

No.
73.

"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS
WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE
RIGHT HAND OF GOD." COL. 3. 1.

THE REVISED VERSION
OF THE LATER SCRIPTURES CONSIDERED.

An Address (revised) at

St. Mary Axe,

20th Feb. 1914.

by

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THE REVISED VERSION OF THE LATER SCRIPTURES CONSIDERED.

Message by Mr. P. W. Heward
At St. Mary Axe, 20th Feb. 1914.

OUTLINE:

1. Mode of preparation.
 2. The text adopted.
 3. Improvements in rendering.
 4. Inconsistencies.
 5. Some manifest errors.
 6. Danger in use.
 7. Thoughts on translation to the glory of God.
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It is one of the reminders to us, beloved friends, of the uncertainty of human arrangements that again the one who desired this subject is hindered by business from being present at its prayerful consideration. When we realize the host of human uncertainties by which we are surrounded, how grateful we should be to our heavenly Father for the wondrous certainties with which His Words are full, for though there is uncertainty in our daily experience, there is no uncertainty in the Truth; there is no uncertainty in grace.

A prefatory word to prevent misunderstandings, and harm, may not be out of place. I do not wish to take the position of the critic who understands everything, this or any evening. To sit quietly and speak about someone else's translation is comparatively easy, to produce a better is more than comparatively hard. I do not wish to take the position of one who knows everything about the Revised Version. I do not wish to take the attitude of speaking against everything that exists because it exists. Nor do I desire that we should have an unspiritual, verbal, and merely critical pondering of certain verses. We have met to see the glory of Christ. This is our object, and everything must be made a part of that object, or everything will be a hindrance, and bring dishonor to the Name of the Lord.

I do not wish to exalt the Authorized Version. I must frankly acknowledge that in preparation for this evening, while, I hope, gratitude to God for His control (in measure) of different translations has been increased, on the other hand I have lost somewhat in the matter of relative esteem for the Authorized Version as compared with the Revised. I do not mean that the

Revised Version has impressed me as that which is by any means desirable, but the Authorized Version perhaps comes out the more clearly with its deficiencies when the two versions are viewed together, and arguments that one must sorrowfully suggest against the Revised Version reflect and strike against the Authorized Version. I wonder what is the best attitude for children of God. I suppose, beloved friends, we may learn from Scripture that it is right to use as far as possible any existing version, for the apostles used as far as possible the Septuagint, the existing version of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, but they never confined themselves to a version. I hope you will not think that my attitude is entirely out of date when I say that the thought has come into my mind, Shall we go back to Tyndale's Version, as fully as it exists? Or, shall we go back to the Geneva Translation? In some respects I wish we could, for there are such serious objections to the Revised Version and such serious objections to the Authorized Version which I am inclined to think would not in so large a measure apply to those translations. However, the "Authorized" is the best known. I incline to think it is to the glory of God in the making known of Truth to adopt that unless we find it to lose thoughts in the original which need emphasis at the time when we are speaking. We cannot adopt a translation that is erroneous, even though it be "Authorized" for it is not Divinely authorized; but EVERY translation is incomplete, and therefore if we use a version at all we must have that which is imperfect. If we say we will not use an imperfect translation we have only one remedy, but that would transgress the rule in which the Lord leads His people to do all to edifying. The majority would not be edified if we kept to the original words. We MUST translate that there may be an edifying, - then we MUST have an imperfect translation. Therefore at the present time it seems the simplest thing to use, as far as possible, the imperfect translation which is best known, and to modify it whenever necessary, either for the correcting of an error seen, or for the increase of an emphasis which is spiritually felt. But never is it wise to correct with pride, nor with the display underlying such expressions as, "The Greek says so and so".

There is more pride than we realize lurking in superficial knowledge. There is only one place where it lurks more, and that is in ignorance, for superficial knowledge is only ignorance one type smaller.

