

ARTICLE XVI.

“ The New Covenant.”

The New Covenant. Volume I. The Four Gospels. By J. W. Hanson, D.D. Boston and Chicago: Universalist Publishing House. 1884.

THE Introduction to this work contains an interesting and generally accurate summary of the defects and merits of the Established and Revised Versions, the purpose and method of the translator, his judgment of the value of the chief codices and editions of the New Testament. He rightly regards the edition of Westcott and Hort as the one most nearly approaching perfection. On page vii. is the inaccurate statement that only eight manuscripts, *none older than the tenth century*, were accessible in the days of King James. Codices Bezae and

Claromontanus, both of the sixth century, were, as early as 1582, in the possession of Beza, on whose edition (1598) of the Greek Testament the authors of the King James Version largely relied.

1. It is of the first importance to determine the text. No accurate translation can be made from an inaccurate text. The author regards Sinaiticus and Vaticanus and the Greek Test. of Westcott and Hort of the highest authority. Two courses were open to the translator. Confiding in the judgment of the editors, he could have simply rendered as accurately as possible the text they place before him ; or he could enter the lists as a competitor with them for the honor of reproducing most nearly the autographs of the New Testament books. It is greatly to be regretted that the latter alternative was chosen. The task demands a fulness of critical apparatus far exceeding the ability of any one man to collect and master. It requires a delicacy in the weighing of evidence which can only be obtained by long training and complete familiarity with the whole ground traversed. If Sin. and Vat. were the only first-class sources of the text, with Alex. as a secondary source, yet holding the balance of power, and other codices, versions, patristic citations, could be left out of account, the problems before the textual critic would be simple and easily solved. But no one can study the three hundred pages which Dr. Hort devotes to a presentation of the problems and methods of textual criticism in Vol. ii. of Westcott and Hort's Greek Testament, or examine the essay of Dr. Warfield on the same topic, in Dr. Schaff's " Companion to the Greek Testament," without seeing how infinitely complex the problems may become, and how patient and delicate must be their handling. This attention the author has not been willing to bestow, and as a consequence, the text he adopts is far inferior to that of Alford, Tischendorf, or Westcott and Hort.

(a) The author sometimes adheres to the readings of the Authorized Version, though they are contrary to those of Sin. and Vat. and the critical editions. Here belong John iv.-36,

where the word "*also*" is retained ; Luke vi. 48, where "upon the rock" is given, though the phrase, *ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν*, is absent from Sin. and Vat. In Luke ii. 14 we read "good will among men," though *εὐδοκίας* is the reading of Sin., Vat., W. and H., and the Revised Version. A notable instance is Mark vii. 16, which whole verse is inserted on the authority of Alex., while Sin., Vat., and modern editors omit it. In Luke vi. 9, the weakly attested reading of Griesbach, *ἀποκτεῖναι*, "to kill," is retained, while codices Sin., Vat., Bezae, and following them, Lachmann, Tisch., and Westcott and Hort have *ἀπολέσαι*, "to destroy." Other examples might be given.

(b) Undue weight is given to the readings of Codex Sinaiticus. Tischendorf, the discoverer of the Codex, has been justly charged with partiality toward his "darling." But here Tischendorf himself is surpassed. An instance of this is John xx. 31, where the word "æonian," *αἰώνιον*, is inserted, which is rejected by Tisch. Here may be mentioned Matt. xii. 30, where, against the judgment of Westcott and Hort, and Tisch., "me," *με* is introduced. The same is true of John iii. 5, where we read *ἰδεῖν*, "see the reign of heaven," instead of *εἰσελθεῖν*, "enter": 31, iv. 24. It is especially in the Gospel according to John that this undue preference is manifest. Chapters iv., vii., viii., xi., contain many instances.

(c) There are omissions of words or phrases. At John iv. 6, *οὕτως*, "thus" is wanting, which is all the more significant since it undoubtedly occasions a real difficulty, and is relied upon by Matthew Arnold and other critics, as proof that the author had certain logia or sayings concerning Jesus, which he inserted, sometimes unskillfully, into his narrative. Luke i. 65, the words, *διελαλεῖτο πάντα*, are omitted entirely from the translation. In Matthew ii. 9, *αὐτούς*, "them," is omitted.

