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## ARTICLE III.

## THE LATEST TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE.

BY HENRY M. WHITNEY.

## II. AIMS AND RESULTS.

WHAT especial improvements do the American Revisers think that they have made? Do their changes make a total that justifies their challenge to the attention of the English-speaking world? And what is there that they did not do and that still invites the doing?

Doubtless the best beginning for the answer to these questions may be found in the prefaces that they have given with the two Testaments.

I. The primary and most summary statement is their own,—that they have embodied in the text all but a few of the American suggestions of change that in the Revision of 1885 were relegated by the English Committee to an appendix. In the Revision of 1901 the terms of that appendix are simply reversed: the American suggestions lead, and the readings preferred by the Englishmen are given with equal fullness and emphasis as having been displaced. Here the issue is frankly joined: which list will have the final verdict from those who are competent to judge?

It might easily have been, that, although the judgment went, on the whole, to the later Revision, yet a large percentage of the American suggestions would fail to commend themselves to American opinion or sentiment; but we believe it to be a fact, that, among such Americans as know the Bible intimately and have made themselves acquainted with the appendix of 1885, there are very few

who do not hold that the use of substantially all the American preferences would have been then, and is now, an excellent thing. To them it has always been hard to comprehend how our English friends could have thought it wise to cling to so many expressions that (1) by shift of meaning had become less dignified or even coarse, or (2) had changed to a different though not a coarse significance, or (3) had gone wholly out of use. So nearly absolute a difference must be at bottom a matter of national temperament,—the greater separation of the English scholar, in fact and in sympathy, from the actual life of the multitude,—the idea that the vocabulary of religion may well be broadly differentiated from the vocabulary of other high thought and feeling.

It was truly said by Southey: "There is, as you must have heard Wordsworth point out, a language of pure intelligible English, which was spoken in Chaucer's time and is spoken in ours, equally understood then and now, of which the Bible is the written and permanent standard, as it has undoubtedly been the great means of preserving it"; but this does not alter the fact that the English language is changing all the time, that Chaucer can be read only with almost constant reference to a glossary, that in many cases Shakespeare's thought is just missed by even the serious reader,<sup>1</sup> and that the Bible of 1611, being cast by intention in a diction even then archaic, has in two hundred and ninety-one years, in spite of constant use, changed in hundreds of cases, so that, when heard or read without gloss, it fails to be understood.

There are, to be sure, multitudes of religious people who

<sup>1</sup> E.g.: "A *station* [attitude] like the herald Mercury,  
New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill" (Ham. iii. 4. 58).  
"Fear boys with *bugs*" (T. of S. i. 2. 211).

For the latter of these we leave the uninitiated reader the amusement of the surprise that he will experience on looking up the meaning for himself.

in their secret hearts do not feel that the Bible was meant to be understood; they even distrust all attempts to make it understood: sing it, drone it, intone it, monotone it, but do not read it with a discriminating emphasis, do not treat it as a book that in its various parts sprang blazing from the hearts of deeply moved men, and that depends for its regenerating power upon its being made to reach the heart through a mind that is at once comprehending because kindled, and kindled because comprehending. Yet the church should never forget the saying of Coleridge, that no religious emotion is profitable except such as is produced by the view of some truth; nor should the scholar forget that a truth couched in archaic diction is, largely or wholly, to some or to many, out of view.

We have named three classes of changes in the sense of words or phrases used in the Bibles of 1611 and 1885:—

(1) Those which are now coarse or undignified cannot be very agreeably illustrated in print. Some of those least offensive are: eyes *wink* for eyes *flash*, *victual* for *provision*, *carcase* for *dead body* (human), *stink* for *stench*, *stink* for *be odious*, *bowels* and *belly* for the seat of the emotions; there are others that are worse; there are some that have become “cacophemisms” to such an extent as to be the terms chosen by the coarse for purposes of insult or abuse.

(2) The words that have changed to a different though not a coarse significance make a list of remarkable length. The reader of the Bible needs to see them massed in the appendix, in order to realize how far away from current English usage the Revision of 1885 was left. The following are only a beginning upon the list: *lust* for *desire*, *charger* for *platter*, *strange* and *stranger* for *foreign* and *foreigner*, *virtuous* for either *worthy* or *potent*, *virtue* for *healing power*, *against* for *toward*, *coasts* for *borders*, *cunning* for *skill*, *discover* for *uncover* or *disclose*, *divers* for

*diverse, due for portion, fenced for fortified, fine for refine, fowl for bird, fray for frighten, fury for wrath* (see the synonymy in the Century Dictionary under *anger*), *gift and reward for bribe, heathen for (foreign) nations, howl for wail, justice for judgment or righteousness, lift up the hand for take oath, none for no (adj.), peculiar for own* ("peculiar people"), *poll for cut the hair, possess for dispossess, present for tribute, reins for heart, scorner for scoffer, shadow for shade, spoil for despoil, surprise for seize, usury for interest, vain and vanity for false and falsehood, withal for wherewith, lightly for easily, amazed for dismayed, in any wise for at all, cattle for beasts generally, temptation for trial, sever for separate, confectioner for perfumer, take thought for be anxious, delicately for cheerfully, overran for outran, roaring for groaning, in good liking for strong, prevent for come earlier, worship for reverence, conversation for manner of life, early for earnestly, saving health for salvation, proverb for byword, dragon for jackal or sea-monster, revenge for avenge* (see the comparison under *avenge* in the Century Dictionary), *senators for elders, nitre for soda, turtle for turtle-dove, cunning for expert, satyrs for wild goats, doctrine for teaching or instruction, bunches for humps* (of camels). These are selected almost entirely from the books preceding Jeremiah, and they are far from being all; some of them, of course, are due to a difference of opinion as to the meaning of the Hebrew words, but the great mass of them are due, as we have said, to an ultra conservatism, making the English translators cling to an ancient, even if half-intelligible, word,—possibly also to the idea that people will value the meaning more if they have to hunt it out,—but perhaps, also, to a secret reluctance to admit unscholarly people to the fellowship of those who know, at sight, what the Bible means.

