

The word "barrister" which I use has not been chosen unintentionally. In the *Canon Muratorianus*, the valuable Roman document, we read about St. Luke : tertio evangelii librum secundo lucan lucas iste medicus post ascensum $\overline{\text{XPI}}$ cum eo paulus *quasi ut iuris studiosum* secundum adsumsisset rumini suo ex opinione concribset. The words *quasi ut iuris studiosum* have been emended into *itineris studiosus* and in other ways, but remained difficult. I conjecture that in these words lies a reminiscence of the service St. Luke paid to St. Paul in his first trial by writing his historical apology for the information of the Roman juridical advisers of the emperor.

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*DR. MOFFATT'S NEW TRANSLATION OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT.*

It has occurred to me, in reading the new translation which Dr. Moffatt has given us of the books of the New Testament and in making a rapid survey of the notices and reviews which it provoked, that there were many features of the new translation which had entirely, or almost entirely, escaped the observation of those who discoursed on the matter in the ear of the public. Their criticism was too fragmentary, too confined to the examination of occasional passages which were known to present peculiar textual or hermeneutic difficulties, to be regarded as a just estimate of the value of Dr. Moffatt's work. For that reason I propose to set down in order certain features of the new translation which are significant to those who do not regard any rendering of the New Testament as an isolated phenomenon, but who look upon it as one of a series in which one must lose sight neither of the great

historical translations of the past, nor of the successive attempts made in our own time to reproduce the New Testament Greek in adequate English, and incidentally (a feature which was hardly prominent in the translations of the Reformation period) to give a more correct idea of the underlying Greek text, so far as investigation has disclosed or verified it. It is especially important on this account to put Dr. Moffatt's book on the shelf of translations side by side with the Revised Version, the so-called Twentieth Century New Testament, and the translation of Dr. Weymouth, for all of these are sufficiently near to one another in point of time to be sensibly occupied with the same problems. If we do not discuss them in detail, they can hardly be left out of our minds on account of the new departures which they may represent in the region of textual study or in the art of the interpreter.

The Revised Version, for example, was characterised by an entirely new Greek text, on the one hand, and in some parts of it, on the other hand, by an entirely new English language. We must always remember that we are treating of the New Testament and not of the Old. The two parts of the Revised Bible are under separate linguistic controls; they must be judged independently: we are speaking of the latter part of the work, to wit, the New Testament. After more than thirty years' study of this translation and its underlying text, I do not hesitate to say of the text that it is often so hopelessly wrong that one wonders how it ever could have been so edited; and of the translation, that the bad Greek has often been done into worse English. The Reviser who is reported to have said at the conclusion of the work that it was the greatest literary bankruptcy of the nineteenth century was really not very wide of the mark. One of the proofs of this lies in the persistent efforts which succeeding translators

have made for its emendation or its replacement. Dr. Weymouth's translation is often represented in a purer classical English, and at the same time it condenses into the form of a scientific revolt the dictum of Matthew Arnold that "the aorist was made for man and not man for the aorist." It is an unequal piece of work, as might have been expected in the work of a single man, without adequate controls, and with a life the thrums of whose loom were cut too soon (as in most work of this kind). Still, Dr. Weymouth's translation was sufficient to show that there was a higher intelligibility possible for the New Testament in English than was attainable for those who held the absurd views on the Greek aorist and the Greek article which are adumbrated in the preface to the New Testament of 1881, and disclosed throughout the book.

The Twentieth Century New Testament was an attempt after intelligibility, and not, in the first instance, after scholarship. It was the will to carry out the Biblical maxim of condescension to men of low estate in the presentation of the text itself. Hence it was not surprising that the group of amateurs, men and women who were engaged in it, accepted with childlike innocence the Greek text of Westcott and Hort, and with childlike goodwill transferred it to the language of the man in the street. They succeeded, at all events, by a happy instinct, in divining the meaning of many elusive passages, and if we do not like the street English, we may often use the book as a genuine and just commentary. I had the pleasure of acting as occasional referee in the production of the second edition, which ran the risk of being badly vitiated by "*secundæ curæ*."