With this word of introduction shall we come to consider the Revised Version? The mode of its preparation, as brought before us in the preface and elsewhere, is not altogether encouraging. We find that the Revisers were hampered by certain rules, which, doubtless, considering the state of their heart as a company toward verbal inspiration, were a useful hampering on the whole, but nevertheless would have been a real hampering to spiritually taught men who were outside the trammels of such a mixed committee. The Revised Version was intentionally but a revision. It was proposed that there should be very few deviations from the Authorized Version. The words used are as follows: - "To introduce as few alterations as possible into the text of the Authorized Version consistently with faithfulness". This language may be taken as somewhat self-contradictory, but its object is fairly clear and doubtless the hampering contains both blessings and hinderings. The "New Testament" committee was chosen from those of all denominations, a unitarian being found within its limits, both in the English company and in the parallel American company. A Roman Catholic rejected identification, therefore it was chosen from the Church of England and nonconformists. The committee chosen within these limits met together day after day during a period of years, (Question as to number of sessions? I think there were about 412 during the period, that is to say, the company met about 400 times, but no one met on all the occasions. All lost some sessions and many were absent for a large period.) The committee included men who would emphasize inspiration, and on the other hand had room within it for one like Dean Stanley whose position was avowedly against the old-fashioned interpretation of GOD'S TRUTH. Difficulties were considered, every difference was brought up twice, that is to say, in the first revision and in the final revision, unless in the first revision it was refused. Simple majorities decided the first time, two-thirds majorities the second. Consequently the translation depended upon a principle of voting, and all had equal votes, though all did

not have equal knowledge, nor did all have equal reverence. The constitution of such a committee and the arrangement of voting do not lead the child of God to particular confidence in the Revised Version. At the outset he draws back from that which in the nineteenth century can invite a unitarian to cooperate. He draws back from such a sign of the times, he cannot expect that God will signally own a work in which it is impossible for the revisers to unitedly ask God's blessing in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ AS GOD AND YET MAN. I suppose there is not a believer present who would be willing to unite in prayer with a unitarian. We draw back with horror from the thought of an imitation prayer when any deny the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Furthermore, we have to bear in mind that this translation, though produced in conjunction with various nonconformist sects, was especially linked with a proposal in convocation of the Church of England and therefore was almost necessarily bound to the latitudinarianism which must exist in an established national church. You cannot but have a broadness in a national church, and that is its condemnation.

The text adopted presents certain problems. By the text I mean the GREEK text. As you know, there are hundreds of manuscripts, and those manuscripts differ in certain respects. There is not a single person present who would write out the New Testament and find he had made no mistakes in the copying. Copyists of centuries gone by were perhaps more careful, but they too made mistakes. Hence the difficulty is to find out the true text from these manuscripts. The one used by the Authorized Version was in a number of places undoubtedly wrong, but the revisers had a swing of the pendulum, if I might so characterize it. They were attracted and biased toward a few manuscripts, which manuscripts differ among themselves to such an extent that you can by no means say they agree. Let me put it like this: if I have in front of me a hundred copies of a page of Scripture, and I find certain of those copies careful on the whole, but differing among themselves, I cannot say they bear a collective witness, because if A is right, B is wrong in a number of places. It has been said the differences are valuable in showing they are not simply