(3) From the same part of the Bible we take the follow-

ing words or phrases preserved in the Revision of 1885, although they are now, as the Apostle Jude would say, "twice dead, plucked up by the roots": *sod* (past tense of *scethe*), *astonied*, *chapiter* for *capital*, *disannul*, *minish*, *holpen*, *clouted* for *patched*, *ouches* for *settings*, *sith* for *since*, *throughly*, *whiles*, *afore* (used in the American Revision in Rom. i. 2), *basilisk* for *adder*, *be* for *is*, *the which*, *drave* for *drove*, *meteyard* for *measure*, *consider of*, *agone*, *methinketh*, *chapmen*, *pound* for *pounds*, *overflown* (error for *overflowed*), *magnifical*, *in* (earth) for *on*, *endamage*, *unperfect*, *prime* for *dawn*, *hardly bestead*, *feller*, *bewray*, *wist*, *wot*, *widow woman*, *on heaps*, *other but*, *daysman* for *umpire*, *amerce* for *fine*, *neesings* for *sneezings*, *oil olives* for *olive-trees*; and there are many more. From the American standpoint there seems to be absolutely no excuse for the retention of any of these. Such as are intelligible seem at least uncouth.

The queerness of some of the archaisms is well illustrated by 2 Sam. x. 12. How many readers are there that fail to have an amused sense of sudden enlightenment, when, after reading (A. V., E. V.; compare Shakespeare's *Tempest* i. i. 11): "Let us play the men for the people," they find in the American Revision, "Let us play the man"?

The great multitude of expressions belonging in these three classes, now distinctly misfits to the sense, makes one marvel that the English Revisers changed any word for something nearer to the usage of the present day. They were as slow to change the diction as they were quick to correct translations based upon errors in the original text. They undertook to introduce by their changes no word that was not in use in 1611: a principle that in itself made sure an unsatisfactory result.

They did make some changes in the words: they cut out the odd expression, "The times of this ignorance God

winked at"; they yielded a few times to the repeated appeals of the American Committee for the admission of *its*. But their zeal seems to have been in this respect a good deal less than half-hearted; for, so far as diction goes, they stopped a good deal less than half-way to the goal. It is easy to believe that they would have made still fewer changes if they had not had the American Revisers to urge them on.

In this connection there is instruction, if not amusement, in their treatment of *its*. They yielded to the American pressure for that to a certain extent, but the American Committee now add some two hundred to the times that the word is used; it is hard to see why the English Committee yielded at all, if they were not prepared to go through. If there was any one place where, above all others, *its* was needed for clearness, it was in the First Psalm: "He shall be like a tree . . . that bringeth forth his [*its*] fruit in his [*its*] season; his [*its*] leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he [not *it*] doeth shall prosper." Here is almost hopeless confusion of man and tree,—all due to the use of *his* for *its*, the latter not being yet in good standing in 1611.<sup>1</sup> The rhetorical method is comparison, which requires that the two, while held close together, shall be kept perfectly distinct. Yet it is an open secret that the insistence of the Americans had to be very great, and three times repeated, before they could win consent that, even in this place of preëminent necessity, there should be the use of what an English critic once called "that unlucky and new-fangled word, *its*."

On the whole, to go carefully over the appendix is to see that the American Revisers have, if only by their substitutions, abundantly fulfilled their assertion that "the pres-

<sup>1</sup>Shakespeare says that a certain sparrow "had *it* head bit off by *it* young." And even *her* was sometimes used and considered right, for lack of *its*, as in Gen. iv. 12 (A.V.): "When thou tillest the ground, *it* shall not henceforth yield unto thee *her* strength," and many times in Joshua xxi. and 1 Chron. vi., and in contemporary authors.

ent volume will, on the one hand, bring a plain reader more closely into contact with the exact thought of the sacred writers than any [other] version now current in Christendom, and, on the other hand, prove itself especially serviceable to the students of the word."