When we come to Dr. Moffatt's translation, we are face to face with a rendering whose literary beauty was evident even to those who had no specially trained artistic sense. People

read the 13th chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, and noted that almost every word had a new rendering and almost every new rendering was an improvement. It was something new in literature, and provoked an immediate resilience of approbation from those who had been uncomfortable, without exactly knowing why, at the barbarisms of 1881.

The English language had resumed its freedom; Lazarus was out of the grave-clothes of pedantry. Not only so, but the revolt had spread, somewhat timidly, into the region of the text. The reader noted that Westcott and Hort's text was at last definitely abandoned. In its place stood the new text of von Soden, and even that was treated freely, as of course it ought to be. We had thus the two preliminary observations, that literary grace had been restored, and that the older textual mechanisms were being discarded.

Now let us look a little more in detail into the peculiar features of this new translation, especially into those points which appear to have eluded the critics and the reviewers. For convenience we reduce the matter to seven heads, and make some remarks under each :

(a) We have a newer and freer text, in which for the first time the translator has made a liberal use of *Conjectural Emendations*.

(b) There has been an editorial rearrangement of such passages as might be supposed to be originally or early displaced.

(c) The practice is widely employed of printing in rhythms such passages as were suspected to be poetical in form.

(d) The translator has condescended (or, if we prefer it, descended) in certain cases to the use of provincialisms, vulgarisms, and slang.

(e) The use of quotation marks is introduced into the

epistles in order to distinguish between St. Paul's own views and those of the correspondents whom he may be quoting.

(f) Occasionally the translator is brave enough to say that the passage upon which he is engaged is beyond recovery as to its meaning and must be left untranslated.

(g) He recognises the help given to the work of translation of the New Testament by the modern Greek language. All of these points are practically new, at least in the extent in which they are employed : each requires a few words of explanatory discussion.

(a) It is interesting to detect that Moffatt is in textual revolt against the dominant school, even if he does not commit himself to a definite statement. For example, he still follows the impossible text of Romans v. 1, "Let us have peace with God" ; it is a mere itacism (ω for o), which is common in MSS. of all periods ; but its intrusion has undermined the whole of the Pauline argument. Moffatt sees this, and evades the theological inaccuracy by an adroit translation :

As we are justified by faith, then, let us enjoy the peace which we have with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is not exactly a translation, but we may say of it that Dr. Moffatt goes down to his house justified, rather than the other. St. Paul said it more simply, and we shall have to get back to him, and affirm him against the old MSS. which misrepresented him.

This does not mean reactionary prejudice against the critical lordship of the Vatican MS. and any other authority which may agree with it : there is a good instance to the contrary in 1 Corinthians xv. 49, and here Moffatt refuses to read $\phi\omicron\rho\rho\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\omega\mu\epsilon\nu$ (another itacism, "let us also bear the image of the heavenly"), and supports himself on the authority of Codex B, with little other confirmation. So he translates :

Thus, as we have borne the likeness of material Man,
So we are to bear the likeness of the heavenly Man.

That must be the right meaning, for St. Paul is not writing as an exhorter, but as a theologian, a divine. I suppose the objection that would be taken to this apparently arbitrary method of settling the text would be like the language of Dr. Hort concerning one of his opponents, "He still thinks he can read what he likes": to which the only reply is that we must prefer sense to nonsense, and good sense to inferior. That way, however, lies conjectural emendation, the one form of criticism which the critics of the older school declared to be barred.

Well, I am very glad that Moffatt has faced this necessity, and has recognised that there are cases where the true text of the New Testament does not exist in any MS. I am, however, somewhat disabled in my judgment of Moffatt's emendations by the fact that he has accepted two of my own in the first epistle of Peter, one of which, if I remember rightly, is not mine but Beza's. "Nothing is more certain than a good emendation"; but the judgment as to the goodness does not lie with the emender.

I may say, in passing, that in the correction which I made to the text of 1 Peter i. 12, the restored *διανοούμην* was further justified by *διανοίας* in the following verse, and it would have been well if Moffatt had brought that sequence out in his translation. But enough of our own restoring hand. I am glad if I have convinced so good an artist.

Those who are interested in the subject of emendations will find a very striking one in 1 Timothy vi. 19, in which, by slight change, St. Paul (if it really was St. Paul) is made to be quoting Tobit, with much illumination of the passage. I do not know who is responsible for this happy conjecture, (*θέμα λίαν* for *θεμέλιον*). As Dr. Moffatt says he accepts it, it cannot be his own: but whence?

