

“DEAN BURGON’S CONFIDENCE IN THE KING JAMES BIBLE”

Taken from
Revision Revised
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A Brief Summary By D. A. Waite

The ERV Inferior to the KJB

“The ENGLISH (as well as the Greek) of the NEWLY ‘REVISED VERSION’ IS HOPELESSLY AT FAULT. It is to me simply unintelligible how a company of Scholars can have spent TEN YEARS in elaborating such a VERY UNSATISFACTORY PRODUCT. Their UNCOUTH PHRASEOLOGY and their JERKY SENTENCES, their PEDANTIC OBSCURITY and their UNIDIOMATIC ENGLISH, contrast painfully with ‘the happy turns of expression, the music of the cadences, the felicities of the rhythm’ of our AUTHORIZED VERSION.

The ERV Inferior to the KJB

“The transition from one to the other, as the Bishop of Lincoln remarks, is like exchanging a well-built carriage for a VEHICLE WITHOUT SPRINGS, in which you GET JOLTED TO DEATH on a NEWLY-MENDED and rarely-traversed road. But the “REVISED VERSION” is INACCURATE as well; exhibits DEFECTIVE SCHOLARSHIP, I mean, IN COUNTLESS PLACES.” [Burgon, *REVISION REVISED*, *op. cit.*, p. vi.]

Our KJB, “Silently Revised”

“With some slight modifications, OUR AUTHORISED ENGLISH VERSION has been SILENTLY REVISED: SILENTLY, I say, for in the margin of the English no record is preserved of the UNDERLYING TEXTUAL CHANGES which have been introduced by the REVISIONISTS. On the contrary. Use has been made of that margin to insinuate suspicion and distrust in countless particulars as to the authenticity of the Text which has been suffered to remain unaltered.”
[Burgon, *REVISION REVISED*, *op. cit.*, xxx.]

Superseding the KJB??

“Not unreasonable therefore is the expectation entertained by its Authors that the ‘NEW ENGLISH VERSION’ founded on this ‘NEW GREEK TEXT’ IS DESTINED TO SUPERSEDE THE ‘AUTHORIZED VERSION’ of 1611.”
[Burgon, *REVISION REVISED, op. cit.*, p. 2]

Blotting Out Precious Words

“We shall therefore pass on, when we have asked the REVISIONISTS in turn—HOW THEY HAVE DARED so effectually to BLOT OUT THESE MANY PRECIOUS WORDS from the BOOK OF LIFE, that no MERE ENGLISH READER, depending on the REVISED VERSION for his knowledge of the Gospels, can by possibility SUSPECT THEIR EXISTENCE?” [Burgon, *REVISION REVISED*, *op. cit.*, p. 118.]

The “OLD” Is Better

“Thus it happens that we never spend half-an-hour over the UNFORTUNATE PRODUCTION BEFORE US [i.e. the ERV of 1881] without exclaiming (with one in the Gospel), ‘THE OLD IS BETTER.’ Changes of ANY SORT are unwelcome in such a book as the Bible; but the discovery that CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE FOR THE WORSE OFFENDS GREATLY.” [Burgon, *REVISION REVISED, op. cit.*, p. 144.]

The KJB “GIANTS”

“But what SUPREMEPLY ANNOYS US in the work just now under review is, that the SCHOOLBOY METHOD OF TRANSLATION already noticed is therein exhibited in CONSTANT OPERATION throughout. It becomes OPPRESSIVE. We are never permitted to believe that we are in the company of SCHOLARS WHO ARE ALTOGETHER MASTERS OF THEIR OWN LANGUAGE.”

The KJB “GIANTS”

“Their sollicitude ever seems to be twofold: (1) To exhibit a SINGULAR INDIFFERENCE to the proprieties of English speech, while they maintain a SERVILE ADHERENCE (etymological or idiomatic, as the case may be) to the Greek: (2) Right or wrong, to PART COMPANY from WILLIAM TYNDALE and the GIANTS who gave us our ‘AUTHORIZED VERSION.’” [Burgon, *REVISION REVISED, op. cit.*, p. 155.]

