accommodate to our own fancies and doubts. The more gravely and thoughtfully we read it, the more likely are we to be convinced, however much against the grain, that the devil and his angels have a very real existence, and that we are urgently and solemnly summoned to pray and strive against them.

And why should we not believe it? What is any spiritual force—such as we know and feel evil to be—but a personal quality? An abstract beneficence has no existence save in our thoughts. Beneficence is a personal quality, and reveals itself in the action of a spirit, human or divine. But evil *is*. We *are* exposed to malignant influences. And just as there is no abstract beneficence, so also there is no abstract maleficence, except in our thoughts. This, too, is and must be a personal quality revealing itself in the action of some spirit, human or diabolic. And what comfort, at least to us men, can there be in the assumption that the human spirit is the sole source of evil, and that the most portentous criminals—a Nero, for example, or a Borgia, or a Buonaparte—have displayed none but human qualities? If there are other and more potent spirits than ours, may not some of these be evil too, and take that very delight in drawing men down to their own base level which we only too often see in the worst men and the worst women? Does not that hypothesis at least relieve the human story of some of its darkest stains, and approve itself to every lover of his kind?

Above all, when we find that men to whose authority we cannot but defer—if on no other ground, yet on this, that they possess a far deeper and wider insight into the spiritual world than their fellows—gravely assure us that there moves in that world a fallen and evil spirit, who tempts that he may destroy us; when they gravely and

earnestly beseech us to resist him and his temptations,—what are we to do? what is it reasonable for us to do? To turn from their teaching with a jest or a smile, as if we were somehow superior to them and knew more than they did? Or to argue: “These men have brought God, life, immortality to us. They have taught us to know ourselves, what we are and what we may and ought to be, as we never could have known ourselves but for them. They have *proved* that they know much more than we know both of the mysteries of our own spiritual being and of the mysteries of that vast spiritual empire to which we are related. And, therefore, confessing our own ignorance, acknowledging their superior insight and wisdom, we will believe what they teach, at least until we detect them in some affirmation or assumption plainly contrary to reason.” To those who have any tincture of modesty in their nature, the latter must seem unspeakably the more reasonable course of the two: and, hence, if the New Version should induce a more general belief in the activity and power of the devil, we should be so far from regretting it that we should rather welcome and rejoice in it as a proof that men are wise enough and humble enough to bow to the authority of teachers whose spiritual insight, or inspiration, they have tried and approved.

Curiously enough, however, while thus thrusting the devil into passages in which he had not otherwise appeared, the Revisers banish him from one very notable passage in which his presence has long been recognized,—a freak which has not yet, so far as I have seen, attracted the attention it undoubtedly deserves. In 2 Timothy ii. 25, 26, we read in our Old Version that, even to the opponents of his word and grace, “God is able to give repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, *who are taken captive by him at his will.*” But in the New Version

the last clause of Verse 26 becomes, "Having been taken captive *by the Lord's servant unto the will of God.*"

Now the passage is confessedly a difficult one, capable of at least three or four different interpretations. For in its final clause, which may be literally rendered, as in the margin of the Revised Version, "Having been taken captive *by him* unto *the will of him,*" two different pronouns are used in the Greek (*αὐτός* and *ἐκεῖνος*) for "him" : and hence we naturally look for two different antecedents. It is not altogether impossible indeed that, in the Greek, *ἐκεῖνος* may have been employed, as some have contended that it was employed, instead of *αὐτός* on the second occasion, by way of *emphasis* simply ; but it is so doubtful, common sense and the *usus loquendi* are so decisively against it, as to be to the last degree unlikely. Any scholar coming to the passage for the first time, with a mind neither perplexed nor prepossessed, would naturally conclude that one person was here represented as taking certain men captive, but that it was to subserve some other and higher will than his own—another person's will—that he was permitted to ensnare them. Any such scholar, too, would, it will be admitted, naturally and instinctively look for the antecedents to the personal *αὐτοῦ* and the demonstrative *ἐκεῖνον* in the substantives which most nearly precede these pronouns ; which substantives are "the devil" and "God." So that, all theological difficulty or prejudice apart, the simple and natural way of reading the sentence, according to the plainest grammatical rule, would be to take it as affirming that, though *the devil* may be allowed to take a certain specified class captive, it is only in order that, by taking them captive, he may in some way subserve *the will of God*. And thus we should reach what seems to me the perfectly true and valuable sense, that the devil himself is but the servant, or slave, of God, whose real function, whatever his intention may be, is to get the pure,

large, saving will of God done in the end by the very men who once opposed themselves against it.

