

past: the first point we must settle is the distinction between  $\phi\epsilon\nu\gamma$  and  $\phi\nu\gamma$  which is common to all their moods. The superstructure which grew up mainly through the intrusion of that little adverb  $\acute{\epsilon}$ -, still detachable as any other preposition in the earliest extant Greek, will be the subject of our next inquiry.

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*THE REVISED VERSION OF THE NEW  
TESTAMENT: A REPLY.*

IN the September number of the EXPOSITOR, the Rev. J. B. McClellan, M.A., puts in "a new and earnest plea for hesitation" against "proposals urged from time to time for the more extended use of the Revised Version, whether in public or in private, in preference to the Authorised Version." He admits "that the R.V. advantageously removes various obsolete expressions and other minor defects of the A.V., and throws light on sundry obscure passages"; but adds that "it must still be firmly asserted that it is burdened with more serious inaccuracies than it removes, and that, upon the whole, it falls far short of the merits of the Old Version."

In support of this sweeping condemnation, Mr. McClellan appeals only, as specimens, to "*erroneous renderings*" of seven passages taken from the Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, and Colossians; and endeavours to "indicate the seriousness of their character." The many changes in the Greek text adopted and translated by the Revisers, he dismisses with an unproved assertion that they were "unduly influenced . . . by an over-estimate, at that time, of certain ancient authorities." As the whole question is one of comparative value, he ought to have quoted, at least in these epistles, the chief passages in which the

supporters of the R.V. claim for its superiority. But this he has not done.

In this paper I shall say a few words about the seven passages on which our critic relies; and shall then adduce others, confining myself to the same four epistles, in which the R.V. contains improvements far outweighing all that can be said against these seven renderings.

Objection is taken to the R.V. rendering of Rom. iii. 9, "Are we in worse case than they?" compared with the A.V., "Are we better *than they*?" This objection seems to me to have some force: for it is very difficult to find any example of *προέχεσθαι* in the sense adopted by the Revisers. But Mr. McClellan admits that "there is apparently no *extant* example" of the meaning given in the A.V. to "the *middle voice*" of this verb. So far both versions fall under the same condemnation. Fortunately, the Revisers give in the margin an alternative rendering, "do we excuse ourselves?" for which Mr. McClellan admits that "there are *extant* examples in the sense of *holding in front of oneself* as a shield, pretext, etc." This seems to me to be Paul's meaning. He asks, in reference to the dilemma in *vv.* 5-8, which alternative do we take? Is it our object to prove that there are no moral distinctions and will be no judgment? Are we, by stating this alternative, *holding before ourselves* a shield behind which we may escape punishment?

In any case, whatever be the correct rendering, the whole matter is unimportant. None of the three renderings will lead any one seriously astray. The A.V. gives one for which no *extant* example can be found: the R.V. gives two, each grammatically admissible; one of them affording a good sense.

The next passage quoted is Rom. v. 1, "Being therefore justified by faith, let us have peace with God."

Here I must admit that the R.V. rendering is open to

serious objection. For, if a man is "justified," he has already, by the meaning of the words used, "peace with God." But the Greek text underlying this rendering is found in all existing Greek MSS. earlier than the ninth century, in all the earliest versions, and in the early commentaries of Origen and Chrysostom. The reading underlying the A.V. rendering, "we have peace with God," is destitute of any early and good documentary evidence. To set aside this almost universal testimony of all our best witnesses is simple desperation; and cannot be tolerated for a moment except under absolute necessity. The Revisers' mistake seems to me to be in their rendering, which should be "Let us then, justified by faith, have peace with God"; in accordance with a very common use of the Greek aorist particle preceding a verb in the subjunctive mood, where other languages would use two subjunctives. So 1 Cor. vi. 15, Acts xv. 36, Eph. iv. 25, etc. Paul here encourages his readers to pass through the gate of justification into an abiding state of peace with God.

But here again, whatever fault be found with the R.V. rendering, its underlying text is right; and the A.V. is undoubtedly wrong. Moreover the R.V. gives both readings, thus calling attention to a real difficulty which the A.V. passes over in silence.

These two difficult passages are all that Mr. McClellan has to bring against the R.V. in the Epistle to the Romans. What is to be said on the other side?

In ch. iv. 19, the word *not*, in the phrase "considered *not* his own body now dead," is omitted by all the critical editors, in all the best Greek MSS. and the best early versions, and by the great Greek commentators Origen and Chrysostom. Such evidence cannot be lightly set aside: and it changes the sense of the verse. The strength of Abraham's faith was shown in that he deliberately con-

templated and took into account the physical difficulties in the way of the fulfilment of the promise; and that in spite of them his faith did not waver. All this is obscured in the A.V.: but the change in the R.V. calls attention to it.