“A Work of Real Genius”

“. . . the plain fact being that the men of 1611—above all, that WILLIAM TYNDALE 77 years before them—PRODUCED A WORK OF REAL GENIUS; seizing with generous WARMTH the MEANING and INTENTION of the sacred Writers, and PERPETUALLY VARYING THE PHRASE, as they felt or fancied that Evangelists and Apostles would have varied it, had they had to express themselves in English: whereas THE MEN OF 1881 have fulfilled their task in what can only be described as a SPIRIT OF SERVILE PEDANTRY. The GRAMMARIAN (pure and simple) crops up everywhere. We seem never to rise above the atmosphere of the LECTURE-ROOM, . . .” [Burgon, *REVISION REVISED*, *op. cit.*, p. 167.]

Grace & Delightful Rhythm

“Even this, however, is not nearly all. As TRANSLATORS, full TWO-THIRDS of the REVISIONISTS have shown themselves SINGULARLY DEFICIENT, alike in their CRITICAL ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE LANGUAGE OUT OF WHICH THEY HAD TO TRANSLATE, and in their FAMILIARITY WITH THE IDIOMATIC REQUIREMENTS OF THEIR OWN TONGUE. They had a NOBLE VERSION BEFORE THEM, which they have contrived to SPOIL IN EVERY PART. Its dignified simplicity and ESSENTIAL FAITHFULNESS, its MANLY GRACE and its DELIGHTFUL RHYTHM, they have shown themselves alike UNABLE TO IMITATE and UNWILLING TO RETAIN.”

Grace & Delightful Rhythm

“Their QUEER UNCOUTH PHRASEOLOGY and their JERKY SENTENCES:–their PEDANTIC OBSCURITY and their STIFF, CONSTRAINED MANNER:–their FIDGETY AFFECTATION OF ACCURACY,–and their HABITUAL ACHIEVEMENT OF ENGLISH WHICH FAILS TO EXHIBIT THE SPIRIT OF THE ORIGINAL GREEK;–are SORRY SUBSTITUTES for the LIVING FRESHNESS, and ELASTIC FREEDOM, and HABITUAL FIDELITY of the GRAND OLD VERSION which we inherited from our Fathers, and which has sustained the spiritual life of the Church of England, and of all English-speaking Christians, for 350 years. . . .–the AUTHORIZED VERSION, wherever it was possible, SHOULD HAVE BEEN JEALOUSLY RETAINED.”

Grace & Delightful Rhythm

“But on the contrary. EVERY FAMILIAR CADENCE has been **DISLOCATED: the CONGENIAL FLOW of almost every verse of Scripture has been **HOPELESSLY MARRED**: so many of those little CONNECTING WORDS, which give life and continuity to a narrative, have been **VEXATIONOUSLY DISPLACED**, that a perpetual sense of **ANNOYANCE** is created. The countless **MINUTE ALTERATIONS** which have been **NEEDLESSLY INTRODUCED** into every familiar page prove at last as tormenting as a SWARM OF FLIES to the weary traveler on a summer's day. To speak plainly, **THE BOOK HAS BEEN MADE UNREADABLE**. . . . We lay the **REVISERS’** volume down **CONVINCED THAT THE CASE OF THEIR WORK IS SIMPLY HOPELESS.**” [Burgon, *REVISION REVISED*, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-26].**

ERV Disfigures The KJB

“Had the blemishes been capable of being reckoned up, it might have been worth while to try to remedy some of them. But when, instead of being disfigured by a FEW WEEDS scattered here and there, THE WHOLE FIELD PROVES TO BE SOWN OVER IN EVERY DIRECTION WITH THORNS AND BRIARS; above all when, DEEP BENEATH THE SURFACE, ROOTS OF BITTERNESS TO BE COUNTED BY THOU-SANDS, ARE FOUND TO HAVE BEEN SILENTLY PLANTED IN, which are sure to produce POISONOUS FRUIT AFTER MANY DAYS:—under such circumstances only ONE COURSE CAN BE PRESCRIBED.”