And I confess that when I first read the Verse in the New Version—happening to refer to it apart from its connexion—I too hastily concluded that our Revisers used “the Lord’s servant,” *i.e.*, bond-servant, or slave, as a synonym for the devil, and had adopted the simple and natural rendering of the passage. And I praised them in my heart for the courage they had shewn in inserting so many words into the text rather than suffer the sense of the passage to remain any longer dubious or obscure.

It only needed a second glance, however, to dispel the pleasant illusion. For, as is apparent from Verse 24, “the Lord’s servant,” or “bond-slave,” means, for them, the idealized Timothy, the Christian teacher or preacher in the abstract. They *have* shewn courage, indeed, but not precisely the kind of courage for which I gave them credit. What they have been bold enough to do is to insert a *gloss* into the text, one of the three or four interpretations which have been put upon this much-disputed passage; and that not, as we have seen, by any means the most simple, natural, and grammatical. Why they should have swept past the antecedent offered them for *αυτου* in Verse 26 (“the devil”) to the remote antecedent in Verse 24 (“the Lord’s servant”), it is for them to explain. To me it is inexplicable on any other ground than the feeling that there must be something wrong in the simplest and most obvious sense of the Apostle’s words, or the fear that there might be something so theologically unsound in it as that it could not possibly be true. For, as Huther has long since pointed out, the interpretation which they have lifted into the text is not only alien to St. Paul’s usual mode of expression, but is also grammatically defective. What they mean to convey is that it is the Lord’s servant, the preacher of the Word, who takes captive those who oppose

themselves to Christ, in order that the will of God may be fulfilled in their salvation. But the use of the perfect tense (ἐξωραγημένοι) in “*having been taken captive*,” shews that the men in question had been taken captive *before* they had escaped out of the snare of the devil, and implies therefore that it was by him whose snare they had escaped that they had first been caught. So that, according to the interpretation adopted by the Revisers, the servant of the Lord had taken them captive before they escaped from the craft and power of the devil; or, in other words, they had broken the snare *before* they were ensnared! ¹

But where after all is the difficulty, theological or other, in the simple grammatical rendering of the words, that we should be driven to fall back on an interpretation of them so singular and open to such serious objection? Why should St. Paul scruple to say, or we scruple to believe, that the devil is God’s slave, and can only do what He permits, and is compelled to subserve the high and gracious counsels of the Divine will, let his aim and intention be as malignant as it may? Surely *that* is the teaching of the whole Bible, or of the Gospel in the whole Bible, from the Book of Genesis to the Book of the Revelation, from the promise to Eve down to the Apocalyptic vision of the triumph of the Lamb; and never needed to be enforced with graver emphasis than now when the devil is being given a new prominence in the Scriptures of the New Testament.

Read thus, in the simplest plainest way, the Verse goes

¹ None of the readings of this perplexing passage are free from difficulty. But, so far as I can see, there is only one difficulty in the reading here proposed, and only one argument in favour of that preferred by the Revisers. And these two are one. The usage of ζῶσαι appears to demand that it should be rendered to take captive *alive*; and whether or not that sense may be sufficiently met by the implication that the devil attempts to take men captive *even while they are alive, before their time*, that is, before they die and fall fairly into his power, or whether, in its later usage, the verb dropped its qualification, and came to imply *capture* pure and simple, I am unable to determine.

far to render the new prominence given to the Tempter tolerable; for if he be but "the Lord's slave," *i.e.* the slave of Christ, and the very temptations and miseries which he inflicts are but means for carrying the saving will of God into effect on those who have opposed themselves to that high Will, we need not at all events lose our composure at finding him introduced into the Lord's prayer. Read thus, the Verse does but pack the whole magnificent argument of "Job" into a nutshell. It represents the great adversary of our souls as still claiming a place among the servants or slaves of God, if no longer among his sons; and as having men "delivered" to him for a time only that he may prove, search, and cleanse their spirits by the fiery trials to which he exposes them. And it invites and strengthens us to endure his "temptations" with fidelity and patience, in order that, like Job, we may rise, through suffering, into a wider truer knowledge of God, and a more entire and hearty devotion to his will.

