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An Evaluation and Comparison of the Methods and Principles Followed by the New Testament Translators of the AV, RV, ASV, and RSV

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AN EVALUATION AND COMPARISON OF THE METHODS AND PRINCIPLES
FOLLOWED BY THE NEW TESTAMENT TRANSLATORS
OF THE AV, RV, ASV, AND RSV

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary
Department of New Testament Theology

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Divinity

by
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May 1947

Approved by: Martin H. Franzmann
Alexander Guebert

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OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION: There is value, particularly at the present time when people are feeling the need for a more modern version of the Bible than the Authorized Version, in comparing the four major English versions of the Bible.

The purpose of this thesis is to compare and evaluate these four versions, in order to determine the chief contributions of each to the field of English Bible revision, and to observe which has the best all-around qualifications for present-day usage. The discussion will center on the New Testament.

PART I: THE AUTHORIZED VERSION

- A. The AV was the third authorized Bible of the Church of England.
 1. John Wycliffe finished his translation in 1384.
 2. William Tyndale produced the first English version of the New Testament made from the original Greek in 1525.
 3. Myles Coverdale, in 1539, produced the Great Bible, the first authorized version.
 4. The Geneva Bible was produced by a group of reformers who fled to Switzerland. It was completed in 1560 and became popular with the common people.
 5. The Bishops' Bible, so called because a number of the revisers were bishops, was completed in 1568. It was the second authorized Bible of the Church of England.
- B. The AV translating project was inaugurated by King James. It was brought about through the complaint of Non-Conformists about the authorized Bibles.
- C. A set of general instructions for the translators was endorsed by King James in 1604.
- D. Under the leadership of Richard Bancroft, fifty-four translators worked at the task.
- E. The men met together for reviewing and re-working of translations.
 1. They labored gratuitously.
 2. Actual time spent on organized endeavor was about three years.
 3. The work was completed and printed in 1611.

- F. The finished product was a revision, not a fresh translation.
 - 1. Other works were generously employed.
 - 2. It is deeply indebted to older versions.
- G. The Greek text is largely that of the Textus Receptus.
- H. The AV men were not hide-bound literalists in their translating.
 - 1. The AV contains much rythmical phrasing.
 - 2. It has an often unwarranted variety of expression for single original terms.
 - 3. It is indifferent to the style of the original writers to a great degree.
 - 4. It is indifferent to the wording of some synoptic parallels.
 - 5. It has a strong emphasis on literary beauty.
- I. Names and technical terms are retained as approved by tradition.
- J. The AV contains a number of translation errors.
 - 1. It has many errors with prepositions.
 - 2. It has many errors with verbs.
 - 3. It contains a few general mistranslations.
 - 4. It has some errors of anachronism.
- E. In general, the AV is a beautiful and scholarly translation.

PART II: THE REVISED VERSION

- A. The AV took over the field completely within thirty to fifty years after publication. It was not until the nineteenth century that serious agitation for a new revision commenced.
- B. A new revision project was launched in 1870.
 - 1. A Convocation Committee considered the idea of a new revision.
 - 2. A translation committee was formed.
- C. Principles of translation were laid down to guide the men.
- D. The translating personnel was composed chiefly of Anglicans, but there were also a number of other Protestants.
 - 1. An American Committee was formed in 1871 to cooperate with the English Committee.

- v
2. A total of 101 scholars were at some time connected with the project.
 3. Personnel included such outstanding men as Westcott, Hort, and Scrivener.
- E. The men met frequently for reviewing and discussing the translation.
1. The English Committee had its first meeting on May 22, 1870.
 - a. Meetings would consider textual emendations first.
 - b. Ten and one-half years of meetings were required.
 - c. The work was done without compensation.
 2. The American Committee met in the Bible House at New York.
 3. Anglo-American cooperation was well conducted.
 4. The English Company was more conservative.
- F. The RV New Testament was completed and published in 1881. In 1885 the entire Scriptures were published.
- G. The Greek text used was much better than the Textus Receptus.
1. They had the use of many manuscript finds since 1611.
 2. Some of the major textual problems were: Mark 16, 9-20; John 7, 53 to 8, 11; Matthew 6, 13; John 5, 3-4; Acts 8, 37; I John 5, 7-8.
 3. Cases of slight textual changes are: Matthew 19, 17; Mark 3, 29; Acts 18, 5; Romans 5, 1.
 4. Textual criticism of RV men is of conservative nature, closely substantiated by Nestle's Text.
- H. The RV men produced a literalistic translation.
- I. The RV contains, besides the textual changes, a number of minor improvements over the AV.
1. It eliminated a number of archaisms.
 2. The general type of improvements may be noted in the examples of I Cor. 13, 1-7 and II Pet. 3, 8-10.
- J. The RV is inferior to the AV in dignity and beauty of language, but an improvement as a work of exact scholarship. It is "strong in Greek, weak in English."

PART III: AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

- A. The ASV project was launched as a result of the American Committee's dissatisfaction with the English Committee's lack of interest over the American Appendix of further suggestions.
 - 1. English Committee disbanded, but American Committee did not.
 - 2. American Committee felt that scholarly opinion warranted an American recension of the RV.
- B. The American Committee worked quietly for years, especially between 1897 and 1901.
 - 1. They had pledged support to RV sale for a period of fourteen years.
 - 2. They completed their recension in 1901.
- C. The finished product is essentially the same as the RV.
 - 1. The opinions and evaluations of the RV essentially apply also to the ASV.
 - 2. Two obvious differences between RV and ASV are the addition of parallel passage references and the inclusion of content headings at the tops of pages in the ASV.
 - 3. One improvement is the further elimination of archaisms.
 - 4. There is a resume of the types of minor changes made in the ASV, in their Appendix.
 - 5. The ASV, however, is more than a mere incorporation of an appendix into the text. It was a further revision wherever such seemed advisable.
 - 6. A selection giving a general indication of the close similarity between the RV and ASV is I Corinthians 15, 29 and 34.
- D. Like the RV, the ASV is an overly literalistic translation. It is an improvement over the RV in that it eliminates more archaisms.
- E. After its completion in 1901, the ASV received an enthusiastic market for its sales. This did not continue, however. The ASV is used in some churches, but the AV is still the standard Bible of Protestantism.

PART IV: REVISED STANDARD VERSION

- A. The International Council of Religious Education appointed a committee to be in charge of the ASV text. This committee decided to undertake further revision for the following reasons:
 - 1. Translations of the RV and ASV were too mechanical.
 - 2. There were new and important manuscript finds.
 - 3. Papyri finds had furthered the understanding of New Testament Greek.
- B. Translating principles were laid down by the I.C.R.E.
- C. The translating personnel for the New Testament included: Luther A. Weigle, Henry J. Cadbury, Edgar J. Goodspeed, James Moffatt, W. Russell Bowie, Frederick C. Grant, Millar Burrows, Clarence T. Craig, and Abdel R. Wentz.
- D. The men had a definite translating procedure which called for a first draft, an intermediate draft, and a final draft of the translation.
- E. The men met frequently for reviewing and discussing the translation.
 - 1. There were thirty-one separate sessions varying from three days to more than two weeks, and covering a total of 145 days.
 - 2. The meetings were conducted over a period of eight years.
 - 3. The men worked without compensation.
 - 4. The meetings were held in members' studies or homes.
- F. The problem of the Greek text involves mainly a re-consideration of the same problems already before the RV men of the nineteenth century.
 - 1. Recent important manuscript finds were available to the translators.
 - 2. Tested principles of textual criticism were followed.
 - 3. The men operated on the basis that "all changes in the text shall be agreed upon by a two-thirds vote of the total membership of the Committee."
 - 4. A few important textual changes from the AV are: Mark 16, 9-20; John 7, 53 to 8, 11; Matthew 6, 13; I John 5, 7.

5. A list of passages omitted by the RSV and for the most part also omitted by the RV, but which are duplicated in other Gospels or parts of the New Testament, includes: Matthew 12, 47; 17, 21; 18, 11; 23, 14; Mark 7, 16; 9, 44 and 46; 11, 26; 15, 28; Luke 17, 36; 22, 19b-20; 23, 17; 24, 12; 24, 40; Acts 8, 37; 15, 34; 24, 6b-8a; Romans 16, 24.
 6. Accusations that the RSV men distorted the text because of their "Liberal" bias are not well grounded.
- G. The finished product is one worthy of being used by the present-day Christian reader.
1. It shows the result of advanced grammatical and lexical aids.
 2. It is not a literalistic but a moderately idiomatic translation.
 3. The accusation that the RSV men mistranslated some important passages in the interest of their personal "Liberalism" is difficult to uphold. Some of the cases usually cited are: Mark 15, 39; John 3, 16; Romans 9, 5; Matthew 16, 25-26.
 4. There are important instances where the RSV renderings are just as conservative as, and in some cases more conservative than the AV. Such places are: Hebrews 1, 8; Romans 5, 1; Mark 1, 1; Titus 2, 13; Matthew 22, 43.
 5. There are sufficient instances of improvement of the RSV over the AV in important passages, to render the RSV unworthy of hasty rejection. Some of these instances are: Matthew 5, 25; 5, 29; 5, 39; 6, 1-2; 6, 7; 6, 22; 6, 25; 9, 17; 10, 24; 23, 24; 28, 19; Mark 2, 4; Luke 2, 49; 4, 13; 16, 9; 17, 21; 18, 12; John 1, 3; 1, 5; Acts 17, 22; 21, 24; 26, 14; Romans 5, 15; 8, 26; I Corinthians 1, 21; 7, 9; 10, 16; 11, 29-30; 13, 12; II Corinthians 6, 14; 12, 11; Galatians 4, 17; 5, 12; Philippians 2, 6-7; 3, 20; 4, 18; Colossians 2, 23; I Timothy 5, 24-25; Hebrews 4, 14; James 1, 21; I Peter 2, 2; II Peter 1, 20-21; I John 2, 2.
 6. Minor problems are well handled.
 - a. "Thee-thou" language is dropped.
 - b. "Verily-verily" problem is tackled.
 - c. Names are treated consistently.

7. The style of the RSV is somewhat clipped and nervous, but it has a vigor and freshness about it which makes it an apt medium for the dynamic contents of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- II. Perhaps we have here a case where honest scholarship, though working through the medium of a "Liberal" group, has produced a translation comparatively free of bias in the actual product. In general, the RSV is a good translation.
- I. The general appearance of the RSV is commendable.
 1. Thomas Nelson & Sons did a superb printing job.
 2. It is presented in the form of living literature.
 3. It retains chapter and verse numbers in such a way as to avoid distracting the continuous reader.
 - J. The reception of the RSV has been good.
 1. There were 300,000 orders the first month.
 2. What turn its popularity will take depends much on the Old Testament Committee's work. This is expected to be completed around the year 1950.

CONCLUSION: The four versions are summarily compared and evaluated:

1. The AV is a scholarly and beautiful translation, deficient in later textual refinements and grammatical studies, but still highly usable for those who are conversant with Elizabethan English.
2. The RV is too literalistic a translation. It is "strong in Greek, weak in English." Its expressions are more Anglican than American. However, except for the matter of beauty of style, it is a great improvement over the AV.
3. The ASV is a later American recension of the RV and is very similar in style and arrangement to the RV. It is an improvement over the RV. Except for the matter of beauty of style, it is a great improvement over the AV.
4. The RSV New Testament is a great improvement over that of the ASV. The RSV is idiomatic, highly readable, of sufficiently dignified expression for public worship, and noteworthy for its clarity of expression. Except for the matter of beauty of style, it is a very great improvement over the AV, especially for modern usage.

**AN EVALUATION AND COMPARISON OF THE METHODS AND PRINCIPLES
FOLLOWED BY THE NEW TESTAMENT TRANSLATORS
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Introduction

Sporadic efforts have been made during the past few decades to translate the Bible into modern English. Efforts have been made also to bring the Greek and Hebrew text into more accurate alignment with the first writings of the Prophets and Apostles. The great number of these translating enterprises indicates a general feeling of need for an English translation or revision of the Bible more adequate for modern use than those made in previous centuries.

Individual translations lack ecumenical appeal. However, there have been noteworthy united efforts to meet the need for a more up-to-date translation of the English Bible for the Protestant world. These translations have essentially been revisions of the Authorized Version of 1611. They are: the Revised Version of 1885, the American Standard

Version of 1901, and the recent Revised Standard Version of 1946¹ of which only the New Testament has been completed. The AV itself is a revision of older English versions. The four versions mentioned are the best we have today in the line of inter-denominational production.

The AV of 1611 is still the version, but some are becoming dissatisfied with its language and arrangement so far as modern usage is concerned. Some who look beyond bare statistics are aware of the fact that never in a long time have English Bibles been so abundantly bought and so sparingly read as now. It is much easier to buy a Bible written in Elizabethan prose, presented in a format not much more conducive to continuous reading than a dictionary, and give it to someone as a present, than to sit down and read it oneself or get the recipient to read it.

For this and other reasons, whether all approve of it or not, quite a few are beginning to look about for other versions and printings of the English Bible than the one which is today being revered more than read. It is of particular value today, therefore, whether a departure from the AV is deplored or not, to compare and evaluate the four major versions being used today. This may best be done by comparing and evaluating the methods and principles followed by the translators. Such is the purpose of this thesis.

1. These four versions will be designated by AV, RV, ASV, and RSV.

The discussion will center on the New Testament with the following considerations:

- a. It will include orienting facts about the beginnings of the different translating projects.
- b. It will mention the principles by which the men guided themselves.
- c. It will observe the men chosen for the work and the methods of their meetings.
- d. The basic original text used will be considered.
- e. There will be an evaluation of the principles employed and of the extent to which they were followed.

The final purpose will be a comparison and evaluation of the four versions in order to determine the chief contributions of each to the field of English Bible revision, and to observe which has the best all-around qualifications for present-day usage.

PART I: THE AUTHORIZED VERSION

The AV was the third authorized Bible of the Church of England. The first was the Great Bible of 1539, and the second was the Bishops' Bible of 1568. The word "authorized" implied official sanction for use in public worship ("appointed to be read in the churches").²

At first it seems odd that there was such a rapid succession of authorized versions of the Bible in England, in 1539, in 1568, and then in 1611. The English Bible, however, had not existed in any form before the fourteenth century. It was in the process of gradually finding its place with the common people. Besides, it was developing at a time when church affairs and politics in England were in a general state of flux. Sometimes Roman Catholic pressure would be stronger, sometimes Anglican. There were also the Non-Conformists to be satisfied. Bible translation, therefore was a controversial task, with the result that different versions would be vying with each other for general approval. A review of the early background of the English Bible will make this evident.

John Wycliffe

The translation of the Bible that Wycliffe undertook

2. The Translators to the Reader, edited by Edgar J. Goodspeed, p. 5.

with the help of Nicholas de Hereford and possibly others, was finished in 1384. It was then revised and polished by John Purvey in 1388. Wycliffe met with tremendous Roman Catholic opposition during his whole life, especially for translating the Bible into the vernacular. It was an idiomatic translation, but not an accurate one. He did not use the original languages at all, but worked from the Latin Vulgate.³ Copies of Wycliffe's Bible were made entirely by hand. Many of them were sought out and destroyed by the church authorities.

William Tyndale

The first English version of the New Testament made from the original Greek was produced by Tyndale in 1525. He likewise worked in the face of conflict and persecution, determined, however, to do all in his power to bring the printed Bible to many. He is said to have made this remark to a clergyman: "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth a plough shall know more of the Scriptures than thou doest."⁴ Tyndale died a martyr's death for his efforts: "On October 6, 1536, Tyndale was brought to trial, and being proved a heretic, was condemned to death. He was tied to a stake, praying in these, his last words: 'Lord, open the King of England's eyes,' and

3. Ira Maurice Price, The Ancestry of Our English Bible, p. 230.

4. Ibid., p. 234.

then was strangled and burned."⁵ His translation is important because of its strong influence on the AV of 1611.

The Great Bible

During the reign of Henry VIII, who was hostile to Tyndale's work, Myles Coverdale produced his translation of the English Bible. He did this apparently without either royal sanction or prohibition.⁶ Coverdale's version, together with a reproduction of Tyndale's version published under the name of "Thomas Matthew", gained wide circulation. The influence of Archbishop Cranmer and of Cromwell contributed much to this circulation, and the assent of Henry VIII was gradually procured.⁷

Cromwell, however, saw the inadvisability of having two different translations used interchangeably and the deficiencies of the two translations themselves. He engaged Coverdale to revamp his first translation with a view toward making it more accurate, particularly to have it represent more faithfully the Hebrew and Latin texts of the Complutensian Polyglot. Additional scholars were employed, and in 1539 Coverdale's new revision was completed. Price says that "Because of its splendid proportions and magnificent form it was called 'The Great Bible.'" In 1534 it was stipulated that the English Bible should be put in every

5. Ibid., p. 243.

6. Ibid., pp. 247-248

7. Ibid., p. 253.

parish church in England. This was after Henry's defection from Rome. Only fourteen years prior to this, Tyndale's New Testament had been publicly burned at St. Paul's.

Taverner, an individual translator, produced his revision of the Bible in 1539, but it never ranked with the authorized Great Bible.⁸

The Geneva Bible

The reign of Edward VI was favorable to the spread of the Bible, but the accession of Mary Tudor to the throne in 1553 inaugurated an anti-Protestant reign of terror. Reformers fled to Geneva, Switzerland, the home of Beza and Calvin. There a company of English scholars, with the assistance of the Calvinists, prepared the Geneva Bible. It was a revision of the Great Bible and it was done under the direction of Whittingham. In 1560 it was completed and dedicated to Queen Elizabeth. Its superiority over all preceding versions soon put it on a popular par with the royally authorized Great Bible.⁹

The Bishops' Bible

In 1563-64 Archbishop Parker, with the assistance of other scholars, undertook a revision of the Great Bible. This revision was called the "Bishops' Bible" because a goodly number of the revisers were bishops. It was completed in 1568.

8. Ibid., pp. 247-259.

9. Ibid., pp. 260-265.

It appealed especially to the churchmen, and its authorization by the bishops was enough to enable it to displace the Great Bible for public worship.¹⁰ When James I came to the throne in 1603, the Bishops' Bible had been the standard version for thirty-five years, and, despite dissatisfaction from several quarters, it seemed to be settling down to a long period of further official usage, when a slight turn of events brought about the launching of another revision, namely, the AV of 1611.

Launching of the AV Project

There were in England at this time a great number of Non-Conformists or Puritans. They were complaining of the need for further departure from Catholic teachings and customs. While discussing their dissension at the Hampton Conference, Dr. Reynolds, a Puritan and President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, voiced the complaint that a new revision of the Bible was sorely needed. He cited examples of what he considered "a most corrupt translation" from the Great Bible and the Bishops' Bible. He also pointed out that the Prayer-Book which they used was based on the wording of the Great Bible, which fact gave them great offense. Price seems to think that King James, being a Bible student himself, jumped at the chance to begin such an important project,¹¹

10. Ibid., pp. 266-268.

11. Ibid., pp. 273-274.

but Roberts feels that James accepted the suggestion of Reynolds out of vanity and policy. He thinks that James saw in it a chance to please the Puritan party by granting their request for revision and at the same time to appease the Conformists by abusing the Geneva Version, the favorite of the Puritans.¹² The Preface to the AV, which unfortunately is no longer printed in our English Bibles (no doubt, because of its verbose and controversial nature), has an explanation of how James I ordered the work on the AV.