servile copies of one another, but you can carry this "argument" too far. Undoubtedly when you find two copies with the same mistakes, evident mistakes, you suspect, as an examiner would, that there has been some unfair relationship between the writers. You can detect in many cases that manuscripts have come from the same copy, and therefore are not independent witnesses. But all this shows how many problems are wrapped up in this study, and how imperfect is man's knowledge. My own position is, at present, this: as to some verses I feel it impossible to speak and to say I am quite sure the true reading is so and so. But these cases are comparatively few, considering the multitude of manuscripts. The differences among them as to which we need have any concern are very few. You will quite follow what I mean in this respect. If I have a hundred copies in front of me, a hundred copies of a certain book written by hand, and 99 agree on a certain word and the other one is distinct, I have evidence to reject that one. It is not likely, it is almost impossible, that 99 should make the mistake and that the one should be accurate in copying. In a matter of spirituality it may be so, but in a matter of copying it is not so. Hence when you hear of the THOUSANDS of differences among manuscripts, remember that the number can be considerably reduced because there are thousands you can rule out at once, and numbers more depend upon mere matters of spelling and do not affect the meaning at all. The revisers adopted a text largely influenced by two learned scholars, Westcott and Hort, which was based to a great extent upon the Sinaitic and the Vatican manuscripts. These manuscripts were allowed a special voice beyond all others. That they are ancient is true, but that they date from near the time of Constantine makes the believer suspicious. You may say, Why has not God arranged for the preservation of the original copies? Or, at least, for copies from the first century? My friends we cannot dictate to Him, He is wise, and by the difficulty He causes His people to study the more. The revisers largely adopted this text, hence we find such comments as the following at the end of Mark 16. "The two oldest Greek Manuscripts and some other authorities omit from verse 9 to the end. Some other authorities have a different ending to the Gospel." And in John 8

the opening narrative has the following marginal note, "Most ancient authorities omit John 7:53 to 8:11. Those which contain it vary very much from each other." Notes of that kind show the stress that was given to one or two of the ancient authorities. This causes certain suspicion.

But, undoubtedly the Revised Version HAS made certain improvements. I do not wish to pose as one who DESIRES to criticise for criticism's sake. One can praise God that in spite of the mixed committee, the translation is not worse than it is. One can praise God for certain improvements which are really helpful. Old words are removed, and thus the translation is more comprehensible to the present day readers. There are improvements, moreover, in literality. If you take any chapter in the Authorized Version, and put the chapter and the Revised at the side you will often find the Revised more literal. I glanced at 2 Timothy in connection with the Revised. Those of you who have the Authorized Version open will be able to follow me. First chapter, "Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God". Marginal note in the Revised "THROUGH the will of God". Deeply important. In the same manner the Revisers put this marginal note "THROUGH" at the beginning of Matthew's Gospel, Where we have the Word of the Lord THROUGH the prophet. I only wish they had put the margin in the text. This would have been a greater improvement still. Where God uses the term "through" we are not to alter it. "According to the promise of THE life which is in Christ Jesus". Here there is a little difficulty, for the Greek is literally - "According to a promise of life, that which is, or the life which is in Christ Jesus". It is more than doubtful if the revisers have accurately reproduced the Greek article on certain occasions but they have put in this "the" with an improvement. "To Timothy my beloved child". The word "my" in italics in the Authorized is not in italics in the Revised, but it does not exist in the Greek. Here is a defect. I may say I shall couple now improvements, inconsistencies, and errors, while glancing through the chapter. "Grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, (Both Authorized and Revised contain this rendering, but the word "thank" is from the same root as grace, and this should have been shown.)

I thank God Whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience". There are several words for "serving". We know how the Authorized Version confuses them, but the Revised Version does the same. "Serving the Lord" is quite distinct from the term here. This is a grave pity. Here is the word for worshipping service. "Whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience". The "my" is in italics in the Authorized, not so in the Revised, but there is no "my" in the Greek. Literally it is "Whom I serve from forefathers". But you say, that is not English. Well, let the English be secondary. The important thing is not to produce an English classic but to understand the expressions God has used. My pondering of this subject for you, dear fellow Christians, this evening, makes a background to a most earnest appeal, and the appeal is this,