It should be said, however, that the American Revisers themselves seem to have been timid, or unduly conservative, or overfond of the archaic, at times. We name a few examples: Gen. xxiv. 22: a *golden* ring (given in the present usage in Jas. ii. 2); xxxi. 36: *chode*; xxxiv. 8, 20: *communed* for *talked, conferred*,—an almost ludicrously lofty word for what was evidently only an ordinary act; xl. 23: *forgat*; xlv. 11: *nourish* for *feed, support* (Jacob); Job ii. 2: *from whence* comest thou? (given in the modern form in i. 7); Mic. vi. 8: he hath *showed* thee; Matt. i. 2: Abraham *begat*; Luke viii. 32: *intreat*;<sup>1</sup> ix. 42: he was yet *a coming*; xvii. 31: *return back* (redundancy); John xi. 44: *grave-clothes* (grave-cloths, bands); Acts xii. 7: a light *shined* (*shone* in ix. 3); xxv. 16: *before that* the accused have; Heb. x. 11: *the which*. *Carnal* in Paul's epistles (e.g. Rom. xv. 27; 1 Cor. ix. 11) is now entirely misleading, and should have given place to *earthly*. If the American Committee counted *eschewed, respect the person* (for *show partiality*), and *purge* (for *atone for* or *purify*) too ancient, they might well have been consistent by coming a little farther down the centuries themselves.

And they have preserved two queer bits of ancient grammar, embedded in the text like gnats in amber: Gen. xxiv. 14: "Let the same be *she*"; 1 Kings iii. 18: "*Save* [i. e., *except*] *we* two"; John vi. 46: "*Save* *he* that is of God." The usage of putting a nominative after *save* is, indeed, old,—as in Shakespeare (*Tw. N.* iii. 1. 172: "*Save I* alone"), and earlier,—but has not the time come to enforce

<sup>1</sup> This is said to be a misprint, not detected in time to be put into the errata, but now changed in the plates.



upon it a stricter grammar, or else to use *but* instead of *save*?<sup>1</sup> It sounds too much like the opposite error after *but*,—as in “It’s nobody *but me*.”

It seems to be largely a question of degree as to the modernness of a word or an idiom; yet through it all there is the play of individual or collective taste or fancy. Is it possible to fix a general principle that shall control all cases? We think not, in any absolute way. But is it not fair to ask that the diction of the Bible be brought near to the multitude so far as this,—that a word of to-day shall be preferred, even if later than any date of a previous version, provided it gives the impression of belonging to the permanent stock of our noblest English speech? Why say *spake* (Acts iv. 1), when *spoke* is a word of perfect dignity? Why introduce *sore* (troubled) (E. R. and A. R., Acts iv. 2), when *greatly* covers the sense, and is at the golden mean between the archaic and the new? The reception given to the “Twentieth Century New Testament” is one of many evidences that the public not only is ready for less ancientness in the text of the English Bible, but even craves it and demands it. That is, it does if the comprehension of the Bible is to it a matter of any real concern. This is, of course, a very different thing from introducing the latest liberties with the possessive (as “Jerusalem’s fate” for “the fate of Jerusalem,” or “John’s killing” for “the killing of John”), or the cleft infinitive, or “would better,” or the last new word, or any other device by which undisciplined or ecstatic writers make cultivated readers wince. It keeps, in the best sense, to “that pure, intelligible English,” the core of the language in every age.

2. In the American Revision, in the special preface to

<sup>1</sup>In 1 Kings iii. 19 the bad grammar of using *overlaid for overlain* (A. V. and E. R.) has now been evaded by different phrasing, and that of Prov. xxvii. 3, *is heavier than them both*, has given place to something that will parse.

the Old Testament, there are emphasized many items of change, the first being the substitution of *Jehovah* for the capitalized LORD and GOD. The reasons given for this are good. So far as it is objected to, it will be especially in two parts of the Old Testament,—in the earlier chapters of Genesis, where the trisyllable recurs with wearisome frequency, and in the Psalms, where the music of the familiar and beloved passages is badly marred. In novelty or in burdensomeness it does not approach what Wycliffe put upon the Christian world when he invented some of his curious words for Bible-conceptions not then having English words to express them; but that was in the fourteenth century, and the world since then has grown exacting as to the oral qualities of style. On the whole, we fear that it would have been more prudent for the American Revisers to refrain from making this change.

3. *Sheol* was introduced into the English Revision as a sheer necessity, and was used twenty-nine times; the American editors have been consistent in this, using *sheol* in all the sixty-four cases of the occurrence of the word in the Hebrew text. *Hades* is its equivalent in the New Testament Greek, and *gehenna* expresses the unhappy part of that invisible world. All three of these words are needed, for nothing in the old stock of the language has any of the definiteness, the precision, that are required for the full transfer of the original ideas.

4. The American Committee think that they have made a marked and valuable improvement by their treatment of *will* and *shall*,—with which are necessarily linked the past tenses, *would* and *should*. They say: “[*Shall*] is certainly excessively used in the Authorized Version, especially when connected with verbs denoting an action of the Divine Being; and the two are also often very inconsistently used, as may be observed in such a striking case as Ps. cxxi. 3, 4.” It is certainly true that in no one re-

spect did the Authorized Version need revision more than in its use of *will* and *shall*, *would* and *should*, and in none, we think, did the English Committee leave their work more incomplete. Probably, also, no other group of words constitutes so severe a test of purity in English style; and the style of the Bible should be absolutely pure.