. . . for the very Historical truth is, that upon the importunate petitions of the Puritans, at his Majesty's coming to this Crown, the Conference at Hampton Court having been appointed for hearing their complaints: when by force of reason they were put from all other grounds, they had recourse at the last, to this shift, that they could not with good conscience subscribe to the Communion book, since it maintained the Bible as it was there translated, which was as they said, a most corrupted translation. And although this was judged to be but a very poor and empty shift; yet even hereupon did his Majesty begin to bethink himself of the good that might ensue by a new translation, and presently after gave order for this Translation which is now presented unto thee. Thus much to satisfy our scrupulous Brethren.¹³

General Instructions

The instructions endorsed by King James in 1604 to govern the translating are quoted by H. W. Robinson:

12. Alexander Roberts, Companion to the Revised Version of the New Testament, p. 154.

13. Goodspeed, Op. Cit., p. 28.

1. The ordinary Bible read in the Church, commonly called the Bishops Bible, to be followed, and as little altered as the truth of the original will permit.

2. The Names of the Prophets, and the Holy Writers, with the other Names of the text, to be retained, as nigh as may be, accordingly as they were vulgarly used.

3. The old Ecclesiastical Words to be kept, viz., the Word Church not to be translated Congregation &c.

4. When a Word hath divers Significations, that to be kept which hath been most commonly used by the most of the Ancient Fathers, being agreeable to the Propriety of the Place and the Analogy of the Faith.

5. The Division of the Chapters to be altered, either not at all, or as little as may be, if Necessity so require.

6. No Marginal Notes at all to be affixed, but only for the Explanation of the Hebrew or Greek Words, which cannot without some circumlocution, so briefly and fitly be express'd in the Text.

7. Such Quotations of Places to be marginally set down as shall serve for the fit Reference of one Scripture to another.

8. Every particular Man of each Company, to take the same Chapter, or Chapters, and having translated or amended them severally by himself, where he thinketh good, all to meet together, confer what they have done, and agree for their Parts what shall stand.

9. As any one Company hath dispatched any one Book in this Manner they shall send it to the rest, to be consider'd of seriously and judiciously, for his Majesty is very careful in this Point.

10. If any Company, upon the Review of the Book so sent, doubt or differ upon any Place, to send them Word thereof; note the Place, and withal send the Reasons, to which if they consent not, the Difference to be compounded at the

General Meeting, which is to be of the chief Persons of each Company, at the end of the Work.

11. When any Place of special Obscurity is doubted of Letters to be directed, by Authority, to send to any Learned Man in the Land, for his Judgment of such a Place.

12. Letters to be sent from every Bishop to the rest of his Clergy, admonishing them of this Translation in hand; and to move and charge as many as being skilful in the Tongues; and having taken pains in that kind, to send his particular Observations to the Company, either at Westminster, Cambridge or Oxford.

13. The Directors in each Company, to be the Deans of Westminster and Chester for that Place; and the King's Professors in the Hebrew or Greek in either University.

14. These translations to be used when they agree better with the Text than the Bishops Bible: Tyndall's; Matthews; Coverdale's; Whitchurch's; Geneva.

15. Besides the said Directors before mentioned, three or four of the most Ancient and Grave Divines, in either of the Universities, not employed in Translating, to be assigned by the Vice-Chancellor, upon Conference with the rest of the Heads, to be Overseers of the Translations as well Hebrew as Greek, for the better Observation of the 4th Rule above specified.¹⁴

The Translators

The main overseer of the project was the Bishop of London, Richard Bancroft. He received word from the King that fifty-four learned men had been picked. There is no complete list of these men extant, but a list of forty-seven has been preserved. This list indicates that the

14. H. Wheeler Robinson, The Bible in Its Ancient and English Versions, pp. 199-201.

men chosen were distinguished in their own day for their scholastic attainments. They were great men of the Church and of the Universities. One of them later became the Archbishop of Canterbury. Five of them became bishops. Some of them were the Regius Professors of Hebrew, of Greek, and of divinity in both Oxford and Cambridge, and there were a dozen Masters or Presidents of individual colleges among them. The inclusion of the names of Chaderton and Reynolds shows that Puritans were not excluded from the group of translators. There were also laymen among the translators.¹⁵

The men originally listed as working on the New Testament were divided into two groups. Those working on the Epistles, with headquarters at Westminster, were:

Dr. William Barlow, Dean of Chester
 Dr. Ralph Hutchinson, President of St. John's College
 Dr. John Spencer, later President of Corpus Christi College
 Dr. Roger Fenton, Fellow of Pembroke Hall
 Michael Rabbett, B.D., Rector of St. Vedast
 Dr. Thomas Sanderson
 William Dakins, B.D., Greek lecturer at Cambridge

Those assigned to the Gospels, Acts, and the Apocalypse, with headquarters at Oxford, were:

Dr. Thomas Ravis, Dean of Christ Church
 Dr. George Abbot, Dean of Winchester
 Dr. Richard Bades, Dean of Worcester
 Dr. Giles Thompson, Dean of Windsor
 Sir Henry Saville, tutor in Greek to Queen Elizabeth
 Dr. John Perin, professor of Greek

15. Charles C. Butterworth, The Literary Lineage of the King James Bible, p. 209.

Dr. Ravens
 Dr. John Harmer, Professor of Greek¹⁶

The basis for choosing these men appears to have been their scholarship, particularly, of course, their skill in the original languages of the Bible.¹⁷ There is every indication that these scholars were devout Christians of an orthodox nature. They lived during the early post-Reformation era at a time when education was largely sponsored and influenced by the Church.¹⁸ The general tenor of the Preface to the AV, written by Miles Smith, is indicative of the spirit that pervaded the minds of at least the majority of the translators. The following is an example of this:

. . . It remaineth, that we commend thee to God, and to the Spirit of his grace, which is able to build further than we can ask or think. He removeth the scales from our eyes, the vail from our hearts, opening our wits that we may understand his word, enlarging our hearts, yea correcting our affections, that we may love it to the end. . . It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; but a blessed thing it is, and will bring us to everlasting blessedness in the end, when God speaketh unto us, to hearken, when he setteth his word before us, to read it, when he stretcheth out his hand and calleth, to answer, Here am I, here we are to do thy will, O God. The Lord work a care and conscience in us to know him and serve him, that we may be acknowledged of him at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the holy Ghost, be all Praise and thanksgiving. Amen.¹⁹

16. J. I. Mombert, English Versions of the Bible, pp. 345-346.

17. Butterworth, Op. Cit., p. 209.

18. For brief personal notes identifying and describing the translators of the AV, see Mombert, Op. Cit., pp. 343-346, and David Daiches, The King James Version of the English Bible, pp. 169-166.

19. Goodspeed, Op. Cit., pp. 37-38.

The Meetings

The men were divided into six groups, two at Westminster, two at Oxford, and two at Cambridge. Each of the groups worked on allotted portions of Scripture, this being done separately at first. The Westminster groups had Genesis to II Kings inclusive for the Old Testament section, and Romans to Jude inclusive for the New Testament. The Oxford groups had Isaiah to Malachi, and the Gospels, Acts and Apocalypse. The Cambridge groups had I Chronicles to Ecclesiastes,²⁰ and the Apocrypha.²¹ The Preface to the AV says the following about the men and their meeting together:

To that purpose there were many chosen, that were greater in other men's eyes than in their own, and that sought the truth rather than their own praise. Again, they came or were thought to come to the work, not exercendi causa (as one saith) but exercitati, that is, learned, not to learn: . . . They trusted in him that hath the key of David, opening and no man shutting; they prayed to the Lord the Father of our Lord, . . . In this confidence, and with this devotion did they assemble together; not too many, lest one should trouble another; and yet many, lest things haply might escape them.²²

We are given a glimpse of the actual workings of the revisers in Dr. Anthony Walker's notes on the life of Dr. John Bois. John Bois was one of the translators of the Cambridge group which worked on the Apocrypha. It is said of Dr. Bois: "All the time he was about his own part, his

20. Price, Op. Cit., p. 275.

21. Butterworth, Op. Cit., p. 10, says that the Apocrypha were generally included in the editions of the AV between the Old and New Testaments up until 1826.

22. Goodspeed, Op. Cit., p. 33.

commons were given him at St. John's; where he abode all week, till Saturday night; & then went home to discharge his cure; returning thence on Monday morning. . ."²³ If the eighth and ninth instructions, as listed above, were followed, then we know this much at least, that the individual men of each company took a chapter or group of chapters and worked them out separately at first. Then they met to compare their work and to strive for a generally acceptable translation of the section under discussion. After one company had finished any one book of the Bible in this way, they were to send it to the rest of the companies to be considered by them. There is no evidence to show whether or not these instructions were carried out completely. They probably were followed to a fair extent.

John Seldon in his "Table Talk" has a few words on the manner of procedure with the translating and reviewing. Seldon was a contemporary of most of the translators. He says:

The translators in king James' time took an excellent way. That part of the Bible was given to him who was most excellent in such a tongue (as the Apocrypha to Andrew Downs), and then they met together, and one read the translation, the rest holding in their hands some Bible, either of the learned tongues, or French, Spanish, Italian, etc.; if they found any fault, they spoke; if not, he read on.²⁴

This description probably refers to some of the final meetings of the groups, after preliminary individual work and

23. Robinson, Op. Cit., p. 202.

24. Butterworth, Op. Cit., p. 214.

intermediate comparison had been done.

Finances

It seems that the translators worked without any pay beyond the reward of personal gratification. King James apparently did not furnish much more for the project than his royal enthusiasm. It is said that he had no cash for the venture, but suggested to the bishops that they "reserve Ecclesiastical preferment for the workers, promising to do the same for prebends and benefices in his gift."²⁵ It did so happen that a large number of the revisers later received ecclesiastical advancement, but no one knows how many of these advancements came as the result of this suggestion and how many would have occurred anyhow. The Church was also reluctant to assume financial responsibility. How even the basic expenses of translating were defrayed we do not know, but we do know that arrangements were made for the revisers to have board and lodging provided them by the colleges free of charge while they were at work at such places. The publisher of the new version agreed to pay quite a large sum for the right to print and sell it.²⁶

Time

Much time was spent in getting the project under way. The official orders and instructions were given in 1604, but

25. Ibid., p. 203.

26. Butterworth, Op. Cit., p. 210.

it was 1607 before the meetings began. Perhaps the problems of picking the right men and trying to obtain financial support contributed to this delay. The actual time spent on the organized endeavor was about three years. This is hinted at in the Preface to the AV in its usual quaint and verbose manner:

Neither did we run over the work with that posting haste that the Septuagint did, if that be true which is reported of them that they finished it in 72 days; neither were we barred or hindered from going over it again, having once done it. . . the work hath not been huddled up in 72 days, but hath cost the workmen, as light as it seemeth, the pains of twice seven times seventy two days and more; matters of such weight and consequence are to be speeded with maturity; for in a business of moment a man feareth not the blame of convenient slackness.²⁷

Completion

A statement submitted to the Synod of Dort, said to have been compiled in 1618 by Samuel Ward of the second Cambridge group, indicates that after the assigned portions were finished by each group, twelve men selected from among them all met together in one place and reviewed and revised the entire work. As a final touch to all their labors, Bishop Bilson of Winchester and Dr. Miles Smith, the writer of the Preface, are said to have gone over it together. Butterworth says that certain memoranda state that Dr. Bret, one of the translators, reported that the Bishops "altered

27. Goodspeed, Op. Cit., p. 34.

very many places that the translators had agreed upon: He had a note of ye places." According to another report, Archbishop Bancroft himself, the King's supervisor of the entire project, insisted upon certain changes in a few places.²⁸ This rechecking by a selected few took up about nine months.

The new version was finally printed on the press of R. Barker in 1611. It was a folio volume in black-letter type, without notes, with the title-page: "Newly translated out of the original tongues; and with former translations diligently compared and revised by his Majesty's special command."²⁹

It was a Revision

The AV was a revision, not a fresh translation. As stated in the first instruction, the Bible being read in the churches at the time, the Bishops' Bible, was to be followed and as little altered as the truth of the original would permit. The Preface itself says:

. . . if we, building upon their foundation that went before us, and being holpen by their labours, do endeavor to make that better which they left so good; no man, we are sure, hath cause to mislike us; . . . For by this means it cometh to pass, that whatsoever is sound already (and all is sound for substance, in one or other of our editions, and the worst of ours far better than their authentic vulgar) the same will shine as gold more brightly, being

28. Butterworth, Op. Cit., pp. 212-213.

29. Price, Op. Cit., p. 278.

rubbed and polished; also, if anything be halting, or superfluous, or not so agreeable to the original, the same may be corrected, and the truth set in place.³⁰

In another place it says:

But it is high time to leave them, and to show in brief what we proposed to ourselves, and what course we held in this our perusal and survey of the Bible. Truly (good Christian Reader) we never thought from the beginning, that we should need to make a new Translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one, (for then the imputation of Sixtus had been true in some sort, that our People had been fed with gall of Dragons instead of wine, with whey instead of milk:) but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one, not justly to be excepted against; that hath been our endeavor, that our mark.³¹

The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible summarizes thus: "It was not a new translation, but a scholarly revision on the basis of the original languages of Scripture; about nine-tenths of the language of the New Testament is still that of Tyndale."³² The announcement, "Newly translated out of the original tongues," on the title-page, served the purpose apparently of distinguishing this version from such as had been translated from the Latin Vulgate. Butterworth also mentions that "the King James version was not regarded by its translators as a brand-new version, but rather as a revision of the earlier English translations."³³

The 1602 printing of the Bishops' Bible was the basis

30. Goodspeed, Op. Cit., pp. 27-28.

31. Ibid., p. 33.

32. John D. Davis, "Versions (English)," The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible, p. 628.

33. Butterworth, Op. Cit., p. 7.

of the revision. The Great Bible, the Geneva Bible, and the versions of Tyndale, Matthew, and Coverdale were also used. This was all in conformity with the fourteenth instruction laid down for the translators.

Other Works Used

The Rheims New Testament was used to advantage. Foreign aids employed were the works of Luther, Leo Juda, and Zwingli in German, Olivetan in French, Paginus, Sebastian Munster and Castalio in Latin, the Vulgate, and Erasmus. A revision of the French Bible had appeared at Geneva in 1587-8, a New Spanish translation in 1602, and an Italian translation by J. Diodati in 1607. They had these translations at their disposal,³⁴ and the Preface indicates that they made use of such works:

If you ask what they had before them, truly it was the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, the Greek of the New. These are the two golden pipes, or rather conduits, where-through the olive branches empty themselves into the gold. . . . If truth be tried by these tongues, then whence should a Translation be made, but out of them? These tongues therefore, the Scriptures we say in those tongues, we set before us to translate, being the tongues wherein God was pleased to speak to his Church by his Prophets and Apostles. . . . Neither did we think much to consult the Translators or Commentators, Chaldee, Hebrew, Syrian, Greek, or Latin, no nor the Spanish, French, Italian, or Dutch; neither did we disdain to revise that which we had done, . . ."³⁵

34. Robinson, Op. Cit., pp. 205-206.

35. Goodspeed, Op. Cit., pp. 33-34.

Indebtedness to Older Versions

Butterworth, although aware of the inaccuracies connected with making such an estimate, has assembled the following tabulation, in order to give an idea of what percentage of the AV text is traceable directly to the older English versions. The tabulations are made on the basis of small literary units, phrases or clauses, and are listed "according to the version in which the final King James phraseology makes its earliest appearance:"³⁶

(1380-1400)	Wycliffite versions, including English Sermons	4%
(1525-1535)	Tyndale's work, including the Matthew Bible	18
(1535-1541)	Coverdale's work, including Great Bibles	13
(1557-1560)	Geneva Bible and Geneva New Testament	19
(1568-1572)	Bishops' Bible and its revision	4
	All other versions before 1611	3
	Total	61%
(1611)	King James Bible	39
		100%

The Greek Text³⁷

The main editions of the Greek Testament used by the translators, or in some way influencing them, are those of Erasmus (1516-35), Robert Stephens (Estienne, Stephanus) of Paris and Geneva (1546-51), Beza (1565-1604), and the Complutensian Polyglot (published 1522). All of these editions were based on a small number of inferior and comparatively modern manuscripts, rather poorly collated. Erasmus had one valuable manuscript of the Gospels, Stephens two

36. Butterworth, Op. Cit., p. 231.

37. Concerning the Old Testament it may be briefly said that the AV translators had no standard "received" Hebrew text, but used the four current Hebrew Bibles and the Complutensian and Antwerp Polyglots. Cf. Price, Op. Cit., p. 278.

(D and L); Beza had also D of the Gospels and Acts and D (the Clermont MS.) of the Pauline Epistles, but it has been observed that these editors made scarcely any use of these better manuscripts. Prof. Abbot (Cambridge, Mass., 1879) further brings out the fact that the text of the AV New Testament agrees more with the later editions of Beza than with any other. Beza followed closely Stephen's edition, and Stephen's edition was little more than a reprint of the fourth edition of Erasmus (1527). Erasmus used as the basis of his text an inferior MS. of the fifteenth century and one of the thirteenth or fourteenth century. For the Apocalypse he supplied defects in the mutilated MS. by translating from the Latin Vulgate into Greek. In later editions Erasmus had other MSS. which, however, did not add much critical value.³⁸

All in all, the Greek text which the AV translators used was very nearly what is today referred to as the Textus Receptus, which was so named after the remark in the preface to the second Elzevir edition, 1633, that this is the text now "received by all." This text held sway from the Reformation down to the middle of the eighteenth century.³⁹

The work of the New Testament critics of the nineteenth century, Griesbach, Lachmann, Tregelles, Tischendorf,

38. Ezra Abbot, "The New Testament Text," Anglo-American Bible Revision, pp. 93-94.

39. Price, Op. Cit., p. 190.

Scrivener, Westcott, and Hort, enabled Price to say that "they have been successful in giving us a Greek text that reaches back at least one thousand years before the date of the manuscripts that formed the basis of the Textus Receptus."⁴⁰ Today we can say that manuscript discoveries have brought testification of the Greek text as far back even as the second century. An example of this is the Old Syriac version discovered on Mt. Sinai by Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Gibson in 1892. It testifies to the Greek text from which it was translated, perhaps around 150 A.D. The Chester Beatty fragments discovered in 1931, which the leading experts agree "were copied for the most part in the third century--a hundred years, presumably, before Vaticanus and Sinaiticus!"⁴¹

The Greek text used by the AV translators, therefore, though inadequate for scholarly translating today, was the best available at the time, and what they had they used to good advantage.