- Oh, that there may be a stress upon the learning of the Scripture in the original languages! More than ever I feel how translations CANNOT reproduce the fulness. One dare not and would not limit the work of the Spirit of God, but, oh, that Christian Parents may bring before their children the patient and thorough study of the original languages, and of the idioms of the original languages, for it is possible to have a foreigner's knowledge of Greek, and never, to be at home in it, never to enter into its idioms, (Question: What is an idiom? Answer: The peculiarities that one language has in modes of expression which do not exist in another language. Sometimes idioms are found in the use of such words as "the" or in the use of participles like "having done", "Having spoken" and so forth. At other times little expressions which, in English, for example, we quite understand, must sound very strange to people hearing for the first time. I mean we have proverbial expressions, and so forth, and compound words which have a special meaning to ourselves. Take the word "understand", take the expression "to look out" for anything. The "out" has lost its meaning. When the Holy Spirit employs certain idioms in Greek it may be hard to reproduce them in English). The important thing therefore is instead of translating the Scriptures, to translate the readers. Do not think the expression strange, the word "translate" simply means to carry across. The word translate is associated with a Latin accompaniment of the verb "φέρω" with

which you are acquainted, - the verb to bear or carry, and "trans" as you know has the thought of crossing over. If the Scriptures were written by men borne along by the Spirit of God, may we be borne across unto them, in a spiritual as well as in a grammatical way. "I thank God Whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience". Here the Greek is more accurately rendered, It is not "with pure conscience" but "in a pure conscience". This reminds me that in the epistle to the Hebrews and the 13th chapter, we read in the 20th verse "Now the God of peace Who brought again from the dead the Great Shepherd of the sheep with the blood of the eternal covenant" (I am reading, as in all cases this evening, from the Revised Version), the marginal note is "by the blood of the eternal covenant", the Greek "in". Why should not this passage have been rendered literally? The marginal note is useful, but why not render at once "IN the blood of the eternal covenant"? But this leads to another point, in passing. The Greek is, "The God of THE peace" and "In blood of an eternal covenant". You will notice there is no article before "blood", no article before "covenant", but there is an article before "peace". Can it be realized why the translators put in the article before "blood", before "covenant" and leave it out before "peace"? This is transposing the word "the" altogether. But it may be said the expression "IN blood of an everlasting covenant" is not English. Neither is it, without a CERTAIN EMPHASIS, but that is the beauty of Scripture, it demands a certain emphasis to understand its teaching. A spiritual emphasis, but it cannot be said "The God of the peace" is not English, to those children of God who understand THAT peace which has been made by the blood of His cross. To us it is most desirable that the word THE should be inserted. "The God of THE peace". That peace which has no equal. That peace which lives in front of our spiritual vision, and which will never be lost from it.

Returning to 2 Tim. 1, "How unceasing is my remembrance of thee in my supplications night and day longing to see thee remembering thy tears that I may be filled with joy". The word "remembering" is a perfect form suggestive of a remembrance in the past with an effect in the present. This our trans-

lators lose. "Having been reminded of the unfeigned faith that is in thee", - this depends partly on a matter of reading. "Having been reminded" however, is not literal, for the words are "ὑπομνησθῆναι λαβών", - having received a reminder". Omitting anything further in the first chapter we approach the second, undoubtedly we reach several improvements here. "Thou therefore, my son, be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou", commit at once is the real force, "to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" There are two words for "others" in the Greek, yet they are NOT distinguished in the rendering. "Suffer hardship with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus". "No soldier on service" is a suggestive improvement, because it links with the previous verse. Our English translation says, "A good soldier...No man that warreth". But if the Holy Spirit uses the same root twice over, the English should seek to bring it out. "No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life." Again an improvement, - "entangling IN", "that he may please Him Who enrolled him as a soldier, and if also a man contend in the games, he is not crowned, except he have contended lawfully. The husbandman that laboreth must be the first to partake of the fruits. Consider what I say, for the Lord shall give thee understanding". Here is, undoubtedly, an improvement. It is not "Consider what I say and the Lord give thee understanding", but "Consider what I say FOR the Lord shall give". God lays stress on a beautiful idea. We consider because the Lord "GIVES". Here is the argument for our prayerful consideration. "Remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead of the seed of David according to my Gospel". Our Authorized Version quite loses the thought of the original. "Of the seed of David" should be associated with "according to my Gospel". The Revised Version is clear on this. The Gospel is the gospel of the kingdom and emphasizes Christ as of the seed of David. "Wherein I suffer hardship unto bonds as a malefactor, but the Word of God is not bound, therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. Faithful is the saying; for if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we endure we shall also reign with Him; if we shall deny Him He