(1) There were, to begin with, the places in which *will* and *willing* had their old strong sense, now obsolete, as: "They that *will* [want to] be rich" (1 Tim. vi. 9), and "He, *willing* [desirous] to justify himself" (Luke x. 29); these two were set right in 1885, but then and in 1901 the correction was not extended to Matt. xxvi. 41: "The spirit indeed is *willing*, but the flesh is weak." Lange implies that *willing* is not now strong enough for *πρόθυμον*: *ready and willing* is his suggestion; Wycliffe says, *redi*; the lexicon says, *ready, eager; forward* would be better than *willing*; *zealous* would hardly be too strong.

(2) There has been also a great deal of infirmity, throughout the history of the English language, in regard to using *will* and *would*, *shall* and *should*, in each other's places. This infirmity now takes especially the form of using *will* and *would* for *shall* and *should*,<sup>1</sup> but, until a period considerably later than Shakespeare, the tendency went heavily, though not uniformly, the other way. Wycliffe's version fairly bristles with *shalls*, of which now a large proportion should, and would, be *wills*; as: Luke ii. 12: "If he axe an eye, whether he *schal* [wole] a reche hym a scorioun?" Chaucer errs both ways, but especial-

<sup>1</sup>So that Peter Bayne attributed to the elder Thomas Arnold the alarming exclamation: "I must write a pamphlet, or I will burst." And the following conversation, that once occurred in a college class-room, is worth studying out:—

*Professor*: "Mr. D., you may give the French numerals."

*Student*: "How many will I give, Professor?"

*Professor*: "I don't know."

ly with the earlier fondness for *shall* and *should*;<sup>1</sup> and Shakespeare, contemporary with the translators, or, more properly, revisers, of 1611, is especially interesting for his variation between felicity and error in his use of all four of the words.<sup>2</sup> The version of 1611 is a close parallel to Shakespeare in this matter: it gravitates toward *shall* and *should*, it has many exceedingly felicitous uses of all four of the words, and, again, it hides the meaning by using a word that is wrong.

In some cases there is room for doubt as to which should be used. Occasionally the difference in the sense is broad and striking: probably the most interesting cases of this latter are in John xii. 32 and Heb. iii. 8, and they are fairly thrilling by the difference made by changing a little word: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, *will* [A.V., E.R., A.R.; but why not *shall*, with Wycliffe?] draw all men unto me"; "To-day, if ye *will* [A.V.; *shall* in E.R. and A.R.] hear his voice, harden not your hearts." We believe that in both these cases *shall* is the proper word; in either Hebrew or Greek not volition, but mere futuration, is the presumption with the future tense. Hence we hold also, with the American Committee, that the last verse of the Twenty-third Psalm should read: "I *shall* [not *will*] dwell in the house of Jehovah forever,"<sup>3</sup> and al-

<sup>1</sup> K. T. 1804: "It semede that the listes *scholde* [wolde] falle."

615: "Though that men *wolde* [scholde] him schake, the gayler sleep."

963: "Ye schul bothe anon unto me swere,

That neveremo ye *schul* [wol] my corowne dere."

<sup>2</sup> C. of E. iii. 1. 123: "This jest *shall* [will] cost me some expense."

J. C. ii. 2. 42: "Cæsar *should* [would] be a beast . . . if he . . ."

Macb. v. 5. 17: "She [Lady Macbeth] *should* [would] have died hereafter."

M. for M. iv. 2. 18: "I *would* [should] be glad to receive some instruction."

<sup>3</sup> But why the archaism, in the American Revision, of the two words, *for ever*, when *forever* has long been the standard form?

so,—against the versions of 1611, 1885, and 1901, but with Wycliffe and the “Twentieth Century,”—that Paul wrote to the church in Rome (xv. 28): “I shall [not *will*] go on by you into Spain.”

In this connection we may raise a question as to Acts xi. 23: “Exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they *would* cleave unto the Lord.” The versions, from Tyndale down to 1901, agree in this use of *would*, but is not *should* clearly the word required?

(3) The Americans have made interesting and commendable changes in a field illustrated by Lev. xi. 2 and Isa. xlvi. 7. The former used to read (A.V., E.R.): “These are the beasts which ye *shall* eat”; the American Revision softens the *shall* to *may*,—an obvious improvement. The second read (A.V., E.R.): “One *shall* cry unto him, yet,” etc. The Americans change this *shall* also to *may*; the case is really one of hendiadys, meaning: *if* one cry unto the idol, it cannot answer; hence *may* is the better word. The Hebrew could express *may* only in some such indirect fashion.

But it would seem that the Revisers might well have looked for more cases of a similar kind. There is, we think, a signal case in Eccl. x. 8, 9. The Preacher seems to note the fact that a modicum of risk attends even the commonest acts: “He that diggeth a pit *shall* [may] fall therein; and him that breaketh down a wall a serpent [may] bite. He that quarrieth out stones [may] be hurt by them; he that splitteth wood [may] be endangered [cut?] thereby.” It is obviously a case of peculiarly Hebrew hyperbole, the uniform being put for the possible. This is best brought home to an Occidental intelligence by the substitution of *may* for *shall*.

Is it not fair to soften similarly Paul’s extreme statement (1 Cor. vii. 32–34) of the superior spirituality of the celibate life? As it stands, it is not justified by what men ob-

serve in society to-day; history does not support the belief that it was justified then; the context shows that Paul did not believe it literally himself. We believe that the Apostle was noting a danger, and that, in the Hebrew manner, he used an absolute assertion for that which only might prove true. E.g. (34): "So also the woman that is unmarried, the virgin, [may be more] careful for the things of the Lord, . . . but she that is married [may become] solicitous [chiefly] for the things of the world, how she may please her husband."