Now let us come to our second head.

(b) The question of restored order in displaced passages is, in one sense, akin to conjectural emendation ; but as it leaves the text intact, it must not be confused with that process. Just as in the case of conjectures proper, it will sometimes happen that MS. evidence will turn up in justification. For instance, in Mark xvi. 3 it always seemed to be a bit inconsequent to say that the women " saw that the stone was rolled away : for it was very great." Mrs. Lewis' Syriac text, however, told us that the women said, " Who shall roll us away the stone ? for it was very great : and when they looked they saw that it was rolled away." I do not think we need hesitate to follow the order of the ancient Syriac at this point. We secure logical sequence : it was not an absolute necessity in an Oriental writing : but we are glad to have it. Quite different is the case with the last verse of the seventh of Romans, where the displacement of the closing words has made Paul contradict himself, and created the very opposite theological statement to what was evidently intended. Dr. Moffatt tells us to restore the latter part of the verse, " Thus, left to myself, I serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin," to a place before the climax of v. 24, " its original and logical position." Paul certainly never meant the climax to be a mere rhetorical ladder, up which one climbed only to climb down again. See how the readjustment brings out the argument :

Miserable wretch that I am ! Who will rescue me from this body of death ? God will ! Thanks be to Him through Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus there is no doom now for those who are in Christ Jesus.¹

¹ Dr. Moffatt does not give an outside authority for the correction of the displacement : so I conclude it is his own. I had already noted it from a German writer, Könnecke.

The reader will find many interesting restorations of order in the new translation : e.g. Matthew vii. 19 is to be placed after vii. 20. In Matthew v. 21, 22 will be found a very interesting readjustment which takes the troublesome *Raca* and *Moreh* out of Christ's mouth, and makes the involved sentences a Rabbinic gloss upon "thou shalt not kill."

Closely related to these questions of textual displacement are certain critical suggestions of intruded matter which breaks sequence, whose omission restores continuity. For instance, in 2 Corinthians vi. 14-*fin.* we have the matter bracketed as being probably from some other letter : I had already noted this in my New Testament : and the observation might be carried further, for the second epistle to the Corinthians is certainly in much disorder. An interesting, and very possible case, will be found in Titus i. 7-9, where Moffatt brackets the three verses as being a later and an awkward addition to the original text. They certainly break sequence : note the connexion between the word "insubordinate" in v. 6 and the same word in v. 10. The meaning of the excision is that the "bishop" of v. 7 is *not* the presbyter of the previous verse, but a later evolution : so the text describing him is also a later evolution : it is an interesting situation to study, and may confirm us in the belief that we have not the pastoral epistles in their first form. Now let us pass on to a much more important matter.

(c) The text appears in many cases printed in rhythms. Thus an attempt is made to indicate the point at which the speech of a person has become rhythmic, or is, for literary effect, represented as such. It is not absolutely new to attempt thus to discriminate prose and poetry. It had been occasionally suggested both in Greek and in English. For example, Westcott and Hort recognise a certain passage

in Ephesians v. as being a fragment of a Christian hymn, and accordingly they print the passage in stanzas:

Awaken, thou that sleepest,
And from the dead arise thou:
Lo! Christ shall thee enlighten.

We are all familiar with these rhythmic recognitions in such cases as the *Nunc Dimittis* or the *Song of Zachariah*. A mere superficial examination of the New Testament will show that these are not accidental cases, but that throughout both Gospels and Epistles there are similar prophetic and high-didactic strains, which are printed poetically, not merely when they are quotations from the Old Testament or the like, but because such form of speech is the normal style of a prophet speaking under afflatus: from the prophet it becomes reflected on to the literature as one of the ways in which a story ought to be told. As this is very important for New Testament criticism and interpretation I propose to spend a little time upon it. Its importance may be estimated from the fact that it is not only Zachariah with his *Benedictus* who sings, but that the Baptist also sometimes talks verse: and not only is it the case with the Baptist, but *Jesus Himself talks verse constantly*, changing frequently from prose to verse, and then back again from verse to prose. This is a great and far-reaching discovery. In order to appreciate it we must not disdain to make comparison with similar phenomena in the uninspired literatures. For example, such a composition as *Aucassin and Nicolette* in old French will help us, for here we find the Provençal story-teller marking the changes of form in his recitation by the words,

Here it is said,
Here it is sung.