also will deny us; if we are faithless, He abideth faithful; for He cannot deny Himself". But the word "HE" is in the 13th verse, and in the latter clause of verse 12 the word "that one". Surely the difference should be reproduced in the English, at least by some special form of printing, to show there is not the ordinary term for "He" but THAT ONE. And the last clause "He cannot deny Himself" is far more emphatic - "To have denied Himself He hath not power". The order of words emphasizes. In the 19th verse the Authorized Version says "The foundation of God standeth sure". The Revised more accurately, "The firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His", but the word "knoweth" is actually "knew". "The Lord knew in the past those that are His". Both translations miss the reference to foreknowledge. "And let everyone that nameth the Name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness". This I think is correct, so far as the expression, "The Name of the Lord". But what shall we say concerning "depart"; why should not that have been changed? Here is the word "stand away from" and a designed contrast with the earlier part of the verse. "The foundation of God STANDETH sure", "Let everyone that nameth the Name of the Lord STAND away from unrighteousness". The last verse of the chapter is partly corrected, but if I mistake not an error is put in. It reads "And they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by the Lord's servant unto the will of God". THESE are additional expressions. Undoubtedly our English Authorized is wrong "AT HIS WILL". Undoubtedly there is the thought of God's will, but "Who are taken captive by him" should I think be left as it is, or shown in some way to apply to the devil. Both margins rightly render it "Who are taken alive". The devil has taken some of the Lord's people, taken them alive, but they are to be recovered out of the snare into the will of God. The expression "Taken captive by the Lord's servant" seems hardly a correct rendering. More than doubtful is the translation of 3:16. "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable", more than doubtful, for elsewhere the translators always render this mode of speech as our English version, "All Scripture IS given by inspiration of God and is profitable". Why is there this rendering?

"Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable?" It more than weakens the force of the precious passage before us.

Turning to John's Gospel, we find some improvements, but not only improvements, and shall I say by no means all the improvements needed on every page. For example, in the first chapter, instead of "The Word was made flesh" we read, "The Word became flesh", but the word "became" is not consistently used. In John 1:6 we read "There CAME a man sent from God whose name was John, the same CAME for witness". Here perhaps we have an illustration of the Revisers' carelessness in English, though that concerns me very little tonight. The majority will feel the infelicity of the rendering "Whose NAME was John, the SAME CAME". But the sadder point is that the word "came", which occurs twice with regard to John, is a distinct word in the Scripture. In one case it is BEcame, why not so render it? Further on in the chapter verse 16 is partly spoiled, and partly improved. "For of His fulness" should rather be "Out of His fulness we all received, and grace for grace." I say partly improved for we have here the true tense. It is not a perfect but an aorist, "We all received". But in the first Epistle of John, first verse, there is not this consistency; the tenses are NOT regularly rendered as they should be, and John 1:17 continues, "For the law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ", Nay, BEcame, came into being. They were illustrated in a Living Person. This is quite lost in our rendering. In the third chapter of John's Gospel, moreover, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born anew", with the word "from above" in the margin, is undoubtedly an improvement; but why should not John 3:16 be caused to bring out the force of the words which the Lord Jesus used. "Every one that believeth INTO Him". Here is a vital relationship. John 8:58 is a remarkable testimony to the Deity of the Lord Jesus, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was I am". The Revision is content with putting "was born" in the margin, but why should it be only there? The LORD'S stress is seen more clearly if we render yet more literally, "Before Abraham came into being, or became". Sufficiently has probably been said to show that there are improvements, and there are