(d) There are traces of haste and want of care. One reads on page xii. of the Introduction: "The words in Italics are found either in the Sinaitic, or Vatican, or both, and *are not* in the Greek of Westcott and Hort." The author, it is to be assumed, intended to state the matter correctly, but he either forgot to exercise due care, or changed his method. As a

consequence, there are *at least sixty-five* instances in which he has put a word, or phrase, or whole verse, in italics when the Greek equivalent is found in the text of Westcott and Hort. Notable instances are found in Matthew vi, 15 ; xvii. 15 ; xxi. 7, 29, 30 ; xxvii. 49 ; others can be traced with equal readiness.

2. The translator informs the reader that he attempts to render the words of " the inspired record in plain, simple, idiomatic English ; " does not design the translation for public use, but for study ; therefore does not regard association or other consideration, aims simply to convey the precise meaning of the words in question. From this point of view the translation must be judged. It will be found to have some positive merits. Many obsolescent or uncouth phrases, which still deface the pages of the Revised Version, are here replaced by modern and more pleasing words. The translator has constantly consulted this version, and traces of its excellencies are to be seen on nearly every page. Many of the suggestions of its margins have been adopted, and in many cases to good effect. Meyer and other commentators have been consulted, and the results of their researches used to advantage. The work has the one great merit of freedom. The transliteration for *αιων* and its adjective, though carried out with what Matthew Arnold would call too much " vigor and rigor," is an acceptable feature. This may also be affirmed of *Gehenna* and *Hades*. In many places the fitting word has been chosen ; e.g., in Mark vii. 35, *δεσμος* is finely rendered " ligature," where the Revised Version has " bond " ; Luke xvi. 13, *οικετης* by " domestic," instead of " servant."

But with the many translations and commentaries now accessible, a translation of many excellencies ought to be produced. The translator can add to his own knowledge of the Greek, the suggestions of able students of all lands and times. A new translation ought to be an improvement on its predecessors, and this high " meed of praise " cannot, it is to be feared, be awarded to the one under consideration, for reasons which follow.

(a) The English used is frequently not good. It is true that we are warned that the translation is not for public use, and may not expect to find the euphony and ease of the common versions; but the accuracy of translation does not demand such infelicities as: Matt. v. 10, "for thus did they persecute the prophets, those who preceded you"; Mark ii. 26, "in Abiathar the high priest's days"; Matthew xvii. 4, "three booths—for you one, and Moses one, and Elijah one"; or Luke xx. 25, "Return Kaisar's things to Kaisar, and God's things to God." The word "transpire" for "happen" occurs at least twice. The ambiguous word "transport" is used in John viii. 56, where we read, "Abraham, your father, was transported to see my day, and saw it, and was glad."

(b) The Greek idiom is not followed. As is well known, the Greek definite article is often used for the possessive pronoun. But for want of due care in this, occur such sentences as Mark vii. 11, "If a man shall say to the father or the mother." At times the article is retained before abstract nouns to the detriment of the translation, as in John v. 34: "But I receive not the testimony from a man." See further Luke xv. 22, Matt xix. 15. In John v. 43, which is a conditional sentence of the form called by Goodwin "the Vivid Future," two forms of condition are confounded, thus: "If another should come in his own name you will receive him." Although the verb "to tithe" is transitive both in Greek and English, we read, Luke xi. 42: "because you tithe of mint and rue." In Luke i. 15 the phrase, *ὅτι μὴ πίῃ*, having the double negative and an Aorist Subjunctive equivalent to the simple Future, is rendered, "He *may not* drink."

(c) The reader is informed in the explanation that the words in brackets are supplied by the translator. The natural inference is that words not in brackets have an equivalent in the Greek text. But the student will find himself frequently misguided. There are many passages where the bracketed word *has* a Greek equivalent, as Matt. v. 10; Luke viii. 15, 45; Matt. xvi. 9; Luke xi. 5. This is evidently from want of care.