(4) The *shall* of command, as in the ten commandments, is a thing about which all are agreed, and so is the *shall* of a promise. But the passage quoted in the American preface (Ps. cxxi. 3, 4) belongs in a different and special class. It formerly read (A.V., E.R.): "He *will* not suffer thy foot to be moved; he that keepeth thee *will* not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel *shall* neither slumber nor sleep." This is an inconsistency, and the American Revisers harmonize it by changing the one *shall* to *will*. But it is one of our finest idioms to use *shall* for high and confident assertion; this very *shall*, that has been turned to *will*, has been often quoted as an example of the splendors of the style of the Bible. It is a part of the history of the English language that the field of *shall* has been gradually cut down, so that some of the *shalls* of the Bible of 1611 are now incorrect, but also sometimes a Bible *shall* has, by its vigor, a fine tonic effect on one's faith. How flat would be the sixth verse of that same psalm, if it read: "The sun *will* not strike thee by day, nor the moon by night"<sup>1</sup> Hence, in the third and fourth verses, we should have stood by the inconsistency of having two *wills* and one *shall*; or, if we had felt that we must be consistent, we

<sup>1</sup> Or Ps. cxxvi. 6, with *will* for *shall*. Or the beatitudes (Matt. v. 3-11), if, with the T.C.N.T., μακάριοι (*blessed*) were translated *happy*, and *shall* were changed to *will*.

should have had three *shalls*. The Committee themselves say (Ps. xxiii. 6): "Surely goodness and loving-kindness *shall* follow me"; and their *shalls* are scattered abundantly through the Psalms.

Here may be noted an awkward and confusing break in the sequence of tenses (A.V.) in Ex. x. 1, 2: "I have hardened his heart . . . that I *might* . . . and that thou *mayest*." This was copied by the English, but corrected by the American, Revisers.

The correctness of the use of auxiliaries may seem a petty matter, but nothing is petty in the translation of the Bible, and auxiliaries often make a fundamental difference in the sense.

5. It would seem that any one with an ear for euphony would be glad to discover that *a*, not *an*, is now used in both Testaments before an aspirated *h* of an emphatic syllable, as in *a house*.

6. To the cases given on page v of the preface, where a reading of the Authorized Version has been restored, we may add the interesting case of Lev. xxv. 38: "To give you the land of Canaan, *and* to be your God." The *and* is not in the Hebrew, but is needed, is meant, and has been, with propriety and felicity, supplied.

7. On the sixth page of the preface is a paragraph giving cases in which Hebraisms formerly transferred to English have now given place to English idiom; as, Ezek. xx. 17: "Mine eye spared them from destroying them"; Num. viii. 11: "That they may be to do the service"; and Jehovah's speaking "by the hand of" some one. Hebraisms are sometimes too deeply inwrought into the substance of the thought to be capable of removal. But it was well to change these, and there are some that were spared by the American Revisers, and that might also have been translated with gain to both the beauty and the intelligibility of the form. This question is essentially one

with that of the measure of literalness that it is best to observe. Can it be considered other than a loss that literalness was carried to the degree of entire sacrifice of English idiom, and of beauty, and almost of sense, in Acts iv. 21: "Finding *nothing how* they might punish them"? In John ii. 47, "What do we?" is literal, but it very poorly brings out the peremptoriness,—not to say, the consternation,—of the demand. In 1 Cor. xiii. 6 the change from "rejoiceth in the truth" to "rejoiceth with" (E.R., A.R.) is more literal, but it dims the light emitted by the verse. In 1 Cor. xiii. 5, "Taketh no account of evil" (E.R., A.R.) is at once more literal and more accurate than "Thinketh no evil" (A.V.), but it does not suggest the sense, which is that of not cherishing resentment.<sup>1</sup> And with "the fire of God" (Job i. 16), and "the terror of God" (Gen. xxxv. 5), and "the mount of God" (Ex. xviii. 5), would it not be well to say, at least in the margin, that these may be Hebrew ways of saying a mighty fire, and terror, and mount? It was not thought necessary, in Acts vii. 20, to say, in the Hebrew manner, that Moses was "fair unto God." Cases like these, involving the question of literalism *versus* intelligibility and perhaps grace, occur in abundance; they should be decided always in favor of intelligibility first, of grace second, and of literalism last of all.

Here, naturally and rather inevitably, recurs the question of the tenses, especially in the Revisions of 1885 and 1901. The most conspicuous thing about them in these Revisions is the effort to follow the original, or at least to follow it more closely than it was followed in 1611. But can it be denied, either that the effort breaks down, or that it ought to break down? In other words, did the Revisers carry their principle through? or could they carry it

<sup>1</sup>This is much better expressed in the T.C.N.T.: "Nor does she reckon up her wrongs."



through? and did they not make bad work in some places, being driven by the stiffness of the Hebrew tenses or the carelessness of the Hebraized Hellenistic tenses into violations of English idiom or into the sacrifice of clearness and grace in a way that must have been painful to themselves, as it certainly is painful to others?

