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WHATEVER may be urged in favour of Biblical Revision, it is at least undeniable that the undertaking involves a tremendous risk. Our Authorized Version is the one religious link which at present binds together ninety millions of English-speaking men scattered over the earth's surface. Is it reasonable that so unutterably precious, so sacred a bond should be endangered, for the sake of representing certain words more accurately, — here and there translating a sense with greater precision, — getting rid of a few archaisms? It may be confidently assumed that no 'Revision' of our Authorized Version, however judiciously executed, will ever occupy the place in public esteem which is actually enjoyed by the work of the Translators of 1611, — the noblest literary work in the Anglo-Saxon language. We shall in fact never have *another* 'Authorized Version.' And this single consideration may be thought absolutely fatal to the project, except in a greatly modified form. To be brief, — As a companion in the study and for private edification: as a book of reference for critical purpose, especially in respect of difficult and controverted passages: — we hold that a revised edition of the Authorized Version of our English Bible, (if executed with consummate ability and learning,) would at any time be a work of inestimable value. The method of such a performance, whether by marginal Notes or in some other way, we forbear to determine. But only as a handmaid is it to be desired. As something *intended to supersede* our present English Bible, we are thoroughly convinced that the project of a rival Translation is not to be entertained for a moment. For ourselves, we deprecate it entirely.

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On the other hand, *who* could have possibly foreseen what has actually come to pass since the Convocation of the Southern Province (in Feb. 1870) declared itself favourable to 'a Revision of the Authorized Version,' and appointed a Committee of Divines to undertake the work? *Who* was to suppose that the Instructions given to the Revisionists would be by them systematically disregarded? *Who* was to imagine that an utterly untrustworthy 'new Greek Text,' constructed on mistaken principles, — (say rather, on *no principles at all*,) — would be the fatal result? To speak more truly, — *Who* could have anticipated that the opportunity would have been adroitly seized to inflict upon the Church the text of Drs Westcott and Hort, in all its essential features, — a text which, as will be found elsewhere largely explained, we hold to be *the most vicious Recension of the original Greek in existence?* Above all, — *Who* was to foresee that instead of removing '*plain and clear errors*' from our Version, the Revisionists, — (besides systematically removing out of sight so many of the genuine utterances of the SPIRIT,) — would themselves introduce a countless number of blemishes, unknown to it before? Lastly, how was it to have been believed that the Revisionists would show themselves industrious in sowing broadcast over four continents

doubts as to the Truth of Scripture, which it will never be in their power either to remove or to recal?

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For, the ill-advised practice of recording in the margin of an English Bible, certain of the blunders — (such things cannot by any stretch of courtesy be styled ‘Various Readings’) — which disfigure ‘some’ or ‘many’ ‘ancient authorities,’ can only result in hopelessly unsettling the faith of millions. It cannot be defended on the plea of candour, — the candour which is determined that men shall ‘know the worst.’ ‘*The worst*’ has NOT been told: and it were dishonesty to insinuate that *it has*. If all the cases were faithfully exhibited where ‘a few,’ ‘some,’ or ‘many ancient authorities’ read differently from what is exhibited in the actual Text, not only would the margin prove insufficient to contain the record, but *the very page itself* would not nearly suffice.

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It is the gross one-sidedness, the patent *unfairness*, in a critical point of view, of this work, (which professes to be nothing else but *a Revision of the English Version of 1611*,) which chiefly shocks and offends us.

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We cannot, it is presumed, act more fairly by the Revisers’ work, than by following them over some of the ground which they claim to have made their own, and which, at the conclusion of their labours, their Right Reverend Chairman evidently surveys with self-complacency. First, he invites attention to the Principle and Rule for their guidance agreed to by the Committee of Convocation (25th May, 1870), viz. ‘TO INTRODUCE AS FEW ALTERATIONS AS POSSIBLE INTO THE TEXT OF THE AUTHORIZED VERSION, CONSISTENTLY WITH FAITHFULNESS.’ Words could not be more emphatic. ‘PLAIN AND CLEAR ERRORS’ were to be corrected. ‘NECESSARY emendations’ were to be made. But (in the words of the Southern Convocation) ‘We do not contemplate any new Translation, *or any alteration of the language*, EXCEPT WHERE, in the judgment of the most competent Scholars, SUCH CHANGE IS NECESSARY.’ The watchword, therefore, given to the company of Revisionists was, — ‘NECESSITY’. *Necessity* was to determine whether they were to depart from the language of the Authorized Version, or not; for the alterations were to be AS FEW AS POSSIBLE.

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It is clear therefore that *Caprice*, not *Necessity*, — an *itching impatience* to introduce changes into the A.V., not the discovery of ‘*plain and clear errors*,’ — has determined the great bulk

of the alterations which molest us in every part of the present unlearned and tasteless performance.

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Shame, — yes, *shame* on the learning which comes abroad only to perplex the weak, and to unsettle the doubting, and to mislead the blind! Shame, — yes, *shame* on that two-thirds majority of well-intentioned but most incompetent men who, finding themselves (in an evil hour) appointed to correct '*plain and clear errors*' in the *English* 'Authorized Version,' occupied themselves instead with *falsifying the inspired Greek Text* in countless places, and branding with suspicion some of the most precious utterances of the SPIRIT! Shame, — yes, *shame* upon them!