A similar unanimity of the best documents and editors omits, in ch. vi. 12, two short words which perceptibly alter the sense of the verse. We are warned, not against obeying *sin* in the desires of the body, but against obeying the desires of the body, and thus permitting sin to make our mortal body its throne. The correct text calls attention to the immoral influence exerted by the body, acting, through its desires, upon the spirit within, sin thus using the lower to dominate the higher; a thought ever present to Paul, but much less prominent now.

Other corrections in the text, adopted by all Critical Editors, and by the Revisers, and perceptibly affecting the sense, are found in chs. vii. 6, viii. 1, x. 17, xi. 6, xiv. 6, 10, xv. 24, 29, xvi. 24.

Of improvements in rendering, without change in the underlying Greek text, I notice the following. In chs. i. 17, iii. 21, 22, x. 3, the phrase, "the righteousness of God," suggests irresistibly God's attribute of righteousness. But, that this was not Paul's thought, is proved by its utter incompatibility with the context. For God's righteousness was not revealed in the Gospel, but long before; nor is it in any special sense revealed "by faith," nor is it supported by the quotation from Hab. ii. 4, "the just one by faith shall live"; nor can it be said to be "manifested apart from law," nor were the Jews in Paul's day "ignorant of it." This unsuitability to the context, and to the whole epistle, compels us to seek for another explanation. A key is found in Phil. iii. 9: "and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own, viz., that from law, but that which is through faith of Christ, the right-

eousness from God on the condition of faith." This divinely given righteousness is the chief matter of the Gospel: it comes through faith apart from works of law, and was unknown to the unbelieving Jews. That this is Paul's meaning is made clear by the evidently equivalent phrases, "justified by faith," and "faith reckoned for righteousness," in chs. iii. 26-30, iv. 2-24. In the A.V. all this is obscured by a familiar, but misleading expression, "the righteousness of God": on the other hand, the clumsy R.V. rendering, a "righteousness of God," calls attention to a matter needing further examination. This is no small gain, and the matter which Paul is here discussing is of infinite importance.

A very important correction is found in ch. iii. 25, where instead of, "for the remission of sins that are past," words which add nothing to the sense of the passage, we now read, "because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime." Paul teaches that the setting forth of Christ in His blood to be a propitiation through faith was prompted by God's earlier forbearance in apparently tolerating sin, as though this tolerance had obscured His righteousness which must now be vindicated by the death of Christ. The words we are considering connect the mercy of God in passing over sin in earlier ages with the supreme sacrifice in Paul's day on the cross. By the R.V. this important element of teaching is rescued for the English reader.

The rendering of *διά* with gen. by the word *through* in Rom. v. 2 (5), 10, 11, 12 twice, 16, 17 twice, 18 twice, 19 twice, 21; instead of (A.V.) *by*, is of importance: for throughout the New Testament this Greek preposition represents Christ as the channel or agent or instrument of whatever God does in creation or redemption (cp. 1 Cor. viii. 6, John i. 3, 10). Another relation of Christ to the same is represented by the preposition *ἐν*, which the

Revisers have done well to reproduce by the word *in* in Rom. vi. 11, 23, instead of (A.V.) *through*, thus bringing it into line with the same preposition in ch. viii. 1, 2, 39. It represents Christ as the environment, and refuge, and home, and vital atmosphere, of the Christian life. This important element in the teaching of Paul and John is in John xv. 1-7 traced, in the parable of the vine, to the lips of Christ. The distinction of these two prepositions *through* and *by* in the R.V., representing two relations of Christ to man and to the universe, is an important gain.

In Rom. vii. 7, 8, the uniform rendering *covet* three times with *lust* in the margin, indicates the line of argument, which is obscured by the changing A.V. rendering, *lust*, *covet*, and *concupiscence*. But the rendering *lust* or *covet* is not the best. For these are always bad, whereas the Greek original (*ἐπιθυμία*) is neutral, and denotes only *desire* (cp. Luke xxii. 15, 1 Thess. ii. 17). The awkwardness of the R.V. rendering is very conspicuous in Gal. v. 17: for we cannot attribute *lust* to the Holy Spirit.

The rather clumsy note to Rom. ix. 5, "Some modern interpreters place a full stop after *flesh*, etc.," does good service by calling attention to the ambiguity of the verse, which may be either an assertion that Christ "is over all, God blessed for ever," or a doxology to the Father, "God who is over all be blessed for ever." This last exposition is adopted by the editors, Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Hort, and by the great grammatical commentator Meyer; the former by the editors Tregelles and Westcott, and by most English commentators. Not only fairness but truth demand that this uncertainty find expression in our copies of the New Testament.

Even the rendering *Elijah* in Rom. xi. 2 and throughout the N.T., and especially *Elisha* in Luke iv. 27, are no small help to the English reader.