Since the Greek text of Beza was heavily leaned upon, as well as the Geneva Bible, and since both of these were largely of Calvinistic origin, one wonders whether there might not be Calvinistic ideas occasionally manifesting themselves in the translation of some of the passages in the AV.

40. Ibid., p. 206.

41. Frederick C. Grant, "The Greek Text of the New Testament," An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, p. 37.

This suspicion seems groundless, however. Some point to Acts 2, 47b as an example of Calvinistic predestinarianism creeping into the treatment of the text.⁴² The AV has: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." The RV simply says: "those that were being saved,"; the ASV: "those that were saved,"; the RSV: "those who were being saved." The Complaint seems disputable, and if this is the strongest indication of Calvinistic bias that can be produced, then we may feel assured that there was practically none of it.

Translating Liberties Taken

It is evident that the AV men were not hide-bound literalists in their translating. This is brought out in another section of the Preface:

Another thing we think good to admonish thee of (gentle Reader) that we have not tied ourselves to an uniformity of phrasing, or to an identity of words, as some peradventure would wish that we had done, because they observe, that some learned men somewhere, have been as exact as they could that way. Truly, that we might not vary from the sense of that which we had translated before, if the word signified the same in both places (for there be some words that be not of the same sense everywhere) we were especially careful, and made a conscience, according to our duty. But, that we should express the same notion in the same particular word; as for example, if we translate the Hebrew or Greek word once by Purpose, never to call it Intent; if one where Journeying, never Traveling; if one where Think, never Suppose; if one where Pain, never Ache; if one where Joy, never Gladness, etc. Thus to mince the matter, we thought

42. Roberts, Op. Cit., Footnote on p. 158.

to savour more of curiosity than wisdom, and that rather it would breed scorn in the Ath-eist, than bring profit to the godly Reader. For is the kingdom of God become words or syllables? why should we be in bondage to them if we may be free, use one precisely when we may use another no less fit, as commodiously?⁴³

Rythmical Phrasing

This verbal freedom which the translators took, and which at bottom springs from a very worthy premise, was no doubt one of the causes for its lasting literary charm. By the judicious use of such freedom one may vastly improve the sound and rythm of phrases. This is evident in the AV. The following passage is an example:

(Geneva Bible)	Come vnto me all ye that are wearie
(Bishops Bible)	Come vnto me all ye that labour sore,
(King James)	Come vnto me all yee that labour,

and laden, and I will ease you.
and are laden, and I wyll ease you.
and are heauy laden, and I will giue you rest.

It may be noticed that the AV's addition of the word "heauy" adds much to the rythm of the passage, and the harmonious cadence of "I will giue you rest" is an improvement over the previous versions.⁴⁴

Variety of Expression

The following of such a principle as that stated in the above excerpt from the Preface to the AV, namely, the free use of synonyms, lent much variety to many passages.

43. Goodspeed, Op. Cit., p. 36.

44. Butterworth, Op. Cit., p. 224.

An example of this is Romans 7, 7-8. The three underlined words are rendered from one basic Greek expression:

Now, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.

The RV, ASV, and RSV use the word covet or some form thereof in each of the three places. A similar case is that of I Corinthians 13, 8-10:

Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

The three underlined expressions are renderings of the same voice and tense of the same Greek verb. In the RV and ASV they are rendered in each place by shall be done away, or some form thereof. In the RSV it is given as will pass away in each instance. It is odd to note that in the AV rendition, in connection with the verbs at the beginning of the verse, faileth and shall fail, just the opposite occurs. There, where the two original Greek words are actually different and would call for variety of expression in English, the AV translators resort to an unwarranted sameness of expression.

In Acts 17, 19 and 22, the underlined terms are identical in the original:

And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus . . . Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said . . .

In the RV, ASV, and RSV it is given as Areopagus in both places. Then there is Matthew 18, 33:

Shouldst not thou also have had compassion
on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?

It is the same Greek verb in both places, therefore the RV, ASV, and RSV all render it with some form of to have mercy in both instances. In this connection Matthew 25, 46 may also be noted:

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Here the Greek word is identical in both cases, therefore, to more closely represent the original, the RV, ASV, and RSV have eternal in both places.⁴⁵

Indifference to Style of Original Writer

This free use of synonyms for the sake of introducing variety of expression involves a certain indifference to the style of the original writer. The writings of St. John are an example of this. John frequently uses the expressions to abide and to bear witness in the Greek in a constant manner and in their basic forms. The AV translation, however, contains the expression to abide in John's writings in seven different varieties, namely: abide, remain, continue, terry, dwell, endure, and be present. Three of them are brought together in the one passage of I John 2, 24:

45. Clarence T. Craig, "The King James and the American Standard Versions of the New Testament," An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, pp. 19-20.

Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

The Greek verb is the same for these three words, and the RV, ASV, and RSV translate with abide in all three places. The expression to bear witness is found in the AV in John's writings also as witness, bear record, testify, and (in the passive) have good report.

Indifference to Wording of Synoptic Parallels

Synoptic parallels are occasionally translated quite differently in the AV, even though the originals may be almost exactly the same.⁴⁶ The following excerpts are an example of this. The underlined portions are those words which represent the same original Greek terms in both passages, but which are rendered differently by the AV translators:

Mark

Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the market-places. And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation. (Ch. 12, vs. 38-40.)

Luke

Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation. (Ch. 20, vs. 46-47.)

46. J. Henry Thayer, "Unwarranted Verbal Differences and Agreements in the English Version," Anglo-American Bible Revision, p. 139.

The RSV, perhaps in the interest of the common source theory of the Synoptic Gospels, is careful to bring out the actual similarities between these two passages. The result, nonetheless, is one of giving the reader a truer picture of the original parallels, as well as one of maintaining a dependable consistency in translation. The only dissimilarities in the same passages as contained in the RSV are those which are demanded by the Greek. The RSV passages are here quoted to show how similar the passages really are, word for word, though one would not suspect it from the AV renderings:

Mark

Beware of the scribes, who like to go about in long robes, and to have salutations in the market places and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation. (Ch. 12, vs. 38-40.)

Luke

Beware of the scribes, who like to go about in long robes, and love salutations in the market places and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation. (Ch. 20, vs. 46-47.)

Example of Free Translation

Where the expression God forbid occurs in the New Testament of the AV it has behind it a Greek expression which really means may it not be so. This is a rather free rendering of the original but, no doubt, a powerfully fitting one.

Lack of Proper Distinction

On the one hand, we find that the AV does not hesitate to make minor distinctions in the text so long as it does not

destroy the meaning and lends to the variety and beauty of the passage. On the other hand, there are instances where it does not make the distinctions which are indicated by the original and which would have afforded variety and would have prevented apparent contradictions in some cases.

The word hell, for example, was used indiscriminately for Hades and for Gehenna. The word beast was used both for the four living creatures who stood round about the throne singing praises to God in Revelations 4, 6, and for the diabolical beings who were the foes of God and His servants in Revelation 11, 7 and 13, 1, despite the fact that different words are used in the original. Likewise, a slight distinction is lost when in John 10, 16 the AV renders:

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

In the Greek the second fold is an entirely different word which means flock. In the RV, ASV, and RSV, therefore, the second fold is rendered flock.⁴⁷

In Galatians 6, 2 of the AV the passage goes:

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

then in the 5th verse:

For every man shall bear his own burden.

This seeming contradiction is more easily explainable when cognizance is taken of the fact that two different words

47. Craig, Op. Cit., pp. 18-19.

are used for burden in the original Greek, that two kinds of burdens are under discussion. The RV and the ASV follow the AV in not making any distinction here, but the RSV indicates the difference of original words as follows:

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill
the law of Christ.

and,

For each man will have to bear his own load.

One Reason for AV's Literary Appeal

The above instances of variations unwarranted by the original but more pleasing to the English ear would be misleading if they created the impression that the AV translators were careless about their translating. On the contrary, they reveal a diligent consideration of all the literary aspects involved in such translating. At the same time it is clear that, in many instances at least, where fairness to the original and fairness to the beauty of the English language were somewhat at odds with each other, the latter frequently won out. This partially explains why the AV is singular in its place of honor in English literature, and why the appeal of its rythmical and reverential language has prevailed for centuries.

Names and Technical Terms

The second, third, and fourth general instructions given to the AV translators stipulate that common and well-

approved names and technical terms should be retained.

Compliance with these instructions is claimed by the Preface:

Lastly, we have on the one side avoided the scrupulosity of the Puritans, who leave the old Ecclesiastical words, and betake them to other, as when they put washing for Baptism, and Congregation instead of Church: as also on the other side we have shunned the obscurity of the Papists, in their Azimes, Tunike, Rational, Holocausts, Praepuce, Pasche, and a number of such like, whereof their late Translation is full, and that of purpose to darken the sense, that since they must needs translate the Bible, yet by the language thereof, it may be kept from being understood. But we desire that the Scripture may speak like itself, as in the language of Canaan, that it may be understood even of the very vulgar.⁴⁸

This they did very well. There is the complaint that the AV has insufficient uniformity in the spelling of names, such as Jeremiah, Jeremias, and Jeremy, this being confusing to the untrained reader of the Bible. No doubt, the reason why these different spellings were allowed to remain was because the original manuscripts presented them that way, and the translators wished to transliterate the names letter for letter. The old ecclesiastical terms were wisely retained.

Errors

In dealing with the exegetical and grammatical aspects of the work of the AV translators, it must be remembered that they did not have the highly developed skills in the

48. Goodspeed, Op. Cit., p. 37.

original languages that scholars have today. For this reason, although they did the best possible for that day, there will be found errors and slip-ups due largely to an incomplete knowledge of Greek grammar. This shows up especially in the treatment of prepositions and verbs.

Errors with Prepositions

Prepositions are important factors of speech, particularly in theology, and they offer difficult problems for the translator. The AV men did not come through with the proper solutions to these prepositional problems in a number of instances. The following paragraph by Craig mentions some of these instances:

It was in the use of prepositions that the King James Version was most misleading. The famous "strain at a gnat" (Matthew 23, 24) was simply a misprint for "strain out a gnat," but the misprint was not corrected. In some cases the reader might guess what the passage really means. He may recognize that "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness" means in fact "by means of the mammon of unrighteousness" (Luke 16, 9). When Jesus says, "against the day of my burying hath she kept this," the meaning is "for the day" (John 12, 7). Other cases are probably too absurd to be misleading. Pilate could not possibly have said about Jesus, "Nothing worthy of death is done unto him" (Luke 23, 15). It must mean "done by him," as the revisers made it. But the average reader was left totally in the dark when Paul was made to write, "I know nothing by myself" (I Cor. 4, 4). The apostle certainly believed that he owed everything to Christ, but what he actually wrote here was, "I know nothing against myself." Among the significant points obscured by the King James use of prepositions was the distinction between source and mediation. In the prologue of John they said of the Word, "All

things were made by him" (1, 3). The American revisers properly corrected it to "through him." The same change was made in I Corinthians 8, 6, where Christ is called the mediator rather than the absolute source of creation.⁴⁹

Errors with Verbs

In connection with the problem of the Greek verb it has been noted that the AV in hundreds of instances renders the Greek aorist by the English perfect and that this is almost always incorrect. The difference between "be" and "become" is expressed by two different verbs in the Greek, but this difference is not registered by the AV translation. There are about sixty or seventy cases of this.⁵⁰

A Few General Errors

The following paragraph by Professor Craig contains a few more instances of erroneous AV translating:

Actual mistranslations are numerous. Paul did not write to the Thessalonians, "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thess. 5, 22). He meant that they should keep from "every form of evil." When the publican (?) was made to say in the parable of Jesus, "I give tithes of all that I possess," this ascribed to Jesus a misconception of the law of the tithe. It was not on property but on income. Hence the revisers properly wrote, "All that I get" (Luke 18, 12). In I Timothy 6, 5 the subject was mistaken for the predicate. "Supposing that gain is godliness" had to be corrected to "supposing that godliness is a way of gain." What Herod

49. Craig, Op. Cit., pp. 17-18. The underlinings are our own.

50. Matthew B. Riddle, "The Greek Verb in the New Testament," Anglo-American Bible Revision, pp. 129-132.

did with John the Baptist when he put him in prison was not to "observe" but "keep him safe" (Mark 6, 20).⁵¹

Anachronisms

In the case of Acts 12, 4 the error is one of anachronism:

And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him, intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

The Greek word is the one for Passover, and there seems to have been no festival in those days called Easter. The RV, ASV, and RSV render it Passover.

A similar anachronism is the one in Luke 15, 8:

Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?

However, in first century Palestine they used lamps and not candles.⁵²

General Evaluation

Lest the foregoing citations of shortcomings and errors show a lack of appreciation for the magnificent production of the AV, it may be stated that the AV, of course, needs no apology for its existence--its record speaks for itself. What this standard and beautiful version of the English Bible

51. Craig, Op. Cit., p. 20. The underlinings and the question mark are our own. Craig undoubtedly refers to the Pharisee in the parable and not to the Publican.

52. Ibid., p. 21.

has done in the service of the Christian faith is beyond human calculation. Besides being the Word of God containing the Gospel of Christ, its style has an enchantment and charm which will very likely never be duplicated. However, it must be admitted that while words of praise could go on forever about the AV, still no one would claim perfection for it. When flaws, small though they be at times, are discovered in the translating of the Word of God, they are worth noting and remedying. The translators of the AV themselves would be the last to claim that their work left no room and never would leave any room for considerable improvement.

Attention must also be called to the fact that the above instances from the AV generally contain misleading or erroneous elements which were developed in the translating process. To discuss the inaccurate or misleading elements now noticeable in the AV because of the superior original manuscripts at our disposal, or to discuss the incomprehensible or misleading elements now present due to the aging and changing of the English language, would indeed require another long section.

In general, the AV is a beautiful and scholarly translation.

PART II: THE REVISED VERSION

When the AV first came off the press the Geneva Bible and the Bishops' Bible were in general use, the latter having been the Church-approved and authorized version for some forty years. The use of the King James Bible was not commanded by any royal edict or decree of convocation. It gained gradual preference over the other versions on the basis of its own merits. Within thirty to fifty years after its first publication it became the generally accepted version for all of England. During the following years repeated efforts were made to introduce new translations, but any gain in accuracy offered by such endeavors was offset by the loss in style and tone of the AV, and the Christian public did not seriously consider them.⁵³ Meanwhile the publishers of the AV through the generations had seen to it that it was tacitly revised from time to time. Obsolete spellings were changed and helps added here and there. This action continued intermittently until 1769 when under the care of Dr. Blayney of Oxford it reached its present form. This care and the correction of misprints have rendered the AV one of the most accurately published books in the world.⁵⁴

53. Theodore D. Woolsey, "Reasons for a New Revision of the Scriptures in English," Anglo-American Bible Revision, pp. 40-42.

54. Goodspeed, Op. Cit., p. 2.

Agitation for Revision

At the beginning of the nineteenth century sporadic agitations for a new revision began to assert themselves in a more serious vein. Individual work was done along these lines without much enduring effect. In 1853 two editions of the Bible appeared using paragraph division. One of them was produced by the Religious Tract Society and furnished with corrections of the text and explanatory notes. "Both Bibles were welcomed in The Edinburgh Review (Oct. 1855) by a writer who took occasion to say that it was high time that a new revision was undertaken by authority under a Royal Commission."⁵⁵ Such activity, coupled with occasional statements by Biblical scholars emphasizing the need for a revision, crescendoed into a strong demand for authoritative and ecumenical action in the matter of revision. The increasing number of archaisms, the discoveries of more reliable manuscripts, and the noticing of erroneous translations were the reasons given for agitation.

Launching the Project

In 1870 Dr. Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Winchester, moved a resolution in the Upper House of Convocation of the Province of Canterbury, to the effect that negotiations be commenced concerning the feasibility and desirability of revising the erroneous passages in the AV New Testament.

55. Robinson, Op. Cit., pp. 236-240.

The Bishop of Llandaff proposed an amendment including the Old Testament. It was carried. The Convocation of the Province of York refused to cooperate saying that it would deplore any recasting of the text of Scripture. The appointed committee met in March of 1870 and reported as follows:

I. That it is desirable that a Revision of the Authorized Version of the Holy Scriptures be undertaken. II. That the Revision be so conducted as to comprise both marginal renderings, and such emendations as it may be found necessary to insert in the text of the Authorized Version. III. That in the above Resolutions we do not contemplate any new translation of the Bible, or any alteration of the language, except where in the judgment of the most competent scholars such change is necessary. IV. That in such necessary changes, the style of the language employed in the existing Version be closely followed. V. That it is desirable that Convocation should nominate a body of its own Members to undertake the work of Revision, who shall be at liberty to invite the co-operation of any eminent for scholarship, to whatever nation or religious body they may belong.⁵⁶

Principles of Translation

A new committee met in May and formed two companies, one to revise the Old Testament and the other the New. The principles which they agreed to abide by were the following:

1. To introduce as few alterations as possible into the Text of the Authorised Version consistently with faithfulness.
2. To limit, as far as possible, the expression of such alterations to the language of the Authorised and earlier English Versions.

56. Ibid., pp. 240-241.

3. Each Company to go twice over the portion to be revised, once provisionally, the second time finally, and on principles of voting as hereinafter is provided.

4. That the Text to be adopted be that for which the evidence is decidedly preponderating; and that when the Text so adopted differs from that from which the Authorised Version was made, the alteration be indicated in the margin.

5. To make or retain no change in the Text on the second final revision by each Company, except two thirds of those present approve of the same, but on the first revision to decide by simple majorities.

6. In every case of proposed alteration that may have given rise to discussion, to defer the voting thereupon till the next Meeting, whensoever the same shall be required by one third of those present at the Meeting, such intended vote to be announced in the notice for the next Meeting.

7. To revise the headings of chapters and pages, paragraphs, italics, and punctuation.

8. To refer, on the part of each Company, when considered desirable, to Divines, Scholars, and Literary Men, whether at home or abroad, for their opinions.⁵⁷

Translating Personnel

The translating personnel chosen for this revision consisted chiefly of Anglicans, but there were also a number of Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Unitarians--no Roman Catholics. At the outset the number of men enlisted was fifty-four, the same as the

57. Preface to the New Testament, Revised A.D. 1881,
p. viii.

original number of men assigned to the AV translation.⁵⁸

The New Testament Company originally consisted of the following:

From the Convocation Committee:

Bishop Wilberforce of Winchester
Bishop Ellicott of Gloucester
Bishop Moberly of Salisbury
Dean Bickersteth of Lichfield
Dean Alford of Canterbury
Dean Stanley of Westminster
Canon J. W. Blakesley of Canterbury.