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the plain fact being that the men of 1611 — above all, that William Tyndale 77 years before them — produced a work of real genius; seizing with generous warmth the meaning and intention of the sacred Writers, and perpetually varying the phrase, as they felt or fancied that Evangelists and Apostles would have varied it, had they had to express themselves in English

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The 'Translators' of 1611, towards the close of their long and quaint Address 'to the Reader', offer the following statement concerning what had been their own practice:— 'We have not *tied ourselves*' (say they) '*to an uniformity of phrasing, or to an identity of words*, as some peradventure would wish that we had done.' On this, they presently enlarge. We have been 'especially careful,' have even 'made a conscience,' 'not to vary from the sense of that which we had translated before, if the word signified the same thing in both places.' But then, (as they shrewdly point out in passing,) '*there be some words that be not of the same sense everywhere.*' And had this been the sum of their avowal, no one with a spark of Taste, or with the least appreciation of what constitutes real Scholarship, would have been found to differ from them. Nay, even when they go on to explain that they have not thought it desirable to insist on invariably expressing 'the same notion' by employing 'the same particular word;' — (which they illustrate by instancing terms which, in their account, may with advantage be diversely rendered in different places;) — we are still disposed to avow ourselves of their mind. 'If (say they,) 'we translate the Hebrew or Greek word once *purpose*, never to call it *intent*; if one where *journeying*, never *travelling*; if one where *think*, never *suppose*; if one where *pain*, never *ache*; if one were *joy*, never *gladness*; — thus to mince the matter, we thought to savour more of curiosity than of wisdom.' And yet it is plain that a different principle is here indicated from that which went before. The remark 'that niceness in words was always counted the next step to trifling,' suggests that, in the Translators' opinion, it matters little *which* word, in the several pairs of words they

instance, is employed; and that, for their own parts, they rather rejoice in the ease and freedom which an ample vocabulary supplies to a Translator of Holy Scripture. Here also however, as already hinted, we are disposed to go along with them. Rhythm, subtle associations of thought, proprieties of diction which are rather to be felt than analysed, — any of such causes may reasonably determine a Translator to reject ‘purpose,’ ‘journey,’ ‘think,’ ‘pain,’ ‘joy,’ — in favour of ‘intent,’ ‘travel,’ ‘suppose,’ ‘ache,’ ‘gladness.’

But then it speedily becomes evident that, at the bottom of all this, there existed in the minds of the Revisionists of 1611 a profound (shall we not rather say a *prophetic*?) consciousness, that the fate of the English Language itself was bound up with the fate of their Translation. *Hence* their reluctance to incur the responsibility of tying themselves ‘to an uniformity of phrasing, or to an identity of words.’ We should be liable to censure (such is their plain avowal), ‘if we should say, as it were, unto certain words, Stand up higher, have a place in the Bible always; and to others of like quality, Get you hence, be banished for ever.’ But this, to say the least, is to introduce a distinct and a somewhat novel consideration.

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It would really seem as if the Revisionists of 1611 had considered it a graceful achievement to vary the English phrase even on occasions where a marked identity of expression characterises the original Greek. When we find them turning ‘goodly apparel,’ (in S. James ii. 2,) into ‘gay clothing,’ (in ver. 3,) — we can but conjecture that they conceived themselves at liberty to act exactly as S. James himself would (possibly) have acted had he been writing English.

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But what makes this so very serious a matter is that, because *HOLY SCRIPTURE* is the Book experimented upon, the loftiest interests that can be named become imperilled; and it will constantly happen that what is not perhaps in itself a very serious mistake may yet inflict irreparable injury.

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They had a noble Version before them, which they have contrived to spoil in every part. Its dignified simplicity and essential faithfulness, its manly grace and its delightful rhythm, they have shown themselves alike unable to imitate and unwilling to retain. Their queer uncouth phraseology and their jerky sentences: — their pedantic obscurity and their stiff, constrained manner: — their fidgety affectation of accuracy, — and their habitual achievement of English which fails to exhibit the spirit of the original Greek; — are sorry substitutes for the living freshness, and elastic freedom, and habitual fidelity of the grand old Version which we inherited from our Fathers, and which has sustained the spiritual life

of the Church of England, and of all English-speaking Christians, for 350 years. Linked with all our holiest, happiest memories, and bound up with all our purest aspirations: part and parcel of whatever there is of good about us: fraught with men's hopes of a blessed Eternity and many a bright vision of the never-ending Life; — the Authorized Version, wherever it was possible, *should have been jealously retained.*

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Then further, those who would interpret the New Testament Scriptures, are reminded that a thorough acquaintance with the Septuagintal Version of the Old Testament is one indispensable condition of success. And finally, the Revisionists of the future (if they desire that their labours should be crowned), will find it their wisdom to practise a severe self-denial; to confine themselves to the correction of '*plain and clear errors;*' and in fact to 'introduce into the Text *as few alterations as possible.*'

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Its effect will be to open men's eyes, as nothing else could possibly have done, to the dangers which beset the Revision of Scripture. It will teach faithful hearts to cling the closer to the priceless treasure which was bequeathed to them by the piety and wisdom of their fathers. It will dispel for ever the dream of those who have secretly imagined that a more exact Version, undertaken with the boasted helps of this nineteenth century of ours, would bring to light something which has been hitherto unfairly kept concealed or else misrepresented.