Nay, more, it suggests that this is the ministry and function of the devil in the history of humanity at large, as well as in the growth and development of the individual soul; that even those who "oppose themselves" are delivered into his hand only that, finding his very mercies to be cruel, they may be quickened to repentance and brought to a saving knowledge of the truth: and that when we can review the human story as a whole, and shall have "seen *the end* of the Lord," we shall discover that all the pains and wrongs and sorrows of time have been permitted and overruled by God for the greater good of his creatures, and in order that they, like Job, like One greater than Job, might be made "perfect" by the things which they suffered.

2. The other inevitable modification of doctrine of which I spoke will probably be most welcome to precisely those to whom the prospect of a deepened popular belief in the existence and activity of the devil will be most un-

welcome: and to no man can this second modification be more welcome than to myself.

For thirty years now I have been preaching what is called "the larger hope," through good and ill report. And only seven years ago when I delivered the series of Lectures, afterwards published in *Salvator Mundi*, and had to affirm that the words "hell" and "damnation" ought to be banished from our New Testament, and that *αἰώνιος* should never be rendered "everlasting," I had to admit that that was "a very grave assertion to make," and might well seem "almost incredible." Most of my hearers, I know, felt its gravity very deeply, and waited with keen anxiety for the proofs by which it was to be sustained. And yet, had the New Version then been in our hands, I should not have felt any special gravity in the assertion, nor would my hearers have waited with any anxiety for proofs: for, actually or virtually, all these words *have* now been banished from our New Testament. The word "everlasting" is not once applied either to the future life or the future punishment of men, in the New Version, though in the Old Version it occurred again and again. The words "damn," "damnation," "damnable," "damned," have all disappeared, and have been replaced by such words as "judge," "judgment," "condemn," "condemnation," "condemned." And though the word "hell" is still retained by our Revisers for "Tartarus" and "Gehenna," or even aggravated into that grotesque pleonasm "hell of fire," it is given up for "Hades"; while even where it is still retained, the Margin confesses that it has no right to its place by recalling the original word. And can any reasonable man suppose that these tremendous changes will have no appreciable effect on the popular eschatological belief?

Hades, a new word, a Greek word, the very word used by the Apostles and Evangelists, is boldly and bodily trans-

ferred into our New Version in every case—and there are ten of them—in which it occurs in the original. Consider what the effect of that will be on the popular mind. We now read (Acts ii. 31), for instance, that our Lord descended from the Cross *into Hades*, while yet, on the Cross, He had promised the penitent robber (Luke xxiii. 43), “To-day shalt thou be with Me *in Paradise!*” Paradise must be in Hades then, though it could not be in “hell.” But in the famous Parable recorded by St. Luke (chap. xvi. 23), we read that “*in Hades*,” the rich man, “lifted up his eyes, being in torments.” In Hades, yet not in Paradise! Then there must be another Hadean province, a place of torment and punishment, the place elsewhere named “Gehenna,” because Gehenna was the public place of punishment and torment for the criminals of Jerusalem. And yet, once more, in the Apocalypse (Rev. xx. 14), it is predicted that, when the Great Assize is held, and the dead both small and great shall be judged according to their works, the whole Hadean world, including both its provinces, will be “cast into the lake of fire,” *i.e.* will be destroyed, as having fulfilled the function for which it was created and made. The states of being shadowed forth by the words, Gehenna, Paradise, Hades cannot, therefore, be final or everlasting; they are only intermediate conditions, states of discipline in which the souls of men await, and may be prepared for, their final award.¹

Yet two of these words, *Hades* and *Gehenna*, are the words which in our Old Version were translated “hell,” and were popularly held to denote the *everlasting* punishment and torment to which the wicked were damned! Only one other word, indeed, has ever been so translated,