In addition were the following Anglicans:

The Rev. F. J. A. Hort of Cambridge
The Rev. W. G. Humphry, Prebendary of St. Paul's
The Rev. B. H. Kennedy, Canon of Ely
Dr. W. Lee, Archdeacon of Dublin
Dr. J. B. Lightfoot of Cambridge
Dr. R. Scott, Master of Balliol
The Rev. F. H. Scrivener, Vicar of St. Gerrans
Dr. R. C. Trench, Archbishop of Dublin
Dr. C. J. Vaughan, Master of the Temple
Dr. B. F. Westcott, Canon of Petersburg

Three Presbyterians:

Dr. J. Hadie, Professor of Biblical Literature, Glasgow
Dr. W. Milligan, Professor of Divinity, Aberdeen
Dr. A. Roberts, Professor of Humanity, St. Andrews

One Baptist:

Dr. J. Angus, Principal of Regent's Park College

One Congregationalist:

The Rev. S. Newth, Professor of Classics, New College

One Methodist:

The Rev. W. F. Moulton, Professor of Classics, Richmond College

58. Price, Op. Cit., p. 286.

One Unitarian:

Dr. G. Vance Smith, later Principal of the Presbyterian College, Carmarthen

There had been added by 1881:

Dr. Chas. Wordsworth, Bishop of St. Andrews

Dr. C. Merivale, Dean of Ely

The Rev. E. Palmer, Professor of Latin at Oxford

Dr. David Brown of the Free Church College, Aberdeen

The Committee lost three members by death: Wilberforce, Alford, and Ladie; and one by resignation: Merivale.⁵⁹

American Committee

In 1870 Dr. Angus went to America and held a conference with some American scholars for the purpose of inviting American cooperation in the translating project. Favorable contacts led to the formation of an American Committee to work in cooperation with the British Committee under the same general principles and rules. There seems to have been no further authority for the forming of the American Committee than the invitation and authority of the British Committee. The American churches were not consulted, except the Protestant Episcopal Church, and it refused to act officially in the matter. The selection was made chiefly from professors of Greek and Hebrew, Biblical scholars, and with consideration for a fair representation of the leading denominations and theological institutions of the United States. There were representatives of the following denominations:

59. Robinson, Op. Cit., pp. 244-245.

Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists, Reformed, one Unitarian, one Friend, and one Lutheran. The American Committee, consisting of thirty members (thirteen in the New Testament Company), was organized in 1871. It went into action in October, 1872, when it received the first revision of the Synoptic Gospels from the British Company.⁶⁰

The list of the New Testament Company as furnished by Philip Schaff, President of the entire committee, is as follows:

Ex-President T. D. Woolsey, New Haven, Connecticut
 Professor J. Henry Thayer, Theological Seminary,
 Andover, Massachusetts
 Professor Ezra Abbot, Divinity School, Harvard
 University, Cambridge, Massachusetts
 The Rev. J. K. Burr, Trenton, New Jersey
 President Thomas Chase Haverford College, Pennsylvania
 Chancellor Howard Crosby, New York University
 Professor Timothy Dwight, Divinity School of Yale
 College, New Haven, Connecticut
 Professor A. C. Kendrick, University of Rochester,
 Rochester, New York
 The Right Rev. Alfred Lee, Bishop of the Diocese of
 Delaware
 Professor Matthew B. Riddle, Theological Seminary,
 Hartford, Connecticut
 Professor Philip Schaff, Union Theological Seminary,
 New York
 Professor Charles Short, Columbia College, New York
 The Rev. E. A. Washburn, Calvary Church, New York⁶¹

Total Number and Quality of the Men

Altogether, counting the British men with the American,

60. Roberts, Op. Cit., pp. 165-167.

61. Philip Schaff, "Introductory Statement," Anglo-American Bible Revision, p. 12.

there was a total of 101 scholars who at some time were connected with the project. In 1879 there were 52 active members in England and 27 in America, making a total then of 79 active members.⁶²

To what extent the men involved were conservatives or liberals, both in their theology and their textual criticism, is impossible to ascertain without a tremendous amount of research. Simply judging by the general era in which they lived and worked as well as the institutions with which they were affiliated, it may appear that there was a fair number of liberals among them. All in all, these men were an eminent group of Biblical scholars, numbering among themselves even such outstanding men as Westcott, Hort, and Scrivener.

Meetings of the British Company

On the 22nd day of June, 1870, the New Testament Company of England met in Henry VII's Chapel at Westminster Abbey and celebrated Holy Communion in preparation for their work. Robinson has an interesting note to sound in this connection:

Inasmuch as one member, Dr. G. Vance Smith, was a Unitarian, and took advantage of the inclusive invitation to be present at the service, violent protests were raised in certain quarters. His very appointment as a Reviser was treated by some as an outrage, while his admission to the Lord's Table was felt to be an intolerable affront to His Divinity. The hubbub, however, died down; and Dr. Vance Smith remained with the Company.⁶³

62. Ibid., p. 15.

63. Robinson, Op. Cit., p. 246.

The men began their first session of work in the Jerusalem Chamber, which remained their usual place of meeting. The New Testament Company met for four consecutive days a month, except during August and September. The average attendance was sixteen. They began work at 11 a.m. and continued until 6 p.m., taking half an hour out for lunch. The members came with their own privately considered suggestions on the part of the New Testament that was to be taken up. The meetings opened with three collects and the Lord's Prayer. Then came the reading of the minutes, correspondence, and the work of revision.

The question of textual emendations was taken up first, with Drs. Scrivener and Hort presenting the evidence and pertinent information, usually on opposite sides. Then came the discussion of proposed alterations of renderings. In that connection, where necessary, differences were settled by vote. This was conducted according to the fourth principle laid down for the translators, namely, that the text to be adopted be that for which the evidence is decidedly preponderating, and the fifth principle, namely, that of making or retaining no change in the text on the final revision unless a two-thirds vote of those present approved it. On the first revision such matters were decided by simple majority votes.

The work moved rather slowly. The average amount of the text covered in one day was about thirty-five verses.

It took ten and one-half years to complete the New Testament. It was finished on November 11th, 1830. This event was celebrated by a special service of thanksgiving in the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields.⁶⁴

The necessary expenses for travelling, printing, etc., were paid by the University Presses. The Work itself was done without compensation.⁶⁵

Meetings of the American Companies

The American Companies met every month, except July and August, in the Bible House at New York, although there was no connection with the American Bible Society in this work. Robertson says that the American companies met "at great personal inconvenience and with prospect of reward," and that the "funds for the necessary expenses of travelling, printing, room-rent, books, and clerical aid were cheerfully contributed by liberal donors" who were to receive memorial copies of the first edition when it was finished.⁶⁶

Anglo-American Cooperation

Cooperation between the English and American Companies was accomplished in the following manner. After the English revisers had completed a section of the New Testament, as for example the Synoptic Gospels, they would send their revision to the American revisers, who would draw up

64. Ibid., pp. 245-247.

65. Schaff, Op. Cit., p. 19.

66. Roberts, Op. Cit., pp. 165-168.

a list of suggestions and submit them for consideration by the British revisers. When the entire New Testament was finished by the English Company, it was to submit it to the American Company and allow the American Company to draw up in appendix form whatever suggestions the English Company had rejected but the American revisers still thought worthy of notation. This is described in the Preface to the Revision of 1881:

Our communications with the American Committee have been of the following nature. We transmitted to them from time to time each several portion of our First Revision, and received from them in return their criticisms and suggestions. These we considered with much care and attention during the time we were engaged on our Second Revision. We then sent over to them the various portions of the Second Revision as they were completed, and received further suggestions, which, like the former, were closely and carefully considered. Last of all, we forwarded to them the Revised Version in its final form; and a list of those passages in which they desire to place on record their preference of other readings and renderings will be found at the end of the volume. We gratefully acknowledge their care, vigilance, and accuracy; and we humbly pray that their labours and our own, thus happily united, may be permitted to bear a blessing to both countries, and to all English-speaking people throughout the world.⁶⁷

The American revisers were to pledge their support to the authorized editions of the University Presses of England, with "a view to their freest circulation within the United States," and they were not to produce a rival edition

67. Preface to the New Testament, Revised A.D. 1881, pp. viii-ix.

for a period of fourteen years.⁶⁸ The English and American groups appear to have worked together with a great deal of harmony and a minimum of partisan spirit.

If one should wonder to what extent the American Committee's work influenced and was accepted by the English Committee, he may take note of the following. Bishop Lee, in some of his correspondence captioned "Wilmington, Del., April 25, 1881," says that in the Epistle to the Hebrews, out of 913 changes made by the American Company, 476 were exactly coincident with those of the English. His estimate of the American suggestions adopted by the British is:⁶⁹

Gospels	318
Acts	186
Epistles and Revelation	400
Total	904

English Company More Conservative

The English Company was apparently the more conservative of the two. Roberts, who writes in favor of the American suggestions, says that the special Appendix containing those renderings which the English Company rejected, if judged by the Greek text, shows greater fidelity and consistency than the choices of the English revisers. He says that "the revision must be faithful first to the original Scriptures, and next to the idiom and vocabulary of the Authorized Version. Sometimes these two kinds of loyalty come

68. Roberts, Op. Cit., p. 172.

69. Ibid., p. 177.

into conflict." He feels that in unimportant or doubtful cases the English revisers allowed their regard for the AV usage to overrule their regard for the Greek text. The Appendix, therefore, although it is not very long, consisting of only eight pages in the May 8, 1885 edition by Thomas Nelson & Sons, shows a closer adherence to the Greek and a greater departure from old English usage.

A specific example of such occasional variance between the two committees is the conflict they had over the words Hades and hell. The Americans wanted to restore the distinction between Hades and Gehenna indicated by the Greek. The English revisers, on the other hand, with conservative regard for old usage, persistently retained the rendering of hell indiscriminately in all cases, until they reached the Apocalypse when the American suggestion was adopted.⁷⁰

Completion

The Revised Version of the New Testament, the result of Anglo-American cooperation, was first published in 1881. In 1885 the entire Scriptures were published.

Greek Text

The problem of the Greek text was the basic one:

A revision of the Greek text was the necessary foundation of our work; but it did not fall within our province to construct a continuous and complete text. In many cases the English

70. Ibid., Cf. pp. 192-206.

rendering was considered to represent correctly either of two competing readings in the Greek, and then the question of the text was usually not raised. A sufficiently laborious task remained in deciding between the rival claims of various readings which might properly affect the translation. . . . Textual criticism, as applied to the Greek New Testament, forms a special study of much intricacy and difficulty, and even now leaves room for considerable variety of opinion among competent critics. Different schools of criticism have been represented among us, and have together contributed to the final result. . . . On the first revision, in accordance with the fifth rule, the decisions were arrived at by simple majorities. On the second revision, at which a majority of two thirds was required to retain or introduce a reading at variance with the reading presumed to underlie the Authorised Version, many readings previously adopted were brought again into debate, and either reaffirmed or set aside.⁷¹

The imperfections of the Textus Receptus (as mentioned under Part I of this thesis) were evident and the need for revision commonly recognized. Among the revisers were Dr. Westcott and Rev. Hort, who were at the time engaged on an independent revision of the Greek text. Their first volume was published a few days before the RV New Testament appeared in English. These men wielded a great influence upon the New Testament translating group, but they did not control it. Furthermore, their influence was counteracted by that of Dr. Scrivener, who usually gave a more conservative estimate of the evidence.

Years of study have since shown that the text of Westcott and Hort was based along the lines of correct theory,

71. Preface to the New Testament, Revised A.D. 1881, p. ix.

despite the fact that it has been in need of occasional modification. We may feel assured, therefore, that the influence of these men enabled the revisers to produce a translation far more accurate and faithful to the sacred authors' original meanings than any version based on the Textus Receptus could afford.⁷² Since 1611 many great New Testament manuscripts had been discovered and the work of such textual critics as Griesbach, Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles was available. Prominent work had been done along textual and philological lines by men like Kennicott, de Rossi, and Davidson, who carefully collated critical material of great value. In 1844 Tischendorf made his famous find, the Codex Sinaiticus. The publication of Tregelles' critical text of Revelation based on many manuscripts in the main libraries of Europe, and the publication in 1857 of his Greek New Testament, had contributed much toward improving the Greek text.

Price makes the statement that "The number of biblical scholars was increasing, and the textual material which could be used in Bible study, particularly of the New Testament, was multiplying as rapidly as old manuscripts were dug out of the old libraries of Europe and the monasteries of the East."⁷³ It would have been a case of gross carelessness and stupidity on the part of the revisers, if they had ignored the advanced Biblical knowledge and important manuscript

72. Robinson, Op. Cit., pp. 253-254.

73. Price, Op. Cit., p. 284.

finds at their disposal and had failed to make many improvements upon the AV along the line of general accuracy. They did, therefore, produce a version more accurately aligned with the first writings of the originals, insofar as this can be scholarly ascertained. Price takes note of this:

The differences of the Greek text used by the revisers from that used by those who prepared the King James' Version, according to Dr. Scrivener's notes (as cited by Dr. Schaff, Companion, p. 419, note) are seen in the case of 5,788 readings. Only about one in four of these makes any material difference in the substance of the text.⁷⁴

Major Textual Problems

The above mention of 5,788 cases of differences in the Greek text used by the RV men from the text used by the AV men sounds rather tremendous, but most of the differences are minute. In reality the revisers handled the cases rather conservatively. The following examples show what they did with some disputable passages of major interest to theologians and conservative Bible readers today.

In the case of the possibly spurious ending to the Gospel of Mark, ch. 16, vs. 9-20, the RV retained the passage in the regular text of the translation. A marginal note was attached which read: "The two oldest Greek manuscripts, and some other authorities, omit from ver. 9 to

74. Ibid., p. 293.

the end. Some other authorities have a different ending to the Gospel." The ASV of 1901 likewise retained this passage in the regular text with the same marginal note. The RSV of 1946, however, renders it in the form of a footnote with the initial expression: "Some texts and versions add as 16. 9-20 the following passage:" The RV, therefore, treated the matter from a conservative viewpoint.

John 7, 53 to 8, 11 is a similar problem. The RV decided to retain the passage in the regular text. A marginal reference said: "Most of the ancient authorities omit John vii. 53--viii. 11. Those which contain it vary much from each other." The marginal reference shows that although the revisers recognized a tremendous amount of textual criticism against the genuineness of the passage, they still decided to abide by the precedent of the AV, and include the passage in the regular text. The ASV does the same. The RSV footnotes the passage with the caption: "Most of the ancient authorities either omit 7. 53--8. 11, or insert it, with variations of the text, here or at the end of this gospel or after Luke 21. 38."

In Matthew 6, 13, where the AV reads:

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

the RV renders:

And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

with the marginal note: "Many authorities, some ancient,

but with variations, add, For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever. Amen. The ASV is the same on this point. The RSV is almost the same, reading:

And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.'

John 5, 3-4 is given thus in the AV:

In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

Of this passage the RV retains only:

In these lay a multitude of them that were sick, blind, halt, withered.

The remainder is relegated to the margin with the leading remark: "Many ancient authorities insert, wholly or in part," etc. The ASV does likewise. The RSV makes the same omission without any marginal or footnote reference.

Acts 8, 37 reads in the AV:

And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

The RV places the entire verse in the margin with the note:

"Some ancient authorities insert, wholly or in part, ver.

37." The ASV does the same. The RSV follows suit.

The AV expresses I John 5, 7-8 as follows:

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are

three that bear witness in earth, the spirit,
and the water, and the blood: and these three
agree in one.

The RV retains only:

For there are three who bear witness,
the Spirit, and the water, and the blood:
and the three agree in one.

No marginal note is added. The ASV reads the same. The
RSV makes the same omission, reading:

There are three witnesses, the Spirit, the
water, and the blood; and these three agree.

The above textual problems present themselves again
in the study of the RSV and most of them are discussed in
much greater detail under Part IV of this thesis. Besides
these major problems, there are a dozen or so minor cases
where individual verses were omitted, chiefly from the Gos-
pels, in the RV. However, in almost every instance this
latter type of omission is one which entails no loss what-
ever to the New Testament, since the identical or nearly
identical verse is retained in another Gospel, usually in
a parallel account. There is a listing of these instances
under Part IV of this thesis. The similar treatment of
these passages later by the ASV and RSV testify to the
fairly sound textual criticism of the RV men, provided gen-
eral scholarly agreement over a period of sixty years of
careful textual study counts for anything.

Slight Textual Changes

The above examples consist of passages considered

for omission or retention. The following few instances are cases of changes within a passage. The ASV and RSV readings are brought in to afford comparison, while the AV and RV readings are underlined since they are the two versions under discussion.

Matthew 19, 17:

AV: And he said unto him, Why callest thou me

RV: And he said unto him, Why askest thou me

ASV: And he said unto him, Why askest thou me

RSV: And he said to him, "Why do you ask me

AV: concerning that which is good? there is none good

RV: concerning that which is good? One there is who is

ASV: concerning that which is good? One there is who is

RSV: about what is good? One there is who is

AV: but one, that is God: but if thou wilt enter

RV: good: but if thou wouldest enter

ASV: good: but if thou wouldest enter

RSV: good. If you would enter

AV: into life, keep the commandments.

RV: into life, keep the commandments.

ASV: into life, keep the commandments.

RSV: life, keep the commandments.

Mark 3, 29:

AV: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy

RV: but whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy

ASV: but whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy

RSV: but whoever blasphemes against the Holy

AV: Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of

RV: Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of

ASV: Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of

RSV: Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of

AV: eternal damnation:

RV: an eternal sin:

ASV: an eternal sin:

RSV: an eternal sin."

Acts 18, 5:

AV: And when Silas and Timotheus were come
 RV: But when Silas and Timothy came down
 ASV: But when Silas and Timothy came down
 RSV: When Silas and Timothy arrived

AV: from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit,
 RV: from Macedonia, Paul was constrained by the word,
 ASV: from Macedonia, Paul was constrained by the word,
 RSV: from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with preaching,

AV: and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.
 RV: testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.
 ASV: testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.
 RSV: testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus.

Romans 5, 1:

AV: Therefore being justified by faith,
 RV: Being therefore justified by faith,
 ASV: Being therefore justified by faith,
 RSV: Therefore, since we are justified by faith,

AV: we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:
 RV: let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;
 ASV: we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;
 RSV: we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

In this last passage the ASV and RSV mention the let us have as a possibility. They do this by means of a footnote.

General Conservative Bent

One may notice the occasional liberal-conservative tug in some of the above instances of RV translation, especially when one compares the ASV and RSV translations with them. It is rather evident (at least from the above cases), especially in comparison with the RSV of 1946, that the RV followed a fairly conservative bent in its dealings with such textual problems. If one should wish to use the Sixteenth Edition of Nestle's Greek Testament as any sort of criterion,

it would be noticed that in practically every one of the above cases, both of omission and alteration, the rendering of the passages in the RV is in harmony with and closely substantiated by the Nestle's Text.⁷⁵

Literalistic Translation

Robinson states that, although the ethics of translating are a very complicated matter, there are generally speaking two ideals, corresponding to the characteristic tendencies of Oxford and Cambridge Universities. "The Oxford method aims at conveying the sense of the original in free idiomatic English without too much regard to the precise wording of the former." In contrast he presents the Cambridge method which is "to pay meticulous attention to verbal accuracy, to translate as literally as is possible without positive violence to English usage, or positive misrepresentation of the author's meaning, and to leave it to the reader to discern the sense as well as he can from the context."⁷⁶

75. The Nestle's Text referred to is based on the great textual editions of Westcott and Hort, Tischendorf, and Weiss, rather than on the "cheap editions of the so-called Textus Receptus, which goes back to Erasmus." Nestle's Text strives principally to represent the agreement of these scientific editions. Differences of judgment brought in by the appearance of Hermann von Soden's text (1913) are acknowledged in the Sixteenth Edition of the Nestle's Text, but "The criticism, which von Soden's restoration of the text had undergone, did not make it appear necessary to allow it then to give its decisions together with HTW, and thus to change our text accordingly." Cf. Greek New Testament, Newly Revised by Dr. Erwin Nestle, Sixteenth Edition, pp. 4-7.