In 1 Cor. vi. 7, our critic blames the Revisers for replacing the A.V. "there is utterly a fault among you" by R.V. "already it is altogether a defect in you," with "a loss to you" in the margin, as an alternative. But the word *already* is an accurate rendering of the conspicuous Greek word ἤδη; which in the A.V. is overlooked. Indeed, Mr. McClellan adopts it in his own rendering, "Nay, already it is a *defeat* to you." This last is perhaps better than the R.V. rendering. But it is not suggested by the A.V. "there is utterly a fault among you," which he is writing to defend, and which omits the important word *already*, made prominent by the Revisers.

A similarly trifling objection is made to the R.V. rendering of 1 Cor. xv. 27. But so far as I can understand our critic, his objection is equally valid against the A.V.; and his own rendering is given in the R.V. margin. His note is a marvel of meaningless perplexity. That he finds no fault with the Revisers' translation of a long epistle, except these two criticisms, is a strong commendation of their work.

In 2 Cor. ii. 14 Mr. McClellan blames the Revisers for replacing the A.V., "thanks be to God which always *causeth us to triumph* in Christ," by "*leadeth us in triumph.*" But he admits that the causative sense given in the A.V. to the word θριαμβεύω is never found in extant Greek literature. The R.V. rendering gives to it its ordinary meaning, as in Col. ii. 15. To set this meaning aside, and give to the word a meaning not found elsewhere, cannot be tolerated unless the ordinary meaning gives no worthy sense. But this is not the case here. The Roman triumph suggests a good meaning. Paul thinks of his life of wandering and hardship, driven from Ephesus by a tumult and from Troas by anxiety about the Corinthian Christians. But he remembers that, just as in the Roman triumphs the long and sad train of captives and

booty revealed the greatness of the victory and the victor, so his own long and weary wanderings over sea and land revealed the grandeur of God. Perhaps his words were suggested in part by the thought, ever present to him, of his former hostility to Christ. As a captive, he is led along: and his absolute submission, shown in his apostolic work, reveals the completeness of the victory of Him against whom Paul once fought. Surely this exposition, which gives to a not uncommon Greek word its ordinary meaning, is better than the violence done to it in the earlier version.

The only other passage mentioned in the Epistles to the Corinthians is 2 Cor iii. 18. Here I agree with Mr. McClellan that the A.V. rendering *beholding* is better than the R.V. *reflecting*. But the rendering displaced is put in the margin as an alternative. Moreover, as some compensation for this loss, as he and I understand it, we have the rendering *mirror* instead of *glass*; and *unveiled* instead of the meaningless words, "with *open face*." The former change gives to the verse at once an intelligible meaning, whereas the rendering *glass*, which the Revisers set aside, is, until explained, altogether indefinite. The change from "*open face*" to "*unveiled face*," and that in ch. iv. 3 from *hid* to *veiled*, are an immense gain: for they recall at once the word *veil* four times in *rv.* 13, 14, 15, 16, and thus forming a continuous thread running through and binding together ch. iii. 13-iv. 3; and making the whole a reference to the remarkable incident in Exod. xxxiv. 29-35. Of this great gain, which illumines the whole passage, as a compensation for the defective rendering *reflecting* instead of *beholding*, which moreover is given in the margin, nothing is said in the paper before us.

Such are all the objections brought against the R.V. of Paul's letters to Corinth. But many improvements are passed over in silence. Of these I note the following.



In 1 Cor. vii. 5. the words "fasting and" are omitted by all editors. This omission gains importance from the fact that the references to fasting in Matt. xvii. 21, Mark ix. 29 are also open to serious doubt. The word *all-things* (R.V. and all editors) instead of *this* (A.V.), in 1 Cor. ix. 23, gives to Paul's words a much wider scope. He is prepared, not only to become weak for the weak, but to do all things within his power to save men around him. In ch. x. 1, the word *for*, instead of *moreover*, makes the examples taken from the story of Israel in the wilderness a confirmation of the warnings in ch. ix. 24-27. The preposition added in 2 Cor. ii. 16, and rendered "*from* death . . . *from* life," instead of "*of* death . . . *of* life," gives an intelligible meaning to Paul's words, viz., an influence going forth *from* life and *from* death, and producing life and death respectively. Such is, in different persons, the different effect of the Gospel he preaches. Also more correct in ch. v. 14 is the reading rendered "we judge that one died for all, therefore all died"; instead of "*if* one died, etc." The omission of "all things" by all editors in v. 17 is also correct.

Much more important than the above corrections of the Greek text are several improvements in translation. In 1 Cor. i. 18 the rendering "are perishing . . . are being saved" reproduces, much better than does the A.V. "perish . . . are saved," the force of the Greek present participle, which denotes a process now going on. In 1 Cor. ix. 25, the A.V. rendering, "every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things," is utter nonsense. The R.V. rendering, "striveth in the games," at least suggests inquiry, and points to the Greek athletic contests so often referred to by Paul as a metaphor of the Christian life. In v. 27, the rendering, "buffet my body," with "bruise" in the margin, recalls (cf. v. 26) the action of a boxer, which is altogether overlooked by the A.V. rendering, "keep under my body."