¹ I am not now justifying these inferences, be it remembered—though that would be far from a hopeless task; and still less am I dealing with the question which has much exercised some thoughtful minds, whether these words and phrases are more than an accommodation to the current eschatological beliefs; I am simply pointing out what the popular mind is likely to make of them

the word "Tartarus," which only occurs in a single passage in a dubious Epistle; where St. Peter, or a *falsarius*, affirms that the angels who sinned were "sent into *Tartarus*, to be held in custody" till they too were judged. Here (2 Pet. ii. 4) our Revisers retain the word "hell" in the text, without, as it seems to me, a shadow of reason, though they give "Tartarus" in the margin; for if they might transfer the Greek word *Hades* into our English version, why might they not also transfer the Greek word *Tartarus*, with which every schoolboy is familiar and which is frequently used by many of our best writers? As however this word occurs only once, and then has no bearing on the future estate of man, we may henceforth drop it out of account. But their great fault in my judgment—and I hold it to be by far the greatest blemish in their whole work—is that they did not also transfer into their version the Hebrew word "Gehenna," since we have no English word which would convey its meaning and implications. This, to my thinking, is a fault wholly inexcusable. For it is of no use to plead, as more than one learned friend on the New Testament Committee have pleaded, that the word "hell" was once a comparatively innocent word, and that it still conveys innocent meanings in certain obscure provincial dialects. Whatever it has been, whatever it may still be in fading provincial usages, the word in its common and popular use is charged and surcharged with horrible meanings and connotations which have no counterparts in the name of the darker province of Hades. To use "hell" for "Gehenna" is only to mislead as many as do not study the margin of the New Version as well as the text.

Nor do I see what reasonable objection there is to retaining the original word. *Gehenna* is already familiar to many, and might just as easily be explained to those who are unfamiliar with it, as "Hades," or "baptize." No child

who has passed through our Sunday Schools ought to be ignorant of the fact that, taken literally, Gehenna is the name of a valley outside Jerusalem where criminals were executed, and their dead bodies were consumed by fire or left as a prey to the worm; and that, taken figuratively, it denotes the darker province of the Hadean world, in which impenitent sinners receive the due reward of their deeds, await their final award, and are, as some believe, purged from their sins "so as by fire." But it never denotes the final and endless estate of man; and still less does it imply an everlasting torment and degradation; for Gehenna itself is to perish one day, as soon as its work is done.

It is on all grounds to be regretted, therefore, that this word was not inserted in the text; while yet it is something—much—to be thankful for that, in every case but one,¹ it is inserted in the margin of our New Version, so that every *careful* reader can now see for himself what the word ought to be.

Now that we may estimate the effect of these changes on the popular mind, let us suppose that the New Version has become the Authorised Version, and that a man of good natural intelligence, but simple and unlettered, comes to his New Testament to learn what it has to teach him of the future doom of the wicked. What does he find? He finds (1) no such word as "damn" or "damnation." (2) He finds the word *Hades* in ten passages in which we now read "hell." And (3) wherever this word "hell" is retained in the text, he is warned by the margin that the original word is *Gehenna*. He sets himself to ascertain by a careful comparison of passages, what these two words mean and imply; and he discerns that *Gehenna* is one of the provinces of Hades, that *Hades* is the name of an

¹ The exception is James iii. 6, where the tongue is said to be "set on fire of hell." Here there is no *Gehenna* in the margin. It is omitted, I suppose, by mere accident or misadventure, and not of set purpose or intention.

intermediate state in which the souls of both righteous and unrighteous await the final judgment, and that when the throne is set and the books are opened *Hades* is to pass away.

Is it possible that *he* should form the doctrinal conception of the future estate of the impenitent that we, many of us at least, have derived from our Authorised Version? Can he possibly believe that, when they die, the wicked pass at once into a place of torment, a hell, from which they will never be released? I do not say that he will be led to "trust the larger hope," to believe in the ultimate restoration of all souls to the love and service of Righteousness. I am sure that, if he read his New Version carefully, he must still believe that a long and terrible retribution awaits those who have loved evil and done it greedily, and that at the lowest a severe and searching discipline must await those who have habitually lived in the baser part of their nature, "cradling themselves on their lees." But can he possibly believe in the dogma represented by the words *Hell* and *Damnation* when once he has learned that neither of these words, that nothing answering to these words, is to be found in the Original Scriptures, or should be retained in our English Version?