Again, there occur countless instances in which the subject of the sentence is implied, being readily determined from the context and the verbal termination. Sometimes the translator puts the supplied subject into brackets, as if it were an addition of his own, sometimes inserts it without note. An example is Mark iv. 32, where the phrase, καὶ ὅταν σπαρῇ, ἀναβαίνει, is given, "and when it is sown, [it] grows up." Since neither verb has an expressed subject, there is no reason why they should not be treated alike. Nearly every page presents instances of this want of uniformity. The Genitive Absolute and the Accusative with the Infinitive usually demand the insertion of some suitable connective, such as "when," "while," "since," "because," or "that." Such words the translator supplies, but there is the same want of uniformity. This is, it is true, a minor matter. But the translation is evidently intended for students who are ignorant of Greek, and the translator professes to put into brackets the supplied words. By bracketing words not supplied he gives the reader untrue data, and leaves him without remedy.

(d) The choice of synonymous words in a language so rich as is the English is often difficult, and a translator should be granted much freedom. A careful translation will be the result of fine discriminations amid verbal niceties. Surely judgment should here incline unto mercy. But doubtful cases aside, there are many passages where the translation, departing from the usual rendering, seems fairly obnoxious to an adverse criticism.

It is useless to attempt to traverse the whole ground. The earlier pages furnish an ample number of instances. Luke i. 2, ὑπηρέται, properly "under-rowers," then "servants," "helpers," "assistants," is rendered "dispensers." This is not translation; it is comment. Matt. i. 22, and frequently πληρωθῇ is translated "verified." But πληρωθῶ in the Passive means to be "fulfilled, completed, accomplished," and ἵνα πληρωθῇ, that it may be "fulfilled," is surely different from "may be verified." Fulfilment is indeed verification, but it is far more. In Luke ii. 2, we read, "This, the first registry, was made by Quirinius,

proconsul of Syria." But the italicized words are in the Genitive absolute, expressing the circumstance of time, and are so understood by commentators. Had Luke wished to indicate the agent he would have used *ὁ*. Besides, the preceding word is *ἐγένετο*, not in the Passive but Middle Voice, to be translated "took place," or "occurred," or perhaps better with Meyer and others, is equivalent to "was"; in any case the sentence is not passive, and the whole translation becomes wrong.

Matt. iii. 2 : *βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν*, "the reign of the heavens," instead of "the kingdom of heaven. So Matt. v. 3, "Happy the poor in spirit, because theirs is the reign of the heavens"; Matt. xiii. 24, "the heavenly reign"; so elsewhere. The phrase "reign of the heavens," is ambiguous in sound, and the terms "kingdom of heaven," "kingdom of God," have a fixed and common religious meaning and use.

Matt. iii. 16 : *ἐρχόμενον*, "resting"; but *ἐρχομαι*, "to come" or "go," is never the equivalent of *μένω*, to "remain." Mark ii. 4 ; *κράββατος* is rendered "pallet." The word signifies a "couch-bed," and may be of any quality; while "pallet" signifies a coarse or poor one, and not of necessity movable. Matt. vii. 3 : *κάρφος*, any small particle, is rendered "sliver," and *δοκός*, a beam, is given as "stick"; so that we read, "and why see the sliver that is in your brother's eye, but perceive not the stick in your own eye?" From a wrong rendering of the words in question, the sentence loses its original and true antithesis. Matt. xi. 8 : *μαλακός* is first given as "soft," which is correct, but is at once reproduced as "showy," for which there is no warrant. Matt. xii. 27 : *διὰ τοῦτο* is translated "in this." There is want of uniformity in the treatment of specific and technical terms. Sometimes they are translated, as *μόδιον*, "grain-measure"; sometimes transliterated, so that we read, for instance, "sata," or "assaries," or "sextuses," and the notes give the reader no light. Luke x. 4, *πίψα* is rendered "sachel," elsewhere "wallet," once "traveling-bag."