losses. But you will say, do not the improvements outweigh the losses? In some passages, yes. But, beloved friends, I cannot help feeling that our attitude may be summed up thus. If we use the Revised Version we shall cause some to stumble, nor is it a translation for which we can be willing to let others stumble. If it were a translation brought out by men of God and representing the Scripture as nearly as we could conceive it, possible we might be willing for others to stumble when we are trying to get more to the exact words of the Holy Spirit. But I am not prepared to confuse people and to mislead dear children of God by coming forward with quotations from a translation made by a committee embracing a unitarian, and a higher critic. Furthermore, if you alter a translation, it is natural that those who hear you, or with whom you converse, think you rest very much on that translation. The Authorized Version, almost everyone knows, contains some mistakes. As soon as you alter it, you must alter it to something FAR better, or either you are calling forth confidence in something fresh which will only be a broken reed. To alter it for that which has, in many ways, almost as many mistakes is actually to mislead. Particularly, when God has granted so many manuscripts to be found, and so much fuller knowledge of the language that we might expect such a wondrous advance in these days. I do not mean an advance in spirituality, though the Lord's own should look for this among themselves; I know the days are evil, but an advance in knowledge grammatically there has been. Therefore, considering everything it surely becomes us not to emphasize or to bring into prominence the Revised Version. We may sometimes use it ourselves, but my own attitude is to employ it very little. Again I would plead with the Lord's people to "BE translated" themselves.

- Q. What reason had you for saying that the Established Church had more weight or more influence with regard to the Version than any other?
- A. The preface reads thus, "The present Revision had its origin in action taken by the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury in Feb. 1870, and it has been conducted throughout on the plan laid in Resolutions of both Houses of the Province, and, more particularly, in accordance with principles and rules drawn up by a special Committee of Convocation in the following May". Thus it was linked with the English Church at the outset, though non-conformists were enrolled afterwards. The whole time spent was

ten years and a half.

Q. Have you any idea of how many men there were on this committee?

A. "The average attendance for the whole time has been 16 each day. The whole company consisting at first of 27, but for the greater part of the time, of 24 members many of them residing at great distances from London", so they could not all be regular.

Q. This version has been adopted a great deal in America, has it not?

A. The American Committee worked at the same time, and I must say that though they included a unitarian upon their staff they made certain improvements beyond the English Version. Some of their notes are given at the end, and you have such statements as the following, which are refreshing. Strike out "S" (i.e. Saint) from the title of the Gospels and from the heading of the pages. For "Holy Ghost" adopt uniformly the rendering "Holy Spirit". Put into the text uniformly the marginal rendering "through" in place of "by" when it relates to prophecy coming through the Lord's servant. Substitute for "devil" (devils) the word "demon" (demons) wherever the latter word is given in the margin or represents the Greek words: *δαίμων, δαιμονίου*, and for "possessed* with a devil" (or devils) substitute either "demoniac" or "possessed with a demon" (or demons). After "baptize" let the margin "Or, IN" and the text exchange places. Let the word "testament" be everywhere changed to "covenant" (without an alternate in the margin) - then they put their sad addition, "except in Hebrews 9:15-17". Why do they not keep "covenant" throughout?

Q. Why do men put on the outside of the Bible now, the word "Testament"?

A. From 2 Corinthians 3.

Q. Would not "Covenant" be advisable?

A. I do not know that we are specially warranted to call the portions of SCRIPTURE, The Two Covenants, or the Old Covenant Scriptures and the New Covenant. Thanks be unto God we have the New Covenant/ worked out wonderfully in the Later Scriptures, but there are many hints of it in the Earlier Scriptures, and all who lived in the time of the Old Covenant, and who knew grace were saved by the New Covenant.

Q. The title "Holy Bible" is not a part of the Scripture, is it?

A. No, but the Title "Sacred Scriptures" has a rather strong authority. "From a child thou hast known the Sacred Scriptures". Literally "The sacred letters". Still the important thing is not to give the precious volume a name by which you can quickly characterize the whole of it, but to SPIRITUALLY digest the various parts of it.

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