76. Robinson, Op. Cit., p. 251.

The Cambridge school of thought, that of literalism, prevailed among the RV men. It will be remembered that the AV translators had indulged in much verbal variety concerning identical originals in their work. Such free use of many synonyms for one original Greek word, chiefly for the sake of style, renders an English concordance of the Bible highly misleading, unless the user is aware of this character of the AV translation. Even then it becomes a difficult matter to trace the usage of individual words when there is an unwarranted number of synonyms in English for a single expression in Greek. This factor the RV men set out to overcome by greater conformity to the original expressions, and they indeed found their task of thus re-working the AV quite a complex one. Their complaint in the Preface is:

The frequent inconsistencies in the Authorised Version have caused us much embarrassment from the fact already referred to, namely, that a studied variety of rendering, even in the same chapter and context, was a kind of principle with our predecessors, and was defended by them on grounds that have been mentioned above.⁷⁷

In their effort to follow the Greek text the RV men produced a work which is more faithful to the original than the AV, but their translation is rather literalistic and has lost much of the beauty and force of the AV. Their work was "strong in Greek, weak in English."⁷⁸

77. Preface to the New Testament, Revised A.D. 1881, p. x.

78. Luther A. Weigle, "The Revision of the English Bible," An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, p. 12, quoted from Charles H. Spurgeon.

Minor Improvements

The RV translators followed their instructions to introduce as few alterations as possible into the AV text "consistently with faithfulness," as stated in the first principle agreed upon for guiding their work. They also followed the instruction given in the second principle, namely, that of limiting the expression of such changes to the language of the AV and earlier English versions. They claim in the Preface, and it is evidently true, that they never removed any archaism unless they were convinced that the expression as it stood in the AV was generally misunderstood or misleading. In the cases where new words had to be introduced, they claim to have chosen words which were to be found in writings of the best authors of the period to which they belong. "The frequent inversions of the strict order of the words, which add much to the strength and variety of the Authorized Version, and give an archaic colour to many felicities of diction, have been seldom modified."⁷⁹

The RV men were advised in their seventh instruction to revise the headings of chapters and pages, paragraphs, italics, and punctuations. It was the only rule that they admittedly found themselves unable to observe in its entirety. They failed to revise the headings of chapters and

⁷⁹. Preface to the New Testament, Revised A.D. 1881,
pp. xii-xiii.

pages on the grounds that it required too much individual interpretation of the subject matter. They did, however, arrange the text in paragraphs according to the precedent of the earliest English versions, "so as to assist the general reader in following the current of narrative or argument." The numbers of chapters and verses were placed on the inside margins. Grammar and punctuation were improved where necessary. They left the titles of the books in the same wording as expressed in the AV printing of 1611.⁸⁰

Attitude of the Revisers

The Preface concludes with the following thoughts:

We now conclude, humbly commending our labours to Almighty God, and praying that his favour and blessing may be vouchsafed to that which has been done in his name. We recognised from the first the responsibility of the undertaking; and through our manifold experience of its abounding difficulties we have felt more and more, as we went onward, that such a work can never be accomplished by organised efforts of scholarship and criticism, unless assisted by Divine help. . . .

Thus in the review of the work which we have been permitted to complete, our closing words must be words of mingled thanksgiving, humility, and prayer. Of thanksgiving, for the many blessings vouchsafed to us throughout the unbroken progress of our corporate labours; of humility, for our failings and imperfections in the fulfilment of our task; and of prayer to Almighty God, that the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ may be more clearly and more freshly shewn forth to all who shall be readers of this Book.⁸¹

80. Ibid., pp. xiv-xv.

81. Ibid., p. xv.

Comparison of AV and RV Language

The following two selections will enable one to compare the general tone of language between the RV and the AV. The ordinary eye or ear will find the language of the two quite similar. The first selection is I Corinthians 13, 1-7:

AV: Though I speak with the tongues of men and of
RV: If I speak with the tongues of men and of

angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass,
angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass,

or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of proph-
or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of proph-

ecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and
ecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and

though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains,
if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains,

and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all
but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all

my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be
my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be

burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.
burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not;
Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not;

charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not be-
love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not be-

have itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily
have itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not

provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in in-
provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in un-

iquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all
righteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all

things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth
 things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth
 all things.
 all things.

The second selection is II Peter 3, 8-10:

AV: But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing,

RV: But forget not this one thing, beloved,

that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a
 that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a

thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning
 thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning

his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffer-
 his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffer-

ing to usward, not willing that any should perish, but
 ing to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but

that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord
 that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord

will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens
 will come as a thief ; in the which the heavens

shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall
 shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall

melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the
 be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the

works that are therein shall be burned up.
 works that are therein shall be burned up.

General Evaluation

The opinion is universal that the RV is inferior to
 the AV in dignity and beauty of language. As a work of
 exact scholarship, however, it is an improvement on the AV.⁸²
 Although the AV is used in some churches, it has never even
 approached the point of displacing the long-enduring AV

82. Davis, Op. Cit., p. 803.

with its deep personal associations and general connections with religious publications, liturgies, and theological literature.

PART III: AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

Soon after the publication of the RV in 1885, the English Committee of the Anglo-American project disbanded. The American Committee, however, remained organized, chiefly in the hope that their Appendix of suggestions rejected by the English Committee would be reconsidered and gradually incorporated into the text. This is explained in the Preface to the American edition:

There still remained the possibility that the British Revisers, or the University Presses, might eventually adopt in the English editions many, or the most, of the American preferences, in case these should receive the approval of scholars and the general public. But soon after the close of their work in 1885 the English Revision Companies disbanded; and there has been no indication of an intention on the part of the Presses to amalgamate the readings of the Appendix, either wholly or in part, with the text of the English editions.⁸³

American Committee's Action

The American revisers had not been able to compile their Appendix until after the entire Anglo-American revision had been completed. Such a compilation would require much careful consideration of points which had been deeply involved in previous discussions. Meanwhile the British public had become impatient over their fifteen-year wait for the new version. The University Presses in turn were

83. Preface to the American Edition, prefacing the Old Testament section of the American Standard Version of the Bible, A.D. 1901, p. iii.

insisting on a prompt submission of the Appendix by the American Committee. The Appendix, therefore, had been "prepared under such pressure and in such hast," that its compilers felt that the task had not been aptly performed and hoped for chances to improve their work.⁸⁴ They not only maintained their identity as a revision committee, but they continued contributing their united efforts toward such a goal.

Their hands were tied, of course, for fourteen years after 1885, because of their former agreement with the British Committee that during those years no publication would be made by the Americans which might rival the RV. Later, from 1897 to 1901, they engaged in real earnest work, revising their Appendix and incorporating its alterations into the text of the RV. They also felt free to make any other changes which they saw fit to adopt. Their claim was that "the judgment of scholars, both in Great Britain and in the United States, has so far approved the American preferences that it now seems to be expedient to issue an edition of the Revised Version with those preferences embodied in the text."⁸⁵

Close Similarity of ASV with RV

The Preface placed before the New Testament section of the ASV states that "in formal particulars, this new

84. Ibid., p. iii.

85. Ibid., p. iii.

edition will show but slight and infrequent deviations from its predecessor."⁸⁶ The ASV and RV are quite similar, the former being an American recension of the latter. For all practical purposes then, the opinions and evaluations given concerning the RV in the preceding part of this thesis apply to the ASV as well. There are a few additional considerations.

Differences Between ASV and RV

Two of the most obvious differences of the ASV from the RV are the addition of references to parallel and illustrative Biblical passages and the inclusion of headings to indicate the contents of the pages. There is a trimming down of the number of marginal references contained in the RV so that there are far less of them in the ASV. Some of the chief improvements of the ASV over the RV are the further elimination of archaisms of expression and spelling still retained in the RV, and the substitution of more American words in the place of those restricted to Anglican usage. In dealing with these matters of language, however, the American revisers claim to have "endeavored to act with becoming deference and reserve." In the process of eliminating some of the archaisms they claim that they "have not forgotten that they were dealing with a venerable monument

86. Preface to the American Edition, prefacing the New Testament section of the American Standard Version of the Bible, A.D. 1900, p. iv.

of English usage, and have been careful not to obliterate the traces of its historic origin and descent.⁸⁷

In referring to the Appendix which is subtitled: "List of Readings and Renderings which appear in the Revised New Testament of 1881 in place of those preferred by the American New Testament Revision Company," we find first a catalog of the various types of passages which are contained therein. A brief resume of this catalog will afford a survey of the extent of alteration effected by the ASV over the RV. This resume takes in the following items:⁸⁸

The ASV omits the caption of Saint in the titles and headings of pages of the Gospels. It also omits the Apostle in the titles of the Epistles, with some exceptions, however. The ASV prefers Holy Spirit to the Holy Ghost of the RV. The preposition through is preferred to the preposition by in the rendering of passages referring to prophecy, e.g., Matthew 2, 5:

And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written through the prophet.

The ASV prefers the expression try or make trial of to the tempt of the AV, at least in cases where no wrongdoing is implied in the passage. Matthew 4, 7 is only one of the instances:

87. Ibid., pp. iv-v.

88. The entire following resume is based on the catalog contained in the Appendix of the New Testament, American Standard Version, A.D. 1900, pp. 285-286.

Jesus said unto him, Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God.⁸⁹

The following list of some of the aged expressions retained in the RV but changed in the ASV gives an indication of the reduction of archaisms effected:

RV	ASV
aforetime	once
always	always
an hungred	hungry
drave	drove
for to	to
hale	drag
holpen	given help to
lade	load
listed	would
plait	plat
quick	living
shew	show
judgement	judgment
trod	trod
twain	two
whether	which
wist	knew
wot	know

The ASV renders penny instead of farthing in Matthew 10, 29, Luke 12, 6, and other places. While the RV has used Master in connection with Christ, and in other places, where the original indicated Teacher, the ASV follows the original more strictly, e.g., Matthew 10, 24:

RV: A disciple is not above his master, nor a
 ASV: A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a

servant above his lord.
 servant above his lord.

89. It is interesting to note that in this passage the modern RSV reverts to the old RV use of tempt instead of this rather stilted rendering of the ASV.

The catalog of which the above is the chief content ends with the statement: "Sundry other slight differences occur, particularly in spelling and in minor details of phraseology. These need not be recorded here. A few additional ones which a reader may detect are obviously designed to preserve either uniformity or precision of rendering."

Comparison of RV and ASV Language

The following selection will serve to indicate what type of differences occasionally exist between the RV and ASV texts and also to show how in general the type and style are of the same mold. It is I Corinthians 15, 29 and 34:

RV: Else what shall they do which are baptized for
 ASV: Else what shall they do that are baptized for

the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are
 the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are

they baptized for them? why do we also stand in jeopardy
 they baptized for them? why do we also stand in jeopardy

every hour? I protest by that glorying in you, brethren,
 every hour? I protest by that glorying in you, brethren,

which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If af-
 which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If af-

ter the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what
 ter the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what

doth it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat
 doth it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat

and drink, for to-morrow we die. Be not deceived: Evil
 and drink, for to-morrow we die. Be not deceived: Evil

company doth corrupt good manners. Awake up righteously,
 companionships corrupt good morals. Awake to soberness

and sin not; for some have no knowledge of God:
 righteously, and sin not; for some have no knowledge of God:

I speak this to move you to shame.

I speak this to move you to shame.

General Evaluation

The ASV was, then, more than a mere incorporation of the old Appendix into the text of the RV. The Committee used full freedom in making the changes they deemed necessary. However, aside from the arrangements of headings and other obvious alterations, plus the elimination of some archaisms, it does not differ so very much from the RV. Like the RV it is an overly literalistic translation.

Completion

This American recension of the RV was published August 26, 1901 (both Testaments) by Thomas Nelson & Sons, New York City, as the Standard American Edition of the Revised Version authorized by the American Committee of Revision.⁹⁰ The ASV was presented to the Bible-reading world in the spirit described by its Preface:

The present volume, it is believed, will on the one hand bring a plain reader more closely into contact with the exact thought of the sacred writers than any version now current in Christendom, and on the other hand prove itself especially serviceable to students of the Word. In this belief the editors bid it anew God-speed, and in

90. Price, Op. Cit., p. 304.

the realization of this desired result they will find their all-sufficient reward.⁹¹

Reception of the ASV

When Price wrote at the turn of the century he made the statement that "This American Revised Version has achieved an ever-increasing popularity since its appearance five years ago (1901)." He says that it was adopted by the American Bible Society and that the demand for it had been so constant that it was issued by the publishers who own the copyright in one hundred different styles.⁹²

As we look back over the scene we notice that this initial enthusiasm of the American public for the ASV did not maintain as great a fervor as Price thought it would. The AV is still the English Bible. On the other hand, the ASV has been widely purchased and is probably being used by many more Christian laymen and clergymen, also for public worship, than is generally noted. Goodspeed in 1935 wrote that "as a matter of fact the English Revised Bible of 1881-85 has, we are told, actually displaced the King James in the use of Canterbury Cathedral and Westminster Abbey." He also states that "In the Protestant Episcopal Church in America Canon 45 provides that the lessons at the morning and evening service shall be read in the King James Bible ('which is the standard Bible of this church'), or in the Revised Version, or

91. Preface to the American Edition, prefacing the New Testament section of the American Standard Version of the Bible, A.D. 1900, p. v.

92. Price, Op. Cit., p. 305.

in the American Standard Version."⁹³ That fairly well tells the story also concerning most of the larger Protestant bodies, namely, that the AV is still the standard Bible, but the RV and especially the ASV are allowed and used occasionally by many and frequently by some.

93. Goodspeed, Op. Cit., p. 6.

PART IV: REVISED STANDARD VERSION

In 1928 Thomas Nelson & Sons transferred their copyright of the ASV to the International Council of Religious Education, with which the educational boards of forty-four of the major Protestant bodies of the United States and Canada are associated. The I.C.R.E. appointed a committee of fifteen scholars to be in charge of the text and authorized the committee to undertake further revision if it was considered necessary. In view of the shortcomings of the ASV, chiefly the over literal type of translation, and because of the additional manuscript and papyri finds, and the better understanding of the Greek of the New Testament, these men began a process of study and revision.⁹⁴ Their general reasons for entering upon this new revision are fairly well summed up in one paragraph of the preface to the New Testament of 1946:

Let it be said here simply that all of the reasons which led to the demand for revision of the King James Version one hundred years ago are still valid, and are even more cogent now than then. And we cannot be content with the Versions of 1881 and 1901 for two main reasons. One is that these are mechanically exact, literal, word-for-word translations, which follow the order of the Greek words, so far as this is possible, rather than the order which is natural to English; they are more accurate than the King James Version, but have lost some of its beauty and power as English literature. The second reason is that the discovery of a few more ancient manuscripts

94. W. Russell Bowie, "The New Testament, A New Translation," The Atlantic Monthly, August, 1946, Vol. 178, No. 2, p. 123.

of the New Testament and of a great body of Greek papyri dealing with the everyday affairs of life in the early centuries of the Christian era, has furnished scholars with new resources, both for seeking to recover the original text of the Greek New Testament and for understanding its language.⁹⁵

The study and work which was begun by the committee, however, was of short duration and was suspended entirely in 1932 because of lack of funds.⁹⁶

Principles of Translation

In 1937 the necessary budget was provided and the work of revision was commenced once more. A definition of the task and the general instructions of the I.C.R.E. to guide the translators are quoted by Luther Weigle, member of the translating committee:

"There is need for a version which embodies the best results of modern scholarship as to the meaning in English diction which is designed for use in public and private worship and preserves those qualities which have given to the King James Version a supreme place in English literature. We, therefore, define the task of the American Standard Bible Committee to be that of revision of the present American Standard Bible in the light of the results of modern scholarship, this revision to be designed for use in public and private worship, and to be in the direction of the simple, classic English style of the King James Version."⁹⁷

It is further brought out by Weigle, in connection with the

95. Preface to the New Testament, Revised Standard Version, A.D. 1946, pp. v-vi.

96. Bowie, Op. Cit., p. 123.

97. Luther A. Weigle, "The Revision of the English Bible," An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, p. 11.

charter of the committee, that the charter contains the provision that "'all changes in the text shall be agreed upon by two-thirds vote of the total membership of the Committee'--a more conservative rule than had governed revision hitherto, which required only a two-thirds vote of members present."⁹⁸

Personnel

The committee for revision was divided into sections, one for the New Testament and one for the Old. In a separately published brochure containing articles by the members of the New Testament section, there is a list of thirty men who were or are working as translators on the project. Eleven of these men are listed as being on the New Testament section, two of them on both the New Testament and the Old Testament sections, and seventeen of them on the Old Testament section.⁹⁹ With the Bible committee there has been associated an advisory board¹⁰⁰ consisting usually of men who are representatives of the denominations affiliated with the I.C.R.E. This board was set up to act in an advisory capacity only, to render opinions, and to give suggestions when these are solicited.¹⁰¹

98. Ibid., pp. 10-11.

99. An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, pp. 6-7.

100. Ibid., pp. 71-72. One item on the Advisory Board list reads: "Missouri Lutheran Synod: Dr. George V. Schick, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo."

101. Weigle, Op. Cit., p. 13.

The chairman of the whole Bible committee, both sections, has been Dean Luther A. Weigle of Yale Divinity School. The secretary was James Moffatt until his death in 1944. When Bowie wrote his article for the Atlantic Monthly, describing the men and the procedure of working on the revision project, he listed nine men as being active in this revision of the New Testament. These nine men are listed below with a fact or two concerning their religious background and major educational interest, besides the mention of only one or two of their works. One must remember that the fields of endeavor and experience of these men, as well as the total sum of their written works, go far beyond the tiny sampling here furnished chiefly by way of identifying the men. For example, Goodspeed has become the author of perhaps fifty or more books, while only four which seem to be pertinent to the field of New Testament translation are herein mentioned. The brief descriptive notes added concerning the activity of the men in the actual translating are those of Bowie in his aforementioned article.¹⁰²

WEIGLE, College professor, born 1880.
 Luther A. Dean of Yale Divinity School since 1928.
 Ordained in Lutheran ministry, 1903.
 Director of Congregational Educational Society,
 1917-1936.
 President of the Federal Council of Churches of
 Christ, 1940-1942.