It is quite incredible that he should; and if he proceed to study the use of the words *αἰών* and *αἰώνιος*, it will become well nigh impossible. I argued in *Salvator Mundi* that the latter of these two words should never be rendered "everlasting" and gave reasons for believing that it should either be transferred into our English Version, and that we should read "aeonial life" and "aeonial punishment"; or, if this should be thought too technical and pedantic, that we should keep our word "eternal" for it, since many of us already used the word *eternal* in the same double sense in which *αἰώνιος* is used in the Greek, and all of us might easily learn to do so, now meaning by it

“spiritual,” now “agelong.” But all that I ventured to propose has been done in our Revised Version. The word “everlasting,” implying endless duration, is never once applied whether to the future life or to the future punishment of man: wherever this word once stood, we now read “eternal,” and even where we still read “for ever” or “for ever and ever,” we are fairly warned in the margin that in the Original we have “through the ages” or “for the ages of the ages.”¹

Nor is it possible, even where the word “eternal” occurs, that any careful student of the English Testament can take it as an equivalent for “everlasting.” And that as for other reasons, so also for this. St. Paul thrice speaks (Rom. xvi. 25; Titus i. 2; 2 Tim. i. 9) in our New Version of “times eternal.” Now a time may be æonial or agelong; but how can *time* be everlasting? and how, above all, can there be *many* everlasting times?

If our supposed student, intelligent but unlettered, with nothing but the New Version of our English Testament before him, should make this discovery also—as in time he must,—could it fail to confirm the conclusion he had already drawn from the other changes of which he had taken note? With all three words gone—“hell,” “damnation,” “everlasting,”—is it credible that he should hold that doctrinal conception of the future fate of the wicked which, in the popular mind at least, has been mainly founded on these very words?

Nor is it of any use, as he will soon detect for himself, for those of us who have rejected this dogma, or for those who still hold to it, to pretend that, after all, we differ only on a single point, and that not of the first importance.

¹ And here I may remark, in passing, that in such marginal readings as “this age” and “the coming age” which abound in our New Version, there lie the germs, latent for the present, of far larger doctrinal changes than either of those which I am now suggesting.

It *is* of the first importance, and it runs far beyond a single point—so far as to give form and colour to our whole system, not of theology alone, but of ruling principles and practical beliefs. It radically affects our conception of God, of his character, of his rule. We can hardly take up the biography of any great writer of our own time without seeing that the dogma of endless torment and punishment has much of the growing scepticism and unbelief of the age to answer for. Many of them have rejected it, and with it, alas, the whole creed of which it has hitherto formed part. When we are admitted to their most secret thoughts, we find them asking such questions as these: “To what end do men tell us God is just, when they attribute to Him deeds from which our natural sense of justice revolts? To what purpose do they assure us that God is love, when they ascribe to Him deeds from which even the fellest Hate would shrink?” And so it has come to pass that we have long made our very God the scourge by which we have driven some of the noblest minds among us from all faith in Him, from all communion with Him, and have then consigned them to an interminable torment for lack of the very faith which we ourselves have made impossible to them!

It will, I hope, be some consolation to those who still cling to this dogma for themselves, in prospect of the inevitable change at hand, to remember that the change they dread will at least remove the rock of offence which has long lain at the threshold of the Church, and over which so many noble souls, “naturally Christian,” have stumbled and fell. While to those of us who have long held Christ to be the Saviour *of the Lost*, the change they dread cannot but be most welcome. It is indeed a very small thing that we who have long been denounced as dangerously in the wrong should at last be pronounced, and that by the New Testament itself, to be, in some

large measure at all events, in the right: but it is a very great thing that any candid and intelligent man who will patiently study the English New Testament for himself may now find in it a God whom he can honour and love as the very Incarnation and Ideal of all justice and all charity; a God who will by no means spare the guilty indeed, but who will punish them justly and not unjustly, and who will at the same time temper judgment with mercy, nay, cause mercy to rejoice over judgment.

If the New Version had no other claim upon us, it has this supreme claim; that, with all its defects, it brings us, on all grave doctrinal questions, nearer to "the mind of the Spirit."

S. Cox.

SOME CRITICISMS ON THE TRANSLATION OF THE REVISED VERSION.

THE more closely we look into the Revised Version, the more apparent is the lack, in numerous instances, of fine scholarship. Certainly, no fixed principles seem to have guided the learned translators in their dealings with *ᾠστε*, as was shewn in the first Article. The three Participial Tenses also have bitterly complained, apparently with justice, of unworkmanlike treatment. This was discussed in Article II., wherein a certain law or rule was formulated, bearing upon the distinct uses of the three participial tenses. It may now be added that this law, which I then framed, I have tested for many years; and (unless I am mistaken) have verified it by instances so numerous, that it seems to be a *rule* with few exceptions. It was shewn in that Article that, if the rule therein formulated be