ERV Disfigures The KJB

“LET THE ENTIRE AREA BE PLOUGHED UP, PLOUGHED DEEP; and let the ground be LEFT FOR A DECENT SPACE OF TIME WITHOUT CULTIVATION. It is IDLE-worse than idle-to dream of revising, WITH A VIEW TO RETAINING, this Revision.”
[Burgon, *REVISION REVISED*, op. cit., p. 227.]

The ERV—What NOT To Do

“Their well-meant endeavors have provided an admirable TEXTBOOK for Teachers of Divinity,—who will henceforth instruct their pupils to BEWARE OF THE TEXTUAL ERRORS OF THE REVISIONISTS OF 1881, as well as their TASTELESS, INJUDICIOUS, AND UNSATISFACTORY ESSAYS IN TRANSLATION.

The ERV–What NOT To Do

“This work of theirs will discharge the office of a WARNING BEACON to as many as shall hereafter embark on the same PERILOUS ENTERPRISE with themselves. It will convince men of the DANGER of pursuing the SAME ILL-OMENED COURSE: trusting to the SAME UNSKILLFUL GUIDANCE: venturing too near the same WRECK-STREWN SHORE.” [Burgon, *REVISION REVISED*, *op. cit.*, pp. 231-32.]

The KJB—a “Sacred Bond”

“Whatever may be urged in favor of BIBLICAL REVISION, it is at least undeniable that the undertaking involves a tremendous RISK. Our AUTHORIZED VERSION is the ONE RELIGIOUS LINK which at present binds together NINETY MILLIONS of English-speaking men scattered over the earth's surface. Is it reasonable that so UNUTTERABLY PRECIOUS, so SACRED A BOND should be endangered, for the sake of representing certain words more accurately,—here and there translating a tense with greater precision,—getting rid of a few archaisms?”

The KJB—a “Sacred Bond”

“It may be CONFIDENTLY ASSUMED THAT NO ‘REVISION’ OF OUR AUTHORIZED VERSION, HOWEVER JUDICIOUSLY EXECUTED, WILL EVER OCCUPY THE PLACE IN PUBLIC ESTEEM WHICH IS ACTUALLY ENJOYED BY THE WORK OF THE TRANSLATORS OF 1611--The NOBLEST LITERARY WORK IN THE ANGLO-SAXON LANGUAGE.” [Burgon, REVISION REVISED, op. cit., p. 113.]

“The Great Scholars of 1611”

“The verb aitein confessedly means ‘to ask.’ And perhaps no better general English equivalent could be suggested for it. But then, IN A CERTAIN CONTEXT, “ask” would be an INADEQUATE RENDERING: in another, IT WOULD BE IMPROPER; in a third, IT WOULD BE SIMPLY INTOLERABLE. Of all this, THE GREAT SCHOLARS OF 1611 SHOWED THEMSELVES PROFOUNDLY CONSCIOUS.” [Burgon, *REVISION REVISED, op. cit.*, p. 190.]

The Spirit Was Upon Them

“. . . who does not respond gratefully to the EXQUISITE TASTE AND TACT with which “BOND-MAID” itself has been exchanged for “BONDWOMAN” by OUR TRANSLATORS OF 1611, in verses 23, 30 and 31? . . . Verily, THOSE MEN UNDERSTOOD THEIR CRAFT! ‘There were GIANTS IN THOSE DAYS.’ As little would they submit to be bound by the new cords of the Philistines as by their green withes. Upon occasion, they could shake themselves free from either. And why? For the selfsame reason: viz. BECAUSE THE SPIRIT OF THEIR GOD WAS MIGHTILY UPON THEM.”
[Burgon, *REVISION REVISED*, *op. cit.*, p. 196.]