102. The sprinkling of facts related to these men are taken from Who's Who in America, Vol. 24, 1946-1947, with the exception of the deceased Moffatt, whose achievements are listed in Vol. 23, 1944-1945. The personal notes mentioned by Bowie concerning these men are taken from Op. Cit., pp. 124-125.

Author of: Jesus and the Educational Method, 1939.

("round-faced, hearty, and genial, endowed with what seemed to be an inexhaustible and unflagging energy. . . Dead in earnest, he transmitted his sense of compelling responsibility to all the others.")

CADBURY,
Henry J.

Educator, born 1883. (Pacifist.)

Hollis Professor of Divinity at Harvard Divinity School since 1934.

Professor of New Testament Interpretation for a number of years.

Chairman of the American Friends Service Commission since 1944.

Author of: The Style and Literary Method of Luke, 1919, and The Peril of Modernizing Jesus, 1937.

(" . . . a scholar of the most implacable patience, never content to let any decision be reached until every imaginable point of doubt as to the exact text to be preferred among variant manuscripts and the exact shade of meaning to be attributed to each Greek word or phrase had been pursued to the ultimate. . . to his placid Quaker resolution may be attributed the fact that nothing the committee ever did was casual or careless or in haste.")

GOODSPEED,
Edgar J.

University professor, born 1871. (Baptist.)

Professor emeritus of Chicago University.

Worked in the field of Biblical and patristic Greek.

Lecturer in Biblical literature.

Author of: Greek Papyri from the Cairo Museum, 1902, Greek Gospel Texts in America, 1918, The New Testament, An American Translation, 1923, Problems of New Testament Translation, 1945.

(" . . . a scholar of wide learning and confident mastery, a ready fighter in linguistic battles, with a razor-like incisiveness of thought and speech, an aroused and formidable protagonist for a particular view, especially when this fell within the area of evidence drawn from the recently discovered papyri, to which he attached immense importance.")

MOFFATT,
James

Professor of Church History, born 1484.

Minister of United Free Church of Scotland, 1896-1912.

Professor at Union Theological Seminary.

Author of: Introduction to Literature of the New Testament, 1911, Approach to the New Testament, 1921, Translation of the New Testament, 1922.

("Tall and frail and soft-spoken he embodied always an Old World courtesy. Some times in the discussion of a suggested translation he would urge his own long-considered judgment with animation and force, but at other times he would fall completely silent . . . refusing to throw his weight toward a particular decision lest it might seem that he was trying to introduce his own personal rendering too much into the verdict of us all.")

BOWIE,
W.
Russell

Clergyman, born 1882.

Deacon, 1908; priest, 1909; Protestant Episcopal Church.

Rector of Grace Church, New York, 1923-1939.

Professor of Practical Theology of Union Theological Seminary since 1939.

Author of: The Story of Jesus, 1937, The Bible, 1940.¹⁰³

GRANT,
Frederick
C.

Clergyman, author, born 1891.

Deacon, 1912; priest 1913; Protestant Episcopal Church.

Rector of several churches successively over a period of years.

Professor of Systematic Theology.

Professor of New Testament at Union Theological Seminary since 1938.

Author of: The Life and Times of Jesus, 1921, Form Criticism--A New Method of New Testament Research, 1934.

(" . . . ranking with Moffatt and Cadbury and Graig in his mastery not only of the language of the New Testament, but also of its background of Greek and Aramaic influences, a large man, quiet and unruffled, with exact opinions always advanced with considerate courtesy, and with the fine literary sense native to one accustomed to the liturgy of the Anglican Church.")

103. Since Bowie is the writer of the article from which the personal notes about the men are taken for this listing, we have no such remarks about Bowie himself. He, no doubt, has the experience and qualities which enable him to fit in well with this group of scholarly gentlemen.

BURROWS,
Miller

Clergyman, educator, born 1889.
Ordained in the ministry of the Presbyterian Church, 1915.
Pastor of rural church in Texas, 1915-1919.
Professor of Biblical Theology.
Now of Yale Divinity School.
Author of: The Literary Relations of Ezekiel, 1925, What Mean These Stones?, 1941.
(" . . . his knowledge not only of Greek but of Hebrew made him equally valuable in both O.T. and N.T. sections.")

CRAIG,
Clarence
T.

Clergyman, educator, born 1895.
Ordained in the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1918.
Pastor of several churches successively.
Professor of New Testament language and literature.
Now at Oberlin Divinity School.
Author of: The Study of the New Testament, 1939, One God, One World, 1943.
("Nearly always next to him Cadbury at work, . . . and the two were well matched in thorough scholarship, in exact knowledge, and in clear expression of what they thought.")

WENTZ,
Abdel R.

Clergyman, educator, born 1883.
President of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg.
Ordained in the Lutheran ministry, 1907.
Professor of history.
Author of: The Lutheran Church in American History, 1923, A New Strategy for Theological Education, 1937.
(" . . . the member most recently added to the committee, but one of the most energetic and helpful, who had opinions of his own which he defended with great tenacity, yet who, as chairman, could be as impartial as he was prompt. As a member of the committee he had one pet aversion. He hated what he called 'backing into an idea.' By that phrase he was expressing a general dislike for any kind of sentence that did not follow the most obvious and straightforward order. Any inversion for rhetorical emphasis or for rhythm seemed to him unnatural. In most of his objections he would be outvoted, but he would come up to the next contest fresh and undismayed; and for the terseness and simplicity which may often be found in the new translation, part of the credit is due to him.")

Translating Procedure

The translators had a definite procedure in handling the work. Each book of the New Testament was assigned to one or two of the members of the committee for preliminary translation. A typewritten copy of this first draft was then sent to all the other members of the New Testament group to be studied before the next meeting. "At the meeting, with all the men sitting around a table, it would be discussed word by word, verse by verse." A new draft, altered according to the results of the meeting, was then prepared by the secretary (Dr. Moffatt), and this draft was mimeographed and distributed for further study. This revision would then be again studied and changed at a following meeting.¹⁰⁴

When the entire New Testament had been thus translated into preliminary form, then twice reviewed by the entire membership of the session, copies were sent to the men of the Old Testament section for their comments and opinions. Other scholars "widely representative of different churches," were invited to read the manuscript and make their criticisms. "With these in hand," the whole New Testament was reviewed for the third time at a session lasting two weeks in Northfield, Massachusetts, in August, 1943.

104. This discussion on translating procedure, as well as the next discussion, about the meetings, is based on Bowie, Op. Cit., p. 124.

Meetings

The number of meetings amounted to thirty-one separate sessions, varying in length from three days to more than two weeks, and covering a total of 145 days. The meetings were conducted over a period of about eight years, if we regard the year 1937, when the work was reinstated and properly budgeted, as the serious beginning of the project. (The work on the Old Testament continues at present, with hopes of finishing in 1950.)

Some of the meetings were held at Union Theological Seminary in Frederick Grant's study. Many of them were held at Yale Divinity School. For two summers the men met as guests of Dr. and Mrs. Edgar J. Goodspeed on Paradise Island, Plum Lake, Wisconsin. The final meeting was held in the Chateau of the Inn at East Northfield, Massachusetts.

The meetings usually began at nine o'clock in the morning in a session which lasted until lunch. The afternoon session continued until "about an hour before dinner-time, and after dinner there was a third session until it was time to go to bed." The men put in a total of about nine hours every day, sitting about a long table, holding before them the manuscripts of that portion of the New Testament which was under discussion. In the middle of the table or near at hand were the lexicons, reference books, other translations, and other material.

The Greek Text

The problem of the Greek text in the case of this version of the New Testament involves mainly a re-consideration of the same problems already before the RV men of the nineteenth century. Recent manuscript finds have provided a little additional information concerning some passages.

The ASV men seem to have placed much stock in the manuscript of the Old Syriac version of the Gospels, from the monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai, found by Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Gibson in 1892. This text is considered older than the Curetonian Syriac and "probably dates from the second century." It therefore "testifies to the state of the Greek text from which it was translated, perhaps around 150 A.D."¹⁰⁵

In this connection there is also mentioned a "remarkable discovery of a fragment of Tatian's Diatessaron in Greek, found at Dura on the Euphrates by the Yale Expedition in 1933, and edited by Professor Carl Kraeling."

Another "important discovery" was a find called the "Washington" manuscript, purchased at Cairo in 1906 by Mr. Charles Freer of Detroit. "It contains a mixed text; i.e., some parts were copied from one type of manuscript, others from other types."

105. The following discussion of the Greek text used by the revisers is based on Frederick C. Grant, "The Greek Text of the New Testament," An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, pp. 37-43.

"Even more important" are the Chester Beatty manuscripts. They were discovered in 1931 and consist of the fragments of twelve manuscripts, eight Old Testament, three New Testament, and one containing part of Enoch. The "leading experts agree that they were copied for the most part in the third century--a hundred years, presumably, before Vaticanus and Sinaiticus!" The Gospels and Acts are considered to have come from the first half of the third century and the fragments of the Pauline letters not later than 250 A.D., thus placing them much earlier than the "great uncials" upon which Westcott and Hort and the earlier revisers relied.

Besides the above, scores of papyrus fragments were discovered, and "even some vellum codices have continued to turn up." The ninth-century Koridethi Gospels were edited by Beermann and Gregory in 1913. Also mentioned are The Rockefeller McCormick New Testament (thirteenth century), The Four Gospels of Karahissar (thirteenth century), and The Elizabeth Day McCormick Apocalypse (seventeenth century), with the consideration that even these late Byzantine manuscripts are not to be overlooked, because they are occasionally "of real importance in establishing the earlier text."

In addition to the Greek and Syriac manuscripts, much attention was given to other versions, such as the Sahidic, Armenian, "and above all the Latin, especially the Old Latin,

perhaps contemporaneous with the Old Syriac, i.e., around 150 A.D."

Textual Criticism

The RSV revisers applied their own textual criticism and evaluations to these finds, as well as to the previously available texts of the Greek Testament. The Greek text of the RSV is not that of Westcott-Hort, Nestle, or Souter, though the statement is made by Grant that as a rule the readings which they adopted will be found either in the text or in the margin of the Seventeenth Edition of Nestle (Stuttgart, 1941). The following paragraph by Grant will indicate the general type of textual criticism which prevailed among the RSV translators:

It was a part of our commission to take into account the progress of modern Biblical research. This most certainly includes textual research or criticism. We have endeavored to discharge this part of our commission as faithfully as we could. And it is really extraordinary how often, with the fuller apparatus of variant readings at our disposal, and with the eclectic principle now more widely accepted, we have concurred in following Westcott and Hort. Not that we agreed in advance in favor of Hort--quite the contrary, there was no such unanimity; our agreement is really a tribute to Westcott-Hort, which is still the great classical edition of modern times. I find that we have adopted only one conjectural emendation (in Jude 5, "he who . . ."), and this is one that Hort discussed in his notes, and favored. We have made considerable use of the Chester Beatty fragments; in fact we have consulted them constantly, and have occasionally adopted readings from that source, when supported by others. Usually the Beatty fragments range

themselves with Aleph and B, i.e., Sinaiticus and Vaticanus.¹⁰⁶

Besides the fact that choosing the correct variant cannot be done by totaling manuscripts or "weighting" or generally evaluating single manuscripts, the revisers of the RSV also considered it unreliable to follow such general rules of thumb as: "Let the harder reading prevail," or "The shorter reading is the more probable one," or "The true reading wins out in the end." On the other hand, they find that the style of a New Testament author is given more weight in the field of textual criticism today than it was in the nineteenth century. Grant quotes favorably the general premise stated by Kenyon in his Text of the Greek Bible:

"In the first two centuries this original text disappeared under a mass of variants, created by errors, by conscious alterations, and by attempts to remedy the uncertainties thus created. Then, as further attempts to recover the lost truth were made, the families of text that we now know took shape. They were, however, nuclei rather than completed forms of text, and did not at once absorb all the atoms that the period of disorder had brought into existence."¹⁰⁷

In their textual criticism the RSV men operated on the basis that "all changes in the text shall be agreed upon by a two-thirds vote of the total membership of the Committee," thereby including even the votes of committeemen who may be absent. They were guided chiefly by the three following

106. Grant, Op. Cit., pp. 41-42.

107. Ibid., p. 40.

principles in their process of textual criticism:

We may venture to state the general situation at present, and the new rules now in force, somewhat as follows:

1. No one type of text is infallible, or to be preferred by virtue of its generally superior authority.

2. Each reading must be examined on its merits, and preference must be given to those readings which are demonstrably in the style of the author under consideration.

3. Readings which explain other variants, but are not contrariwise themselves to be explained by the others, merit our preference; but this is a very subtle process, involving intangible elements, and liable to subjective judgment on the part of the critic.¹⁰⁸

Important Textual Changes

Most of the important textual changes from the AV had already been introduced by the RV and ASV. If the changes were not actually made by the RV and ASV, they were strongly hinted at in the footnotes or marginal references.

The RSV eliminates the doubtful passage of Mark 16, 9-20 from the body of the text and renders it in the form of a footnote. The authenticity of this section had been doubted by many of the men who worked on the RV and the ASV, but an element of highly conservative regard for the form of the AV caused its retention in the body of the text, with an explanatory marginal reference. Without going into all the subtle pros and cons concerning the genuineness of this

108. Ibid., p. 41.

passage, we would quote the following remarks of Dr. Chamberlain which contain objective facts concerning the treatment of this passage in the original manuscripts. Dr. Chamberlain says in the February 1st, 1947 issue of The Presbyterian:

This passage has been translated, but printed in small italics at the end of the Gospel. The translation is introduced with the words: "Some texts and versions add as 16:9-20 the following passage." As a matter of fact, these verses are found in the great majority of Greek manuscripts, but they are all of late date. In textual criticism, a reading is not decided by numerical majority, but by historical evidence. In general, the earlier manuscripts are more accurate.

Besides this familiar ending to the Gospel, there are at least four others known. Some manuscripts and versions have a much shorter ending, which has also been translated and printed below the longer ending in the R. S. V. A few manuscripts have both endings. The Washington manuscript of the Gospels has the familiar ending, with an insertion after verse 14, which has not been found elsewhere. The earliest and most accurate manuscripts end at verse 8 with the words, "for they feared." Nearly all scholars have felt that this was a queer way to end a Gospel. None of the other three end upon a note of fear; they all close with a note of triumph.

There can be no real question as to whether these verses were in the Gospel in its original form. The evidence against it is overwhelming. . . . We lose nothing of Christian truth by omitting this passage.¹⁰⁹

These same facts mentioned by Dr. Chamberlain evidently made it impossible for the RSV men to honestly keep this passage on a textual par with the rest of the Gospel of Mark. Therefore the RSV prints it in italics in a footnote section.

109. W. Douglas Chamberlain, "Explain Please," The Presbyterian, February 1, 1947, Vol. CXVII, No. 5, p. 8.

The RSV eliminates the doubtful passage of John 7, 53 to 8, 11, and renders it in the form of a footnote, in italics. The genuineness of this passage had been doubted by many of the men who worked on the RV and the ASV, but, as with the Mark passage, it was allowed by them to remain with an explanatory marginal reference. Dr. Chamberlain's brief and simple resume of manuscript evidence is worth noting:

The story of the woman taken in adultery is also omitted by all of the best authorities, both manuscripts in Greek and the early translations. The Eusebian Canons also omit this passage. Some manuscripts place this story at the end of the Gospel of John. One places it after John 7:26; twelve (the Ferrar Group) put it in the Gospel of Luke after 21:38.

Unquestionably, this was not a part of the Gospel of John in its original form. The translators have dealt quite honestly with the reader in having it printed in italics, as in the case of Mark 16:9-20.

If this story was not a part of the Gospel of John, is it a true incident in Jesus' ministry? I believe that it is. We must remember that the Gospel writers did not try to tell all that they knew about Jesus. See John 20:30,31.¹¹⁰

In Matthew 6, 13 the doxological ending to the Lord's Prayer is omitted in the RSV. Mention of this fact is made in a footnote. This passage had been treated in the same way by the RV and ASV. The reasons for such omission seem rather overwhelming:

This doxology to the Lord's Prayer does not occur in the oldest and best Greek manuscripts. It is also absent from the best Greek manuscripts.

110. Ibid., p. 8.

It is also absent from the best copies of the Old Latin version. Both Origen and Cyprian omit it, in quoting from the Lord's Prayer. It appears in no Greek MS before the fifth century A. D. When the doxology does occur, in other manuscripts and versions, it has many variations in wording. This fact of itself casts suspicion upon its genuineness. Altogether, it is quite certain that the doxology was not originally in Matthew's Gospel. It is a later liturgical addition to the prayer as it was adapted to use in public worship.

Theologically, it is in harmony with the rest of the prayer, and therefore, it is quite appropriate to use it in our own worship.¹¹¹

I John 5, 7 is omitted in the RSV as it was also omitted in the RV and ASV. The underlying reason for this omission seems to be rather simple:

The "Three heavenly witnesses" are omitted from this verse. The words, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one," do not occur in any Greek manuscript before the 16th century. When Erasmus published the first printed Greek Testament in 1516, he omitted these words, which did occur in some Latin translations. He was chided for this and rashly promised to print them in his next edition if a single Greek manuscript could be found which contained them. Two were made to order, and Erasmus reluctantly included these words in his next edition. It was from this source that they came into our English translations.¹¹²

The passages, besides the above, which have been placed in the footnotes and omitted from the regular text in the RSV, are the following:

Matthew 12, 47: Some one told him, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside,

111. Ibid., p. 8.

112. Ibid., p. 8.

asking to speak to you." (The RV and ASV retain the passage in the text, but add the footnote that some ancient authorities omit it.)

Matthew 17, 21: But this kind never comes out except by prayer and fasting. (Also omitted from the text in the RV and ASV. Compare, however, Mark 9, 29.)

Matthew 18, 11: For the Son of man came to save that which was lost. (Also omitted from the text in the RV and ASV. Compare, however, Luke 19, 10.)

Matthew 23, 14: Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you devour widows' houses, and for a pretence you make long prayers; therefore you will receive the greater condemnation. (Also omitted from the text in the RV and ASV. Compare, however, Mark 12, 40 and Luke 20, 47.)

Mark 7, 16: If any man has ears to hear, let him hear. (Also omitted from the text in the RV and ASV. Compare, however, ch. 4, 9 & 23.)

Mark 9, 44 and 46: where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched. (These verses, which are identical with v. 48, are also omitted in the RV and ASV.)

Mark 11, 26: But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your trespasses. (Also omitted from the text in the RV and ASV. Compare, however, Matthew 6, 15, and 18, 35.)

Mark 15, 28: And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "He was reckoned among the transgressors." (Also omitted from the text in the RV and ASV. Compare, however, Luke 22, 37.)

Luke 17, 36: Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. (Also omitted from the text in the RV and ASV. Compare, however, Matthew 24, 40.)

Luke 22, 19b-20: which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And likewise the cup after supper, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. (The RV and ASV retain this passage in the text,

but add the footnote that some ancient authorities omit "which is given for you" . . . "which is poured out for you." Compare, however, Matthew 26, 26, Mark 14, 22, and I Corinthians 11, 23-26.)