Unsatisfactory is the treatment of verbal parallels The

revisers made it a rule, in the Synoptics, to translate the parallel passage, where the text was the same, in every place in the same way. Our translator gives notice that he does not adopt this rule. As a consequence the student, comparing the parallels, has his attention constantly drawn to verbal differences, and is unable to determine whether they are of the original or manufactured by the translator. Injustice is done to the New Testament, for the cause of faith demands that while real differences should be honestly recognized, no needless difficulties should be created. The Synoptics have much matter verbally similar; such a method of translation conceals it.

(e) But the translation contains also features which, since they cannot result from want of judgment or knowledge, must be attributed to haste and want of care. Such are: the confusion of *αὐτός*, self, or same, with *οὗτος*, this, as in Matt. iii. 4 and Mark ii. 36; the words "do not say," as the equivalent of *οὐχ ὑμεῖς λέγετε*, in John iv. 35. At Matthew xiii. 5, the phrase, *διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν βάθος γῆς*, is, contrary to all precedent, given as "*though not having* depth of earth." In the parallel passage, Mark iv. 6, precisely the same original is translated, "because it had not much earth." Luke xviii. 25, the words "*εὐκοπώτερον γὰρ ἐστὶν κάμηλον διὰ τρήματος βελόνης εἰσελθεῖν*," appear as, "It is easier for a camel to perforate a needle's eye," and in a note below the passive noun *τρήμα* figures as a verb, meaning "to perforate."

3. The Harmony follows largely the usual order, and does not require special comment. Strong, Robinson and Tischendorf have apparently been consulted. A welcome improvement is the insertion of Matthew xxiv. and xxv. as one connected whole.

4. The author does not present his commentary as full or complete. It is largely controversial, or an elaborate exegesis of the special passages which have long been subjects of controversy. For this purpose it has much value. Of the matter thus presented, covering perhaps seventy pages, about one half is reproduced, for the most part verbally, from the pages

of the author's previous works, "Bible Proofs," "Bible Threatenings Explained," and "Aion." This republication will cause the really valuable matter of those earlier works to reach a larger circle of readers. Of the remaining half, some twenty pages consist of citations from Drs. Paige, Clarke, Thayer, Demarest and others, in support of the positions taken, and are both useful and generally convincing. The remainder, some fifteen or twenty pages, is new, original matter. Much of it is good. But some blemishes should at once be remedied.

On page 4 it is said that in the earlier part of the Revised New Testament, the phrase *πνεῦμα ἁγίου* is *usually* rendered Holy Spirit. But this is an error.

On page 17 it is affirmed that "Greek had been the *prevailing* language of Judea for *several* centuries." Since the introduction of Greek dates from the era of the Ptolemies and the Seleucidæ, the word "several" is clearly out of place, while as to the adjective *prevailing*, we are informed by the author, on page 329, that "the common speech of the Jewish people had . . . become a corrupt dialect, 'Syro-Chaldaic' or 'Aramaic.'"

On page 75 we are informed that the oldest Targum is that of Jonathan Ben Uzziel. This is news indeed. That of Onkelos on the Pentateuch has hitherto counted as the first.

On the same page the date of the latest writings of the Old Testament Apocrypha is put as 150 B.C., and the next page contains a statement to the same effect. But 1 Maccabees brings the history of the Asmonean family down to 135 B.C., and was not written until after the death of John Hyrcanus, 107 B.C., and 2 Maccabees is of later origin still.

On 219 one reads that the Gemara Babylonicum was written "probably during the Babylonish captivity," and, some lines below, that it was written during the seventy years' captivity, that is, between 588 and 537 B.C. But this is surely about a thousand years too early.

The author had before him a task of the utmost difficulty and delicacy; the greatest wonder is that he had the courage

to undertake it. The ground to be traversed is so vast, and yet the knowledge demanded so minute, detailed, accurate, that a certain measure of failure was inevitable. And while recognizing gladly many excellencies, judgment must be rendered that we have here no really important addition either to the list of translations extant or to our own denominational literature.

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