An even better parallel, because it is Oriental, will be found

in the Arabian Nights. A glance, for instance, at the story of *Sindbad the Sailor* in the original will show us Arabic prose interspersed with Arabic poetry. A person may read the story of Sindbad in a translation, and never suspect that he passes from prose to poetry, and back again from poetry to prose in a single speech.

Perhaps an even better parallel may be found in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, where the people are constantly saying or singing something metrical, and pass from one form of speech to another with the greatest freedom: one can hardly tell whether it is meant for prose or verse, for sometimes it is called "saying" and sometimes "singing." Here is an example:

"Christiana thought she heard, in a grove a little way off on the right-hand side, a most curious melodious note, with words much like these:

Through all my life Thy favour is
So frankly showed to me,
That in Thy house for evermore
My dwelling-place shall be;

and listening still she thought she heard another answer it, saying:

For why? the Lord our God is good,
His mercy is for ever sure;
His truth at all times firmly stood
And shall from age to age endure.

So Christiana asked Prudence what it was that made these curious notes? They are, said she, our Country Birds; they sing these notes but seldom, except it be at the Spring when the Flowers appear, and the sun shines warm, and then you may hear them all the day long."

The following illustration will be a little closer to what actually occurs in the Scriptures: here is Faithful's comment upon Talkative;

then did Faithful say,
 How *Talkative* at first lifts up his plumes,
 How bravely doth he speak! How he presumes
 To drive down all before him! But so soon
 As Faithful talks of Heart-work, like the Moon
 That's past the full, into the wane he goes,
 And so will all, but he that Heart-work knows."

There are passages like that, in form, in the pages of the New Testament. This is, in part, due to the occurrence of Hebrew parallels, which are the basis of Old Testament poesy. Suppose we take a passage and try to discriminate between its prose and its verse: let us try Luke ix. 19-24 using Moffatt's rendering as a base; with some further modifications (or, if you prefer it, exaggerations on our part) in order to emphasise the arrangement:

"I have indeed given you the power of treading on serpents and scorpions and of trampling down all the power of the enemy: nothing shall injure you; only" (now it is sung):

Rejoice not ye that sprites of ill
 Yield to your prowess in the strife;
 But joy because the roll of Heaven
 Hath writ your names elect for life":

(now it is said):

"He thrilled with joy at that hour in the Holy Spirit, saying, I praise thee, Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, for concealing this from the wise and learned, and revealing it to the simple-minded: yes, Father, I praise thee that such was thy chosen purpose. Then, turning to the disciples, he said":

(now it is sung):

"Praise God from whom all blessing flows,
 My Father God whom no man knows,
 Save me; He gives me all.
 I, too, the Christ, am known of none
 Save of the Father, and the one
 Whose mind I disenthral."

(Now it is said):

“Then turning to his disciples he said privately (now it is sung) :

“How happy are your eyes
That see this gospel light !
Prophets and kings desired it long,
And died without the sight.
How happy are your ears
That hear this heavenly sound !
Prophets and kings desired it long,
And sought, but never found.”

(Now it is said) :

“ Now a lawyer got up to tempt him,” etc. etc.

These illustrations will serve to show the meaning of the reform which Moffatt introduces into the printing and spacing of the text. It must not be supposed that it is always easy to detect and isolate the poetical strains. Sometimes, as in Mark iii. 23, we are prepared for verse by the remark that Jesus was speaking in parable ; so that we easily isolate the rhythms which follow the question, How can Satan cast out Satan ? Rhythm is the natural form of parable. Accordingly Moffatt prints Mark iii. 24-26 as follows :

If a realm is divided against itself,
that realm cannot stand :
If a household is divided against itself,
that household cannot stand :
And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided,
He cannot stand, he comes to an end.

It is not so clear, however, why *v.* 27 is not metrical, and then *vv.* 28, 29 again are metrical.