Luke 23, 17: Now he was obliged to release one man to them at the festival. (Also omitted from the text in the RV and ASV. Compare, however, Matthew 27, 15, Mark 15, 6, and John 18, 39.)

Luke 24, 12: But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stopping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home wondering at what had happened. (The RV and ASV retain this verse in the text, but add the footnote to the effect that some ancient authorities omit it.)

Luke 24, 40: And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. (The RV and ASV retain this verse in the text but add a footnote to the effect that some ancient authorities omit it. Compare, however, John 20, 20 and 27.)

Acts 8, 37: And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Also omitted from the text in the RV and ASV.)

Acts 15, 34: But it seemed good to Silas to remain there. (Also omitted from the text in the RV and ASV.)

Acts 24, 6b-8a: and we would have judged him according to our law. But the chief captain Lysias came and with great violence took him out of our hands, commanding his accusers to come before you. (Also omitted from the text in the RV and ASV.)

Romans 16, 24: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. (Also omitted from the text in the RV and ASV. Compare, however, verse 20.)

Accusation of "Liberalistic" Distortion of Text

There is a feeling in some quarters that the RSV men's

treatment of the text is "Liberalistic" and Modernistic.¹¹³ This question will be re-considered under the general discussion of the translation principles followed by the men. However, in connection with the textual problems, it may be noted that all of the above-listed passages had been questioned by the RV and ASV men, who worked at the end of the nineteenth century. Practically all of these passages had been already relegated to the footnotes by the RV and ASV men. It may be noted also that the passages, as indicated in the list, are usually well duplicated in other Gospels or portions of the New Testament, and that no Scriptural content is lost by their removal from the individual authentic text. Surely nothing but convenience and custom prevents their being removed from the text if the best Christian scholarship available during the past sixty years warrants their omission. If the RSV men had ulterior motives, or if their scholarship was overcome by a strong "Liberal" bias, then it will have to be shown from something other than these cases of textual omissions.

113. Cf. Dr. Samuel M. Zwemer, "The Revised Standard Version Once More," reprinted in the Concordia Theological Monthly, Vol. XVII, No. 12, December, 1946, pp. 926-929. There are a number of adverse criticisms quoted here from other articles in other publications, which hinge upon such sentiments as: "of what appears to us a definitely Modernist tendency," concerning the RSV. Some of the complaints raised are those discussed in the following pages of this thesis. Most of the complaints consist of deploring certain changes without considering the textual evidence before and available to the RSV translators.

In the cases of the longer Mark and John passages, even if one should wish to grant that there is as much evidence in favor of retaining those sections as in dismissing them from the text (which is doubtful), it would seem that the person who is seeking the purest possible original text (as surely the orthodox believer in divine inspiration) would be grateful to the RSV translators for noting the doubtful nature of these passages and indicating it. Their treatment of these passages conforms very well with the sixteenth edition of Nestle's Greek Testament (published in 1936). While their disposition toward these passages may not be as sympathetic with tradition as some would wish, and while their personal Christian beliefs may be "Liberal," there is nothing here to indicate any either malicious or mild endeavor to weaken or taint any existing credo of orthodoxy. Their treatment of the passages seems to be the result of uncompromising and honest scholarship. It seems to be the most accurate and disinterested result that can be obtained with present-day knowledge of the problem.

Modern Translation Aids Used

Discoveries of manuscripts and the study of textual criticism were not the only advancements of scholarship during the past decades. The recently published papyri have in turn contributed much toward lexical and grammatical study. The RSV Committee had the additional benefit of

eight lexicons of the Greek New Testament produced within the past twenty-five years. They were especially fortunate in having the use of the great revision of the Liddell-Scott work, the standard Greek lexicon, completed in 1941. Besides these works, the men also had the use of all the private translations produced during the past centuries.¹¹⁴

Moderately Idiomatic Translation

One member of the RSV Committee states the basic principle of their translating as follows:

The Committee consistently proceeded on the assumption that its duty was to translate the Greek Text of the New Testament, not to reconstruct any document or tradition that may have lain behind it. Having determined as best we could the correct text of each passage, we have tried to reproduce the meaning of that text accurately and clearly in acceptable English. Only where this fundamental purpose seemed to us to demand it have we felt free to depart from the familiar language of the American Standard or the King James versions. Therefore the Committee has not considered it either necessary or permissible to paraphrase words or phrases expressing traditional Jewish ideas. Such terms, for example, as "kingdom of heaven" or "Son of man" have been translated literally, as in previous versions. To interpret them in the light of their Jewish background is the task of the commentator, not the translator.¹¹⁵

This paragraph by Millar Burrows may give the impression that the revisers endeavored to translate somewhat on

114. Edgar J. Goodspeed, "The Making of the New Testament," An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, p. 35.

115. Millar Burrows, "The Semitic Background of the New Testament," An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, p. 22.

a literalistic and word for word basis. However, Burrows writes the above in connection with the problem of injecting the Semitic background of the New Testament into the translation. While in such matters, as the expressions "Son of man," "kingdom of God," etc., the revisers wisely avoided any paraphrasing but retained the old phrases word for word, nevertheless, in general we do find a rather free style of translating which even resorts to paraphrasing in some cases. Another member of the committee expresses it this way:

We have sought to mediate between the original writer and the modern reader. It has been our effort not only to determine as precisely as possible what we understand the original writer to mean, but to take that exact message and transmit it in terms that the reader and hearer of our day cannot misunderstand. . . . Not all of the metaphors hidden away in the Greek could be brought out for the understanding of the English reader. Sometimes obscure words or expressions were made meaningful through paraphrases. Occasionally the order of words was changed to fit the English idiom. Often a participle was resolved into a clause to conform to the manner of writing and speaking in our time.¹¹⁶

The RSV men have taken some of the translators' liberties that the AV men took and a few more. In doing so, however, they have contributed much to the understandability of the text. Their principle of translating the meanings of the original rather than just an array of words, renders

116. Abdel Ross Wentz, "The New Testament and the Word of God," An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, pp. 67-68.

the resultant work a much better overall translation than its predecessors. This type of translating, of course, involves a good deal of subjective handling of the text on the part of the translators. When any good type of translating is engaged in, namely, that of translating meanings and not just words, it gives the reader a particular right to want to know what kind of men and minds performed the translating. Therefore, when the conservative reader learns that these men apparently are rather "Liberal" Christians, he is apt to decide a priori that the translation must needs be well tainted with a liberal bias.

It must be admitted that any translation of any work will contain a certain amount of impurity, a certain imperfection of thought transfer from one language to the other. This is one of the reasons why the value of knowing the Holy Scriptures in the original languages by the Christian clergy must ever be highly estimated. But in this world of imperfections, the question must not be concerning a vernacular translation "Is there any influence whatever of the mental set of the translators upon this work?" but "To what extent is this translation distorted by the general bias of the translators?"

Controversial Renderings

There are several particular instances where the translation problems were handled in such a manner by the revisers as to arouse suspicion, to cause one to wonder whether perhaps

their usually dependable scholarship was not marred considerably by a "Liberal" bent of mind. The chief instances of this type are quoted below (with controversial parts underlined) and discussed.

Mark 15, 39

AV

And when the centurion,
which stood over against him
saw that he so cried out,
and gave up the ghost he said,
Truly this man was the Son
of God.

RSV

And when the centurion,
who stood facing him,
saw that he thus breathed
his last, he said,
"Truly this man was a son
of God."

It is possible that the revisers are correct in the above rendering of a son of God instead of with the definite article. The Greek does not have the article, and they have no doubt reasoned that the heathen Roman soldier did not have the Christian point of view, and, therefore, the highest tribute that he could pay Jesus was that of calling him a son of God.

On the other side of the picture, the Greek grammarian knows that a predicate nominative when it precedes the linking verb does not need to have the article to be considered definite. The phrase, therefore, could be rendered the Son of God.

By way of interest, it may be mentioned that Thayer regards the title in this connection as having "a heathen sense, as uttered by the Roman centurion of Jesus, a 'Demigod' or 'hero.'" Vincent also regards it as a son of God. There are many good scholars, though, who will maintain the opposite. We find it difficult to insist that it must definitely

be one or the other. While a more conservative course would have avoided the change from the AV and the arousing of protest from some quarters, it is nevertheless well within the realm of possibility that the RSV revisers have the more accurate rendering.¹¹⁷ (The parallel passage of Matthew 27, 54 involves the same question.)

Was it, therefore, because of their "Liberal" bias that the RSV revisers rendered this passage with the indefinite article? Would more conservative men of equivalent training and equal scholarship have unwaveringly differed from them and regarded their action as biased? It is one thing to disagree with their translation here; it is quite another to maintain that it is unfair and biased.

John 3, 16

AV

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

RSV

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

The Greek word involved etymologically means only-begotten. It seems that its usage at the time of the New Testament was limited to that of sons and daughters, and that it simply meant to be an only son or an only daughter, just

117. For further consideration of this matter, compare Paul M. Bretscher, "The Most Important Publication of 1946," in the Cresset, Vol. IX, No. 6, April, 1946, p. 23; also Floyd V. Filson, "The Revised Standard New Testament," in Theology Today, Vol. III, No. 2, July, 1946, pp. 228-229; Joseph Henry Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 636; Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament, Vol. I, p. 232, and others.

as we would say today, "He is her only child." The Greek word is the same one used also in Luke 7, 12; 8, 42, and 9, 38. In those places the AV itself translates: "the only son of his mother," "he had one only daughter," and "for he is mine only child," respectively. The AV was rather inconsistent in translating merely only in these cases and then switching to only-begotten in connection with the John 3, 16 passage. It was perhaps done with the laudable appreciation of the fact that words used to describe the Son of God are of greater import in such connection. Furthermore, in discussing fine points of theology, seriously and conclusively, one would surely be obliged to consult and consider the actual original with its basic concepts, connotations, and depths of meaning. But for ordinary translating purposes, if the word was used in the way we today use the word only when speaking of a son or daughter (as the AV did in the instances in Luke), then is it not a good translation when that word is also rendered only in John 3, 16, as also the Apostle's Creed simply expresses it: "And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord"?

Perhaps we may feel offended at the way the RSV dropped the familiar begotten from this passage. We may feel that the word really intends to stress the begotten part of its essential meaning, and that all the other passages where it occurs in the New Testament should have been rendered only-begotten. But should we point to the RSV translation of

John 3, 16 as indicative of poor scholarship, as an unfair treatment of the matter, and as a definitely provable outcropping of Modernistic bias?

Romans 9, 5

AV

Whose are the fathers,
and of whom as concerning
the flesh Christ came, who
is over all, God blessed
for ever. Amen.

RSV

to them belong the patri-
archs, and of their race,
according to the flesh, is
the Christ. God who is over
all be blessed forever.
Amen.

Of the instances usually cited to argue a distortion of the text by the RSV revisers due to Modernistic bias, this one is one of the most cogent. It seems to be somewhat of a strain on the Greek order of the words to translate this as the RSV men do. To get an idea of the import of this problem, it would be helpful to note the entire paragraph written by Floyd V. Filson in this connection, from perhaps a "Liberal" viewpoint:

Did Paul call Christ "God"? The answer depends on the translation of Rom. 9:5, where Paul either concludes his enumeration of the God-given privileges of Israel with an outburst of praise to God for such blessings, or adds to his mention of Christ the fact that he is God blessed forever. In favor of the former alternative are certain facts: such an expression of praise to God is found twice in the Gospels and five other times in Paul's letters, always with clear reference to God the Father; elsewhere Paul directs his thanksgiving to God the Father; Paul nowhere else calls Christ "God." To support the latter view one can cite the fact that the outburst of praise follows almost immediately the reference to Christ, so that it is quite easy grammatically to refer this mention of God to Christ. Now Paul never thought of Jesus Christ as simply a man;

to the Apostle he was rather the pre-existent Son who as Lord rightly claims the full obedience of men. The opening greetings of Paul's letters link God and Christ together as joint source of the divine blessings of salvation. The benedictions of the letters speak of the divine grace as given through Christ. There is substantial evidence in Paul's letters to support the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, but Paul never formulated that doctrine, and it is seriously in doubt whether he ever spoke in explicit terms of Christ as "God." This latter term he used of the Father. The RSV recognizes in a footnote that the blessing may refer to Christ, but in the text places a period after the mention of Christ, and adds, "God who is over all be blessed forever. Amen." This translation is probably correct. The passage praises God for his blessings to Israel.¹¹⁸

There is much to be said about this passage. The orthodox student would be inclined to regard it as a direct statement of the deity of Christ. So far as can be ascertained by the writer, this view would be the better one, but it remains somewhat problematical.¹¹⁹ The RSV rendering

118. Floyd V. Filson, "The Revised Standard New Testament," Theology Today, Vol. III, No. 2, July, 1946, p. 231.

119. James Denney, the expositor for the Epistle of Paul to the Romans in the Expositor's Greek Testament, enumerates the usual arguments for and against the doxological view. Cf. Vol. II, pp. 658-659. He, himself, maintains the view which the RSV men have taken. So does Marvin R. Vincent, in his Word Studies in the New Testament, Vol. III, p. 101. In a footnote there he says, "I incline to the doxological view, but the long and intricate discussion cannot be gone into here. For the doxological view the student may consult Meyer's note, Professor Ezra Abbot, 'Journal of the American Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis,' 1881 (also 'Critical Essays'), and Beet's 'Commentary on Romans' also G. Vance Smith, 'Expositor,' first series, ix, 397, to which are appended answers by Archdeacon Farrar and W. Sanday. On the other side, President Dwight's note in the American Meyer. He refers in this to his own article in the same number of the 'Journal of Biblical Literature' in which Professor Abbot's article appears. See, also, Farrar in 'Expositor' as above, p. 217, and Godet on Romans."

of this passage as a doxology instead of a reference to Christ may be indicative of a "Liberal" bias on the part of the revisers, since their decision is not in strict harmony with the grammar involved, and since it is also based on a general interpretation of Paul's theology as they find it expressed in his letters. While the problem remains debatable, it may be noted that there are other New Testament passages where Christ is explicitly called God, as, for example, Hebrews 1, 8.

AV

Matthew 16, 25-26

RSV

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life?

The RSV translation of this Gospel passage is offensive to some. The following is the objection of a Roman Catholic reviewer:

"Catholic scholars will object to the rendering of Matt. 16:26, 'for what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life?' The word here translated 'life,' undoubtedly refers not to physical life, but to the life of the soul, and the English expression for the loss of that spiritual life has been from time immemorial 'soul,' which besides is the literal translation of the Greek."¹²⁰

120. This paragraph is quoted in an article by Dr. Samuel M. Zwemer in the Fresbyterian of August 15, 1945, which article is reprinted in the Concordia Theological Monthly, Vol. XVII, No. 12, December, 1946, p. 928.

What this Catholic reviewer fails to mention, however, is that the same Greek word is used in the two places of the 25th verse as well, and there is no valid reason for shifting the meaning of the word from this one verse to the next. If we use the word soul in the first verse we find that "whoever would save his soul will lose it," which does not make much sense. It apparently must be translated life in the 25th verse, as the old AV does, and also the RSV. But by what right, then, may we change it to soul in the 26th verse? It is, in fact, unwarranted to demand a sudden switch in terms between the two verses. Perhaps the RSV is not causing a "Liberal" distortion of the text when it renders both verses with the word life. Entering into fine points of exegesis is another matter.¹²¹

Instances of Conservative Renderings

While the above instances are several which are used to point out a Modernistic leaning in the translation of the RSV, there are others which may be employed to demonstrate the opposite. Such are the following:

121. Cf. Joseph Henry Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 677. According to Thayer (with many New Testament citations) the meaning of the Greek word in question is variable. It may have the following meanings: "breath," "the breath of life; the vital force which animates the body and shows itself in breathing," "life," "the soul," "the seat of the feelings, desires, affections, aversions," "the (human) soul in so far as it is so constituted that by right use of the aids offered it by God it can attain its highest end and secure eternal blessedness, the soul regarded as a moral being designed for everlasting life," "the soul as an essence which differs from the body and is not dissolved by death."

Hebrews 1, 8

AV

But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

RSV

But of the Son he says, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, the righteous scepter is the scepter of thy kingdom.

The phrase underlined could have been in the views of some legitimately rendered as God is thy throne, as is mentioned in the RSV footnote, and which view is supported by Westcott. Nevertheless, the RSV maintained the address to the Son of Thy throne, O God, which thus directly ascribes deity to Jesus.

Romans 5, 1

AV

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

RSV

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The RSV footnote mentions that many ancient authorities read let us have instead of we have, which could be considered a weakening of the statement in the passage. The Expositor's Greek Testament says that the MSS. evidence is overwhelmingly in favour of the exhortative let us have, so much so that Westcott and Hord do not notice any other reading, and Tischendorf says that it can hardly be rejected.¹²² Nevertheless, the RSV men retained the more conservative we have.

Mark 1, 1

AV

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;

RSV

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

122. James Denney, Op. Cit., p. 623.

The RSV has the footnote that some ancient authorities omit the Son of God. The Expositor's Greek Testament says that the phrase is lacking in Sinaiticus and that it is omitted from the text by Tischendorf and Westcott and Hort.¹²³ The Sixteenth Edition of Nestle omits it from the text and places it in the footnotes. Yet the RSV men retained the phrase in the text at the beginning of the Gospel of Mark.

Titus 2, 13

AV

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

RSV

awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

The RSV footnote says: "Or, of the great God and our Savior." In this instance the RSV rendition of the passage is one which calls Jesus God, while the AV separates God and Christ, which is permissible. The same situation exists in II Peter 1, 1, where the AV again separates God and Christ, while the RSV allows the phrase to call Jesus God. Whatever the maze of motives behind such action may be, the result is one of conservatism and should appeal to the reader who believes in the true deity of Christ.

Matthew 22, 43

AV

He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,

RSV

He said to them, "How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying,

123. Alexander Balmain Bruce, "The Synoptic Gospels," The Expositor's Greek Testament, p. 341.

In this instance the RSV translation of the passage brings out much more clearly than the AV the divine inspiration through which David wrote.

More Instances Where RSV Is Improvement Over AV

On the one hand, this principle of translating in a meaningful way demands that the reader place a little additional trust in the translators' understanding, honesty, and scholarship (which, however, can also be fairly well checked). On the other hand, it results in a clarity of expression which is not only warranted but truer to the original than that which results from a more irresponsible obscuring of meanings by resorting to a form of "transliteration" instead of actually translating from one language and idiom to another. The RSV is much more easily read than the AV.

In order to afford a comparison of the styles of the AV and RSV, as well as to present sufficient evidence to show that the number of specific improvements of the RSV over the AV render it unworthy of hasty rejection and worthy of candid consideration, the following passages are cited.