This trouble occurs almost entirely in the New Testament. The paucity of the Hebrew tenses delivered the Old Testament Companies from the snare, for it has from the beginning habituated translators to strike directly for the idea and to express the idea with any English tense that will fit. The New Testament Companies did not come off so well.

For example, in Rev. xxii. 5: "There shall be night no more; and they [shall] need no light of lamp, for the Lord God shall give them light,"—why should not the second verb be a future, as we have made it?

Acts iv. 20, being in the original an aorist, has been rendered: "We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard"; but it is hard to believe that Peter and John were not making a statement as to the whole of their experience; and that would call for the perfect tense; "saw and heard," as we believe, conveys a wrong idea, namely, that of a single time of seeing and hearing.

In Acts iv. 7, on the other hand, the Revisers had an opportunity to be literal with happy effect, but they let it slip. It would be rather fine to say, translating the aorist strictly, "By what power, or in what name, *did ye do* [not *have ye done*] this?" The exactness and the singleness of the time referred to invited that rendering, and it is hard to see why the perfect was used.

The study of the treatment of the Greek aorist in the two Revisions tempts one to think that the preterit was used in the very places where there was most need, and the most obvious need, for the perfect; it is hard to speak

patiently of the rendering in the Saviour's prayer (John xvii. 4), "I *glorified* thee upon the earth."

And there is the whole question of the pluperfect tense: it is a form unknown to the Hebrew, and it is curiously mutilated or slighted in the New Testament Greek. But the idea is there in other tenses, and the English pluperfect is the only way to bring it out. It is a curious fact that it was Wycliffe and Tyndale who were the ones, by adherence to the imperfect, to darken the sense in Acts iv. 13; says Wycliffe: "They knewen hem that they *weren* with Jhesu." The two Revisions make an exception to their general strictness by rendering it, with the Authorized Version: "They *had been* with Jesus." This is a sacrifice of the tense, but it exactly covers the meaning. Yet the pluperfect is not more needed there than in Luke xiv. 17: "To say to them [those?] that were [had been] bidden," or in John xii. 1: "Where Lazarus was, whom Jesus [had] raised from the dead," or in Acts iii. 10: "They took knowledge of him that it was he that [had] sat for alms." There are many more cases like these.

And then comes up the question of rendering the imperfect sometimes by *used to*; as in Acts iii. 2: "Whom they [*used to lay*] daily at the Beautiful Gate." It is what the "Twentieth Century New Testament" aims at and very well hits in Luke xxiii. 35: "*Kept saying* sneeringly." The form *used to* would not have pleased the translators appointed by King James, but it is perfectly good English now, and we might as well have the good of it in making the Bible clear, exact, and vivid. It would be a capital thing to go over the past tenses of the Old Testament, the imperfect tenses of the New Testament, to determine how many of them this helpful locution would fit.

As much may be said of the forms of *be*, joined with a participle, active or passive, to denote a continuing act, or event, or state: the structure is a valuable addition to our

language, and contributes largely to the superior excellence of the American Revision: the Old Testament Committee added it sixty-three times. The abundant Hebrew use of participles is particularly well matched by this form. A single example will serve: in 1 Sam. i. 9 Eli "was sitting" by the door-post when Hannah appeared. There is room for more of it; as in Acts vi. 7: "The number of the disciples [*was multiplying*] and a great company of the priests [*were becoming*] obedient to the faith." Our language would seem stiffened, impoverished, if this structure were now to be lost; why, then, should it not, by being added to the grammar of the Bible, give suppleness, richness, to the form in which the Bible addresses men's minds?<sup>1</sup>

Any one who has studied the elaborate analysis, by Wiener, of the substitutions of tense for tense in New Testament Greek must realize how strange and how misleading a thing it is to ignore the facts in translation. Again we say, the Hebrew and the Greek verbs must be rendered into standard English idiom, and the English tenses that bring out the meaning of those verbs are the ones that must be used. Translation that does not compass this is not translation in the true sense of the word.

Leaving the *verbs*, we note two points in which we are obliged to think that the *conjunctions* have not had quite their due.

(1) It is well known that in the version of 1611 *oŭv* is sometimes rendered *therefore* and sometimes *then*, and that the choice between the two was evidently made with care. In the two Revisions *then* as a note of continuation has been almost entirely dropped.<sup>2</sup> At random we take John viii. as an example: *oŭv* occurs twelve times in that chap-

<sup>1</sup> The American New Testament Committee made a change four times in the opposite direction (2 Cor. ii. 15 (*bis*); iv. 3; 2 Thess. ii. 10), but with doubtful profit.

<sup>2</sup> Why the exception in John xi. 31?

ter; in 1611 three of these were rendered *therefore*, and nine were rendered *then*; in the Revisions all were rendered *therefore*. With all deference, we are obliged to think the change a bad mistake. A collation of these passages, a collation of all the passages, more than five hundred, in which the word occurs, furnishes irresistible evidence, as we believe, not only that *therefore* is clumsy and wearisome with its constant repetition, but that in very many cases *οὐν* is merely a device, like the Hebrew conjunction *waw*, for running the story smoothly along,—a device for which *then* is the fittest word. Even if no other dialect of Greek has this characteristic, in the Hellenistic it must be recognized as a fact.