We noticed in passing that John the Baptist talks in prophetic rhythm : see Matthew iii. 11. But so does Paul : and Moffatt prints Romans viii. 5, 6 that way ; and so Romans xiv. 6-8 and elsewhere.

Enough has now been said to draw attention to this

important feature of the new text. We now pass on to the fourth point.

(d) Here Dr. Moffatt has been abundantly and adversely criticised. He exposed himself to hostile review by introducing provincialisms and colloquialisms. It is doubtful if he could persuade people to accept—

Hebrews xii. 1, "Let us strip off every *handicap*"; nor would it pass to translate

Matthew xxv. 21, "*Capital*, you excellent and trusty servant": the ambiguity of the term "*capital*" in a parable already under economic suspicions, would suffice for condemnation!

The translation in Matthew xxvii. 41, and elsewhere,

"The high priests *made fun* of him,"

is wanting in dignity, at a point where dignity was imperative.

Luke xi. 7, "He answers from the inside, Don't *bother* me," is, on the other hand, a situation where colloquial forms are in order, and almost tolerable.

John viii. 11 is, however, past forgiveness: for Jesus to say, "Be off, and never sin again," is the speech of a magistrate to a first offender, not the release of the Judge of all the earth.

In 2 Thessalonians iii. 6 we are advised to "shun any brother who is *loafing*" and so in 1 Thessalonians v. 14. I do not know whether this word has a respectable ancestry: if it is German *laufen*, it has changed its meaning: the modern *loafer* stands idle and does not run. It was an unfortunate word to use in spite of a certain attractiveness.

I suppose we must regard it as a provincialism when Dr. Moffatt avoids the word "*lest*," and prefers to render the Greek $\mu\eta$ by *in case that*. Is this French or Scotch or both? It certainly is not English. Examples will be

found in Matthew vii. 6, "In case they trample"; Hebrews iv. 12, "In case there is a wicked, unbelieving heart in any of you"; Revelations iii. 11, "Hold fast to what you have, in case your crown is taken from you." The last instance shows clearly how the provincialism misses the meaning.¹

Our remaining observations must be very brief.

(e) In the matter of recognising quotations in the Pauline Epistles, Dr. Moffatt has made a great stride forward in the interpretation of St. Paul, especially by relieving his epistles from contrary sentiments, which lie adjacent to one another. For example:

1 Corinthians viii. 1, "We all possess knowledge," followed by a scorn of knowledge, is justified by the inverted commas, which mark a quotation from the Epistle *from the Corinthians*. So in 1 Corinthians viii 4, the meaning is brought out quite clearly by the inverted commas in the sentence,

I am quite aware "*that there is no such thing as an idol in the world*" and that "*there is only the one God.*"

Elucidations of this kind might have been applied in many other passages, for St. Paul habitually quotes from his correspondent, in answering a letter.

As, however, this is the first time that quotation has actually been recognised in New Testament translation, it was natural that Dr. Moffatt should not treat us to too many examples in a new region of criticism.

(f) Our next point is that Dr. Moffatt sometimes says that a passage is untranslatable, which is an almost unheard of modesty. An instance will be found in Acts xxiv. 17, where the translator says he can only give the

¹ Murray's Dictionary says that it is good modern English: "take your umbrella in case it rains": but this is not the same thing, unless we regard the rain as the consequence of the umbrella not being taken.

general drift of the passage. See, for a somewhat similar case, Acts ii. 47.

(g) Our last case of translator's reform is the use of modern Greek analogies, with which we might take the results of the modern study of papyri and of dialects. The best instance of modern Greek, considered as incipient in the speech of the New Testament, is the use of the Greek *iva* in the sense of the French *que* in such an expression as *que j'aïlle*. Moffatt translates Ephesians ii. 17:

May Christ dwell in your hearts as you have faith. May you be so fixed and founded in love, etc.:

which is a great improvement on the conventional "that Christ may dwell." There are similar passages in John xvii. 21 sqq.; Colossians ii. 2 is another good case:

May their hearts be encouraged!

May they learn the meaning of love!

These new renderings are a great improvement, even if for the present the grammarians are ignorant of them and the classical scholars acknowledge them not.

There were a number of bad misprints in the first edition of this valuable book: but that only proves that the earliest manuscripts do not always convey the correct reading.

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