KJB–Habitual Fidelity

“They held a NOBLE VERSION BEFORE THEM, which they contrived to SPOIL in every part. Its DIGNIFIED SIMPLICITY and ESSENTIAL FAITHFULNESS, its MANLY GRACE and its DELIGHTFUL RHYTHM, they have shown themselves alike unable to imitate and unwilling to retain.... are sorry substitutes for THE LIVING FRESHNESS, and ELASTIC FREEDOM, and HABITUAL FIDELITY OF THE GRAND OLD VERSION WHICH WE INHERITED FROM OUR FATHERS, and which has sustained the spiritual life of the Church of England, and of all English-speaking Christians, for 250 years.... the AUTHORIZED VERSION, wherever it was possible, SHOULD HAVE BEEN JEALOUSLY RETAINED.” [Burgon, REVISION REVISED, op. cit., pp. 225-26.]

KJB–“Priceless Treasure”

“ . . . It will teach FAITHFUL HEARTS to CLING THE CLOSER TO THE PRICELESS TREASURE which was bequeathed to them by the PIETY and WISDOM OF THEIR FATHERS. It will dispel for ever the dream of those who have secretly imagined that A MORE EXACT VERSION, undertaken with the boasted helps of this nineteenth century of ours, would bring to light something which has been hitherto unfairly kept concealed or else misrepresented.

KJB–“Priceless Treasure”

“Not the least service which the Revisionists have rendered has been the proof their work affords, HOW VERY SELDOM OUR AUTHORIZED VERSION is MATERIALLY WRONG; HOW FAITHFUL AND TRUSTWORTHY, on the contrary, IT IS THROUGHOUT.” [Burgon, *REVISION REVISED, op. cit.*, p. 232.]

Not Time for KJB Revision

“Enough has been offered by this time to prove that AN AUTHORITY REVISION OF THE GREEK TEXT will HAVE TO PRECEDE ANY FUTURE REVISION OF THE ENGLISH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.” [Burgon, *REVISION REVISED, op. cit.*, p. 124.]

Not Time for KJB Revision

“Equally CERTAIN is it that FOR SUCH AN UNDERTAKING [i.e. a ‘FUTURE REVISION’ of the English N.T.], THE TIME HAS NOT YET COME. ‘It is my honest conviction,’ – (remarks Bp. Ellicott, the Chairman of the Revisionists,)—‘that for any AUTHORITY-TATIVE REVISION, WE ARE NOT YET MATURE; either in BIBLICAL LEARNING or HELLENISTIC SCHOLARSHIP.” [Burgon, *REVISION REVISED, op. cit., p. 124.*]

No KJB “Rival Translation”

“To be brief,—As a COMPANION IN THE STUDY and FOR PRIVATE EDIFICATION: as a Book OF REFERENCE FOR CRITICAL PURPOSES, especially in respect of DIFFICULT AND CONTROVERTED PASSAGES:—we hold that a REVISED EDITION OF THE AUTHORIZED VERSION OF OUR ENGLISH BIBLE (IF EXECUTED WITH CONSUMMATE ABILITY AND LEARNING,) would at any time be a WORK OF INESTIMABLE VALUE. . . .

No KJB “Rival Translation”

“The METHOD of such a performance, whether BY MARGINAL NOTES or in SOME OTHER WAY, we forbear to determine. . . . But certainly ONLY AS A HANDMAID is it to be desired. As something INTENDED TO SUPERSEDE OUR PRESENT ENGLISH BIBLE, we are THOROUGHLY CONVINCED that the project of a RIVAL TRANSLATION IS NOT TO BE ENTERTAINED FOR A MOMENT. For ourselves, WE DEPRECATE IT ENTIRELY.”
[Burgon, *REVISION REVISED*, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-14.]