To make a parallel case: many English-speaking people use *while* for *although*: it can be proved by the context in their books; in translating these books into French shall *while* never be rendered by *quoique*, on the ground that *while* does not mean *although*?

It is only an unobservant person who does not realize how largely the meaning of a word is judged by the context. There is an excellent example in English literature: it has been said by a high authority that "Pope in his 'Essay on Criticism' uses the word 'wit' with at least seven different meanings, and for their shades of distinction we are dependent entirely on the context." The context is the primary determinant of the sense for words of every class.

Winer<sup>1</sup> holds the view here set forth in regard to *οὐν*. He says: "*Οὐν* is also very frequently used, like the German *nun*, simply to mark the progress of a narration, where it is only in virtue of a connection in time that the second of the two events can be said to rest on the first as its basis." He quotes Ellicott and others to the same effect.

In John xx. 10, 11 are two cases, closely neighboring,

<sup>1</sup> Grammar, N. T. Idiom, Edinb., 1870, p. 555.

in which both Revisions have tried the effect of rendering *οὐν* by *so* as a weakened kind of *therefore*. The result does not seem to us happy. The first seems clearly, and the second very clearly, to tell only what happened next. This is the second: "Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping: *so*, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb." What occasion is there in this for *so*?

In the treatment of *οὐν* the Americans failed to use a capital opportunity of adding a large group to the points in which they improved on the English Revision by restoring the readings of the earlier day. So far forth also the New Testament Company lost ground in trying to do as good work as those who translated the Hebrew text.

(2) He who has not gone over the Gospels trying the effect of substituting *but* for *and* has before him an experience full of delightful surprises. In most cases *and* is the better fit, but in many cases the substitution is the one thing needed to make the passage seem right. We take the following at random, and find in it abundant evidence that the matter is worth looking up (John xi. 21-26): "Martha therefore [Then Martha?] said unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. [But] even now I know that, whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee. . . . Jesus said unto her, . . . he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; [but] whatsoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." For a passage outside of the Gospels we take, also at random, these words from the end of the Revelation (xxi. 21 f.): "The street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent gold. [But] I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof" (26 f.). "And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; [but] there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean" (xxii. 3). "And there shall be no curse any more: [but] the throne of God and of the Lamb shall

be therein" (8-11). "I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel that showed me these things. [But] he saith unto me, See thou do it not. . . . He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still: and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still: [but] he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still: and he that is holy, let him be made holy still." These cases alone should satisfy the reader that he has much to learn about the New Testament, if he has not proved its *ands* to see whether they are really *buts*.

To him who says that this is not good Greek usage, the answer is simply that Hellenistic Greek is a kind of Greek that was powerfully affected by Hebrew usage, and that the principal Hebrew conjunction served for *and* and *but*, and a good many words besides.<sup>1</sup> The Old Testament has always been translated with this fact in mind, but the New Testament has yet to profit by the recognition of the influence which *waw* had upon *kal*.<sup>2</sup> Some day it will be fully realized how mistaken, not to say absurd, it is to translate Hellenistic, as though it were Attic, Greek.

<sup>1</sup> This doubtless accounts for some of the cases of hendiadys, in which *waw* stands for *as*, *if*, or especially *of*; as in Gen. i. 14, where "for signs and for seasons" means "for signs of the seasons," and in Gen. iii. 16, where "thy pain and thy conception" means "the pain of thy conception." In cases of certainty like these, why should not the translation bring out the idea? With most readers it makes the difference between getting and not getting the point.

<sup>2</sup> Winer says in regard to *kal*, where it seems to mean *but*: "The author probably had in his thought two clauses in simple juxtaposition." If the New Testament writers were thus unclear in their thinking, the very passages to which Winer refers show that *but* is the only word that can properly bring out their meaning; e.g.: Matt. xx. 10 (but received); Mark xii. 12 (but feared); Acts x. 28 (but God); 1 Cor. xii. 5, 6 (a marked case by comparison with v. 4); xvi. 9 (but many); 1 Thess. ii. 18 (but Satan); 1 John v. 19 (but the whole). A notable additional case is in Acts ix. 26: [Saul] "assayed [essayed?] to join himself to the disciples: [*but*] they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple." In each of these cases the change to *but* is like the final touch that perfects the focusing of a lens.

8. Still limiting this paper to the account that the American Committee give of their work, we note finally a few points as to the printed page.

(1) The Committee call attention to the changes that they have made in the paragraphing of the text. In this respect the English Committee certainly made a grave mistake. It was here that they were expected to make one of their greatest improvements,—an improvement for which the way had been prepared by the paragraph-bibles; and yet dismay is hardly too strong a word for the effect of their changes upon the public mind. A paragraph to a verse, as in the Authorized Version, was not right, of course; but a paragraph to a page or more was a great deal worse. The translator who wishes to make the Bible interesting to those who are not scholars, whether young or old, will make as many paragraphs as the matter will bear: the best proof of this is to watch such persons turning over books to find one that “looks interesting,” and deciding which to try by the openness of the page. The long paragraphs of the English Revision were a distinct loss to the hold of the Bible upon the mass of the English-speaking peoples; the American Committee have come part way back to the attractiveness of the Authorized Version in this respect.