Far more important than the above, is the rendering *covenant* with *testament* in the margin in 1 Cor. xi. 25, "this cup is the new *covenant* in my blood"; and in Luke xxii. 20, 2 Cor. iii. 6, 14. For it recalls at once Jer. xxxi. 31: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new *covenant* with the house of Israel . . . not according to the *covenant* that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my *covenant* they brake." Our Lord asserts, as recorded in 1 Cor. xi. 25, Luke xxii. 20, that the time had come, foreseen by the ancient prophet, and that God was about to enter into a new relation to men, more glorious than that into which He entered with Israel at the Exodus. This all-important reference is altogether overlooked in the Authorised Version. It gives an entirely new significance to these solemn words of Christ.

Another great gain is the word *love*, which every one understands, instead of *charity* in 1 Cor. viii. 1, xiii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 13, xiv. 1, Rom. xiv. 15, etc. For it puts these passages in relation to the unique attribute of *love* in 1 Cor. viii. 3, 2 Cor. v. 14, Rom. v. 5, 8, viii. 35, 39, John iii. 16, 1 John iv. 7-21, etc. The omission of the word *unknown* from 1 Cor. xiv. 2, 4, 13, 14, 19, 27 removes a misconception of the real nature of the mysterious gift of tongues, which was certainly not a talking in a foreign language.

Better renderings are given in 2 Cor. iii. 5, "our sufficiency is *from* God," instead of "*of* God"; and in v. 7, "which *glory* was passing away," instead of "to be done away." Unfortunately we have in ch. v. 13 a worse rendering, "if we are beside ourselves, it is unto God; or whether we are of sober mind, it is *unto* you"; instead of (A.V.) "for your cause." The R.V. "*unto* God . . . *unto* you," is meaningless nonsense. The correct rendering of

the Greek dative of advantage is "if we have become beside ourselves, it is *for God*; and if we are of sober mind, it is *for you*": so seven times (R.V.) and six times (A.V.) in 1 Cor. vi. 12, 13. This uncouth and very frequent rendering of a common Greek grammatical form is a serious blemish of the Revised Version.

The passage quoted from Col. ii. 15 is one of the most difficult in the New Testament. Here, as in Rom. iii. 9; Mr. McClellan asks us to interpret a middle or passive voice ἀπεκδυσάμενος as though it were active; without giving any reason why one voice is put in place of another. The R.V. seems to me to give a correct and intelligible sense. In any case it does not lead the English reader seriously astray.

Such are all the proofs adduced in support of the sweeping assertion that the "blemishes and imperfections" of the A.V. "fade almost into insignificance in comparison with the serious errors of the Revised." If the above are specimens, these errors are not serious: and they are surpassed in importance by the improvements mentioned in this paper.

Undoubtedly, the R.V. has many defects. The Revisers were too confident of the excellence of their work; and expected that it would be at once accepted by the nation with humble gratitude because of the authority of those who made it. They have been rudely undeceived. Perhaps it would have been better to have submitted it for public criticism before issue of the final edition. On the other hand, they may have feared that a public outcry might have compelled them to retreat from their position of absolute loyalty to the best results of modern scholarship.

This last is the chief and great gain of the Revised Version. The version used in our childhood as God's word written was based on a Greek text now known, by

the unanimous testimony of all those who have devoted themselves to a critical study of it, to be, in many important passages, incorrect. Any one, with any claim or with no claim to scholarship, was at liberty to correct it. This was a serious element of uncertainty surrounding all study of the English Bible. The readers of the Revised Version know now that, within the limits marked out by its marginal notes, the translation they use rests upon a text almost as near to the actual words of the Evangelists and Apostles as modern scholarship permits. This is the chief gain of the new version. After much careful study I am convinced that, with a few serious blemishes, also the English rendering, uncouth as it sometimes is, gives us the sense intended by the Sacred Writers much more accurately than does any earlier translation.

Moreover, we are not likely to have, for a long time to come, a better English version. Do not let us neglect the best available because it is not perfect.

In public worship, the Church listens to the divinely-given records of the supreme revelation given to men in Christ, and of earlier revelations leading up to it. Surely we are bound to put these records before the Church in the form most nearly approaching that intended by the Sacred Writers. For private study, few will deny the superiority of the Revised Version. How small and few are the objections to it, we may learn from Mr. McClellan's paper. In full view of all that can be said against it, the English reader may well be grateful that he possesses the sacred volume in a form embodying so well the best scholarship of all the ages.

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