The RSV is frequently, though not always, of a more terse and concise nature than the AV. It thereby loses some of the AV's literary flavor. The RSV is more idiomatic than the AV, yet of a sufficiently worshipful tone to render it usable in ecclesiastical situations. In occasional spots the RSV may be slightly stilted in its language, but this is

not the usual case by any means.

In connection with the form of the text, it may be noted that the RSV has a more up-to-date form of punctuation, eliminates archaisms, and uses quotation marks.

In general, the passages below are noteworthy improvements of the RSV over the AV in matters of textual accuracy, true meanings, and clarity of expression. A check with the Greek text and standard Greek helps and commentaries will show the RSV renderings to be well supported. As Dr. Bretscher says of one of the improvements (Luke 2, 49), they may come as a surprise to some but others will rejoice.¹²⁴

Matthew 5, 25

AV

Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

RSV

Make friends quickly with your accuser, while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison;

Matthew 5, 29

AV

And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

RSV

If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell.

Matthew 5, 39

AV

But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

RSV

But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

124. Paul M. Bretscher, "The Most Important Publication of 1946," The Cresset, Vol. IX, No. 6, April, 1946, p. 24.

Matthew 6, 1-2

AV

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

RSV

"Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward.

Matthew 6, 7

AV

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

RSV

"And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words.

Matthew 6, 22

AV

The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

RSV

"The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light;

Matthew 6, 25

AV

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

RSV

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

Matthew 9, 17

AV

Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

RSV

Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; if it is, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.

Matthew 10, 24

AV

The disciple is not above
his master, nor the servant
above his lord.

RSV

"A disciple is not above
his teacher, nor a servant
above his master;

Matthew 23, 24

AV

Ye blind guides, which
strain at a gnat, and
swallow a camel.

RSV

You blind guides,
straining out a gnat and
swallowing a camel!

Matthew 28, 19

AV

Go ye therefore, and
teach all nations, baptizing
them in the name of the
Father, and of the Son, and
of the Holy Ghost:

RSV

Go therefore and make
disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the
name of the Father and of
the Son and of the Holy
Spirit,

Mark 2, 4

AV

And when they could not
come nigh unto him for the
press, they uncovered the
roof where he was: and when
they had broken it up, they
let down the bed wherein the
sick of the palsy lay.

RSV

And when they could not
get near him because of the
crowd, they removed the
roof above him; and when
they had made an opening,
they let down the pallet
on which the paralytic lay.

Luke 2, 49

AV

And he said unto them,
How is it that ye sought me?
wist ye not that I must be
about my Father's business?

RSV

And he said to them,
"How is it that you sought
me? Did you not know that
I must be in my Father's
house?"

Luke 4, 13

AV

And when the devil had
ended all the temptation, he
departed from him for a
season.

RSV

And when the devil had
ended every temptation, he
departed from him until an
opportune time.

Luke 16, 9

AV

And I say unto you, Make
to yourselves friends of the
mammon of unrighteousness;
that, when ye fail they may
receive you into everlasting
habitations.

RSV

And I tell you, make
friends for yourselves by
means of unrighteous mammon,
so that when it fails they
may receive you into the
eternal habitations.

Luke 17, 21

AV

Neither shall they say,
Lo here! or, lo there! for,
behold, the kingdom of God
is within you.

RSV

nor will they say,
'Lo, here it is!' or
'There!' for behold, the
kingdom of God is in the
midst of you."

Luke 18, 12

AV

I fast twice in the week,
I give tithes of all that I
possess.

RSV

I fast twice a week,
I give tithes of all that I
get.'

John 1, 3

AV

All things were made
by him; and without him was
not any thing made that was
made.

RSV

all things were made
through him, and without
him was not anything made
that was made.

John 1, 5

AV

And the light shineth
in darkness; and the darkness
comprehended it not.

RSV

The light shines in the
darkness, and the darkness
has not overcome it.

Acts 17, 22

AV

Then Paul stood in the
midst of Mars' hill, and
said, Ye men of Athens, I
perceive that in all things
ye are too superstitious.

RSV

So Paul, standing in
the middle of the Areopa-
gus, said: "Men of Athens,
I perceive that in every
way you are very religious.

Acts 21, 24

AV

Them take, and purify
thyselves with them, and be at
charges with them, that they
may shave their heads: and
all may know that those
things, whereof they were in-
formed concerning thee, are
nothing; but that thou thy-
self also walkest orderly,
and keepest the law.

RSV

take these men and pur-
ify yourself along with
them and pay their expenses,
so that they may shave
their heads. Thus all will
know that there is nothing
in what they have been told
about you, but that you
yourself live in observance
of the law.

Acts 26, 14

AV

And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

RSV

And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.'

Romans 5, 15

AV

But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

RSV

But the free gift is not like the trespass. For it many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.

Romans 8, 26

AV

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

RSV

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words.

I Corinthians 1, 21

AV

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

RSV

For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.

I Corinthians 7, 9

AV

But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

RSV

But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion.

I Corinthians 10, 16

AV

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

RSV

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

I Corinthians 11, 29-30

AV

For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

RSV

For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.

I Corinthians 13, 12

AV

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

RSV

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood.

II Corinthians 6, 14

AV

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

RSV

Do not be mismated with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?

II Corinthians 12, 11

AV

I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.

RSV

I have been a fool! You forced me to it, for I ought to have been commended by you. For I am not at all inferior to these superlative apostles, even though I am nothing.

Galatians 4, 17

AV

They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.

RSV

They make much of you, but for no good purpose; they want to shut you out, that you may make much of them.

Galatians 5, 12

AV

I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

RSV

I wish those who unsettle you would mutilate themselves.

Philippians 2, 6-7

AV

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

RSV

who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

Philippians 3, 20

AV

For our conversation is in heaven; From whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

RSV

But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

Philippians 4, 18

AV

But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.

RSV

I have received full payment, and more; I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

Colossians 2, 23

AV

Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

RSV

These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting rigor of devotion and self-abasement and severity to the body, but they are of no value in checking the indulgence of the flesh.

I Timothy 5, 24-25

AV

Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.

RSV

The sins of some men are conspicuous, pointing to judgment, but the sins of others appear later. So also good deeds are conspicuous; and even when they are not, they cannot remain hidden.

Hebrews 4, 14

AV

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

RSV

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

James 1, 21

AV

Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

RSV

Therefore put away all filthiness and rank growth of wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

I Peter 2, 2

AV

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

RSV

Like newborn babes, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation.

II Peter 1, 20-21

AV

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

RSV

First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

I John 2, 2

AV

And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

RSV

and he is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Minor Problems

It will be noticed that the RSV has dropped the thee-thou language except in the cases where God is addressed. This was done by them only after "two years of debate and

experiment." The eth and th forms for verb endings in the third person are not employed at all. The RSV men abandoned entirely the practice of using italics. They omit them "on the principle that only words necessary to convey the meaning in English are used."¹²⁵

The Amen I say to you problem was, according to one member of the committee, the most troublesome of all with which they dealt. "The recurrent debate over it, which would not stay settled, took more time than any other in the meetings of the Committee." They decided upon the translation Truly, I say to you, which is a correct expression of the meaning but lacks some of the solemn assurance which the expression Verily must have had as Jesus used it. However, because the English word Verily is too archaic, and because no other conceivable alternative could be offered to solve the problem, the Truly of the RSV is the best that they could offer, although it "fully satisfies few of us."¹²⁶

In the matter of translating proper names, the RSV has followed the commendable practice of consistently using the same form as was used in the Old Testament and disregarding the form used in the Greek. In Matthew 3, 3, for example, the prophet quoted is not Esaias but Isaiah. Likewise in the following passage, Acts 7, 45:

125. Luther A. Weigle, Op. Cit., p. 56.

126. Ibid., p. 56.

Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; (AV),

where Stephen refers to Jesus and means the Jesus who led Israel in the conquest of Canaan, the RSV renders it more clearly as Joshua, the Hebrew form of the name.¹²⁷ In Mark 3, 18, Simon the Canaanite of the AV is more aptly rendered as Simon the Cananaean in the RSV.

Since they were instructed to produce a work that would be "in the direction of the simple, classic English style of the King James Version," and since they were also advised that this revision "be designed for use in public and private worship," the RSV revisers made certain allowances for traditions and associations and also kept in mind the sound of the language (what its effect would be upon the ear).¹²⁸ The technical Christian terms were fairly well retained. The term magnify is retained in the Magnificat for liturgical reasons.¹²⁹

The Lord's Prayer, in Matthew, beginning with Our Father who art in heaven, retains the familiar words and arrangement, with the exception of the fourth petition which renders: "And forgive us our debts, As we also have forgiven our debtors;" the difference being not with the words debt

127. Burrows, Op. Cit., p. 23.

128. Wentz, Op. Cit., p. 67.

129. Weigle, Op. Cit., p. 55.

and debtors, but in the also have forgiven instead of simply forgive.

The use of the term Counselor instead of Comforter for the Holy Spirit in John 14, 26 will not be appreciated by many. The problem is debatable.

On the whole, the RSV translators could have avoided some disapproval on the part of AV readers, if they had been even more lenient toward traditional usage than they have been. It must be difficult, however, to draw the fine line where appreciation for tradition and demands of true scholarship clash.

Style

Although instructed to abide by the English style of the AV, the RSV men knew that since we no longer live in the Elizabethan age, it would be unwise to merely repeat "forms and phrases of three hundred years ago" throughout the translation. They have broken away from the AV style, and in so doing they have, of course, lost something. The language of the RSV tends, even by the admission of one of its translating members, to be "more clipped and nervous," which is fine for graphic description and narration, but loses some of the religious atmosphere attached to the older style. Such a thing is noticed, as Bowie comments, when current speech changes "There were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field" to "In that region there were shepherds

out in the field;" and because of the change "it is as though for a moment a glory seems to fade."¹³⁰

Then again, there are different kinds of beauty, and this translation may be recognized as having a beauty much more enduring than is apparent at first use. Surely it has a vigor and freshness about it which makes it an apt medium for the dynamic contents of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If one considers the Greek styles of the New Testament, he surely sees no particular attempt at literary artistry. If it comes at all it is only a by-product. One sees chiefly a vital message presented with simplicity and directness and sincerity. In this respect the RSV approaches the style of the original much more closely than the other versions herein discussed. At the same time there is a dignity in the oral reading of the RSV which may cause some to feel that in designing their production for use in public worship as well as private reading, the revisers have avoided the pitfall of levity of expression which is apt to accompany idiomatic translation.

General Evaluation

To be sure, the RSV has its shortcomings along with other versions. There are some errors and inconsistencies within it, and some of its passages will be disputed for years to come. But all in all, the innumerable honest

130. Bowie, Op. Cit., p. 127.

improvements contained therein render the RSV more than "just another Modernistic work" to be tossed aside because the men behind the project are not of the totally orthodox camp. An impartial checking of the disputable items often reveals that the RSV translation is remarkably true and acceptable despite any personal "Liberal" bent that may exist among the translators. Perhaps we have a case here where honest scholarship, though working through the medium of a "Liberal" group, has produced a translation comparatively free of bias in the actual product. We bear in mind that translating, even in the case of the Word of God, is primarily a matter of knowledge, training, honesty, skill, and scholarship, and that, while sound orthodox Christian intuition is helpful, no amount of this will take the place of these other things. In general, the RSV is a good translation.

General Appearance

Concerning the general appearance of the first edition of The New Covenant, Commonly Called the New Testament of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Revised Standard Version, Translated from the Greek, Being the Version set forth A.D. 1611, Revised A.D. 1881 and 1901, Compared with the most Ancient Authorities and Revised A.D. 1946, we notice that Thomas Nelson & Sons did a superb printing job. The larger than usual type, the consolidation of verses into paragraphs with the removal of parallel references and notes from the usual middle or side column to the foot of the page,

the printing of the text across the full page as is done in ordinary literature, the printing as poetry of the lyrical passages, and the use of quotation marks, all contribute to a rather inviting and much more readable format than is usually afforded in Bible printing. The chapter and verse numberings are retained in such a manner as to facilitate rapid reference without becoming a distraction to the person engaged in continuous reading.

Reception of the RSV

A general final statement of the purpose intended by the RSV Committee in their work expresses the hope that the revision will be of value to the people of today:

In this present revision the purpose has been to bring the devout reader and worshipful hearer in some degree nearer to the very heart of the divine message, to prepare a more adequate instrument for the preacher and teacher of the Word of God as he seeks to make Christ more vital in the lives of his people. We have honestly sought to help stimulate a genuine and abiding interest in the message of the New Testament; and we cherish the hope that the version here provided for the message of the New Testament may serve in some measure to bring its readers and hearers into closer fellowship with the Savior who meets us in this book.¹³¹

As stated by an article in the Walther League Messenger, the RSV is offered as a "contribution to the never-ending

131. Abdel Ross Wentz, "The New Testament and the Word of God," An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, p. 70.

process of trying to make clear to each generation the Word of God." It further states:

Whether the new version will be used in Lutheran pulpits and Protestant pulpits as well in place of the present versions now in use will not be determined for a long time to come. Perhaps tradition and custom will still play an important part in determining how the Word of God is to be heard and read in the liturgical part of the church service. For study in Sunday Schools and Bible classes it is almost certain that the RSV will find an increasing use. Even in its use for study purposes and for devotional use, it is possible that years will have to elapse before the King James version is supplanted. One can predict quite confidently that most Bible readers will at least want to own a Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, commonly called the New Testament.¹³²

Filson mentions that, since it was widely publicized before its appearance, it "attracted about three hundred thousand orders in the first month. Only the lack of copies prevented more vigorous promotion and a much larger sale."¹³³ How well the RSV New Testament will be received during the years ahead remains to be demonstrated chiefly by the average Christian reader. Whatever popularity it gains or loses in public worship may be decidedly altered by the completion of the Old Testament Committee's work. This is expected around the year 1950.

132. Willmar Thorkelson, "The Bible in Modern Dress," The Walther League Messenger, June, 1946, p. 36.

133. Filson, Op. Cit., p. 221.

CONCLUSION

The Authorized Version

The AV of 1611 is a revision of the Bishops' Bible of 1568. It is also heavily indebted to Tyndale's translation. It is noticeably indebted to the translations of Wycliffe and Coverdale, as well as to the Great Bible, Geneva Bible, and others. The Greek text employed is substantially that of the Textus Receptus. The AV men were not hide-bound literalists in their manner of translating. The AV frequently employs many English synonyms for a single Greek word. In many cases this is done because the original word has various meanings. In very many cases this is done chiefly for the sake of ⁱⁿrythm, variety, and beauty of expression. In such cases faithfulness to the original suffers. On the other hand, in a number of cases, different Greek terms are rendered by a single English word when a distinction should really be made.

The AV lacks the refinements of later textual and grammatical studies. This entails a lack of reliability in some instances. Despite the lack of these refinements, the AV is such an honest, scholarly, and beautiful translation, that it is still highly usable today for those who are conversant with Elizabethan English.

The Revised Version

The RV of 1885 is a revision of the AV of 1611. The

reasons for this revision were: the increasing number of archaisms, the discoveries of more reliable manuscripts, and the noting of erroneous translations in the AV. It was the result of Anglo-American cooperation. The influence of the Anglican men was by far predominant. Among the revisers were Westcott and Hort. The chief contribution of the RV is textual accuracy. Practically all of the more important textual emendations under discussion today were already taken up by the RV men. In some of the major passages under consideration the RV men complied with the traditional demands of popular familiarity with the AV. Rather than eliminate such a passage, they occasionally left it in the text with a brief marginal reference concerning the problem.

The RV translation shows greater conformity to the original Greek expressions. This makes it a volume more faithful to the original, but causes it to lose some of the beauty and force of the AV. The translating work of the RV men was too literalistic. It is "strong in Greek, weak in English." It contains many of the archaisms of the AV. Its expressions are more Anglican than American. However, except for the matter of beauty of style, it is a great improvement over the AV.

The American Standard Version

The ASV of 1901 is a revision of the RV of 1885. The American Committee, which had worked with the Anglican

Committee on the RV, was not satisfied with the treatment the British gave the American suggestions. The Anglican Committee had printed in their Bible an appendix containing those American suggestions which the English had rejected. The American Committee had hoped that these suggestions would gradually be incorporated into the text, but the English Committee disbanded and dropped the matter. In the production of the ASV the American Committee incorporated most of this appendix into the text of the new version, and made additional alterations of a minor nature. The chief contribution of the ASV is the further elimination of archaisms.

The ASV is a later American recension of the RV and is very similar in style and arrangement to the RV. It is an improvement over the RV. Except for the matter of beauty of style, it is a great improvement over the AV.

The Revised Standard Version

The RSV of 1946 is a revision of the ASV of 1901. It is authorized by the International Council of Religious Education. Forty-four of the major Protestant bodies of the United States and Canada are associated with this council. To date only the New Testament section has been completed.

The problem of the Greek text for the RSV men involves mainly a re-consideration of the same questions already before the RV men of the nineteenth century. Recent manuscript

finds have provided a little more information concerning some passages. As a rule the readings of the RSV men conform to those in the text or in the margin of the Seventeenth Edition of Nestle. The revisers have been able to make use of twentieth century lexical and grammatical studies, which contain improvements as a result of the many recent papyri finds and publications.

The RSV men followed the principle of translating the meanings of the original text rather than just re-setting an array of words from Greek to English. Their translation is much more idiomatic than the AV, RV, and ASV. The translation, however, shows many deferences to AV phrasing and terminology. In general it is a fine casting of the New Testament into modern idiomatic English without breaking away too much from the familiarities of the AV. It maintains sufficient dignity of expression for use in public worship. It is idiomatic enough to be readily understood, yet not so idiomatic that it would need re-translating after a decade or two. The chief contribution of the RSV is its clarity of expression which affords a high degree of readability.

The RSV men are apparently of the "Liberal" school. There are some who feel that the RSV bears the regrettable marks of "Liberalism." To a certain extent this may be true. Romans 9, 5 may be an example of this. It is amazing, however, to what a negligible extent this condition can be

shown to exist. If one did not know that the translators were "Liberals," he would be hard pressed to prove that any passages "bear the unmistakable marks of Liberalism." What is labeled as "Liberal" because the reader knows of the translators' personal leanings, could easily be assigned to other causes. There are cases in some passages where "Liberal" motives, if they were such, happened to lead to more conservative results than those of the AV. Despite the "Liberal" bent of the men, the resultant work is one of honest and competent scholarship. Its few perhaps "distressing," but not demonstrably erroneous, choices are far outweighed by its numerous improvements.

The style of the RSV is energetic. It is more terse and clipped than the AV's style. It matches the language of today. It matches the styles of the New Testament writers more than the AV does. Its interest is in conveying dynamic content in a meaningful manner, rather than soliciting praise over style and beauty of expression.

The RSV New Testament is printed as living literature, in paragraph form, and with quotation marks. The "thee-thou" language is eliminated except in reference to God. The conventional chapter and verse numberings are maintained in a manner so as not to be distracting to the reader and yet easily referable.

The RSV New Testament is an improvement over that of the ASV of 1901. Except for the matter of beauty of style, it is a very great improvement over the AV, especially for modern usage.

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