For example, Gen. xxiv. consists of sixty-seven paragraphs in the version of 1611, of one in that of 1885, and of five in that of 1901; it would have been better to make fourteen. The story of Balaam, three chapters (Num. xxii.—xxiv.), is in the Revision of 1885 one prodigious paragraph, although the material has three primary divisions,—the call, the episode of the ass, and the vain endeavor to secure a curse from Balaam, the last of these being further subdivided. The American Revisers made ten paragraphs of the story, and that is a great relief,—but, if they had thought still more earnestly of at-

tracting the child and the average man to the reading of the Bible, they would have made more paragraphs yet. They might easily have made twenty-seven.

Taking at random the first five chapters of Acts, we find that the English and the American Revisers make the same number of paragraphs, besides the poetry,—twenty-two in all: but that the “*Twentieth Century New Testament*” makes fifty-one, besides frequently using Herbert Spencer’s device of the sub-paragraph, or a break of half an inch in a line. It is easy to tell which of the three bodies of translators are by their work the most skillful fishers for men. It is a good thing for a translator, a scholar, to work from the standpoint of the tenderness, the condescension, of Christ.

The greater care given to the paragraphing by the American Committee, and the resulting success, may be studied in the effect produced by the transfer of the last clause of 2 Kings xxiv. 20 from the end of one paragraph to the beginning of the next; in the emergence of the thought when a paragraph is made at the middle of Isa. lix. 15; and by the revolution produced by a new paragraph and by rephrasing in Jer. xxix. 15. To these we wish we could add the transfer of the second half of 1 Cor. xii. 31 to the beginning of the paragraph and the chapter that follow: the “most excellent way” is the subject of 1 Cor. xiii., and should be its opening words.<sup>1</sup>

(2) The American Committee say that they added to the text a good many hyphens. The hyphen is a valuable aid to clearness;<sup>2</sup> in its place has become a requisite to

<sup>1</sup> It is so cast in the Westcott-and-Hort Greek Testament, and in the T.C.N.T.

<sup>2</sup> Goldwin Smith wrote in his “*United States*”: “There were social meetings for the young, such as raising bees and sewing bees.” When the smiling critics suggested that a hyphen or two would have helped the sense, he could answer only that English usage was not strict in regard to the hyphen,—a fact that did not save him from being an object



a clear, correct, and classic style. Punctuation has been a growth, with every addition justified by its meeting of the needs of expression; there is no more virtue or profit in keeping the Bible within its earlier limitations in this respect than in refusing to modernize a house.

(3) Of the care given to the punctuation by the American Revisers, and of the resulting niceties of discrimination, we may note a few interesting cases: In 2 Kings xxv. 29 the question of "who did what" is remarkably cleared up by a period and the adding of a name: there are many cases like this. In Mic. v. 5 a period makes a valuable change. In Gen. xxx. 3, and in many other places, a comma after "behold" shows that the word is an exclamation (*hinne*): in the older versions the lack of a comma makes "behold" seem a governing verb. In Jer. xiv. 18 the effect of the comma is especially good.

If any one thinks the comma too petty a matter for serious regard, let him turn to Luke iv. 17: "There was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written . . ." Let him put a comma after "place," and he will find that a comma can tell a story, can call up an historical picture, can revolutionize the sense. Jesus did not take a passage at random, nor select one for himself; he "found the place," the place appointed for the day; its boundaries are marked in the Hebrew Bible yet. As we look at the line thus written, what we have read of the scene in the tabernacle rises before the mind like a picture; our eyes are "fastened on him," and we seem to hear the gracious voice saying, "To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears."

of mirth. No sentence in the Bible may need the hyphen quite as much as did this one of Mr. Smith's, and yet the hyphen is a very good thing for the Bible.

The scope of this paper does not take in the multitude of places in which the American Revisers sought and found an apter word or form. If the student, with or without help from the original, will carefully compare the two Revisions in Isa. lx. 5; Hosea xi. 2; Mic. i. 6; and Hab. iii. 16, he will get some conception of the time, the thought, the discernment, the conscience, and the love, that have been lavished upon the effort to detect the meaning of even the obscurest words. The book of Job seems to us to have been remarkably improved in this way: its eloquence, always impressive, has seemed to acquire new splendor with each touch of the corrector's hand. It is like the angel that has stood only half-emerged from the marble, but now has been chiseled out almost into full and magnificent release.

For, indeed, an adequate translator of the Bible must be a very Michelangelo in words. He must have a passion for the simple, the sincere, the noble. He must have a genius for the word that expresses, and for the marshaling of words upon the printed page. All that belongs to diction, to rhythm, to cadence, to what Horace Bushnell called the second and the third stories of words, must be a part of his native or his acquired equipment for his work. A single false note in the dignity of a word or a phrase, a single harshness in rhythm and especially in the roll of a sentence to its close, must be to him, as to the disciplined reader, like a discord in the Hallelujah Chorus. The makers of both the recent Revisions must have approached the supreme passages of the Bible,—the Fifty-first Psalm, the fifty-third of Isaiah, the sermon on the mount, the triumph of Paul over death, the rapt vision of the new Jerusalem,—not only with awe before their intrinsic character, but also with a prayer that they might be enabled to rise to an expression not utterly unworthy, and that to this end the Spirit of God might guide the hand with which they essayed to write.