

**CRITICAL NOTES ON THE
AUTHORISED
ENGLISH VERSION OF
THE NEW TESTAMENT**

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Critical Notes on the Authorised English Version of the New Testament by Samuel Sharpe

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ON

THE AUTHORISED ENGLISH VERSION

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT.

BEING A COMPANION TO THE AUTHOR'S NEW TESTAMENT
TRANSLATED FROM GRESBACH'S TEXT.

BY SAMUEL SHARPE.



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PREFACE.

THERE are few readers of the Bible who are not aware that many passages in the authorised English version are incorrectly translated ; and if their wish for truth were not outweighed by the dislike of novelty and by the distrust of rash attempts at improvement, they would be glad to receive the Scriptures in a new English dress. Such a new translation would relieve the commentator from one-half of his labours. But such a new translation is not likely to come into general use till put forth by authority. In the mean while several scholars have published translations of different parts of the Bible, to show what they think ought to be done. With this view also the Author published, in 1840, a translation of the New Testament, and corrected editions of the same in 1844 and 1856. To this translation he added no notes to explain the changes that he had made, as he believes that the reader does not always wish to be troubled with the reasons for the alterations, and he here publishes such notes in a separate volume.

There are three sources for the alterations which

ought to be made in the authorised version. First, because we now possess a better Greek text than was in the hands of King James's translators. Secondly, because two hundred years of study have enabled us to translate it more correctly. And lastly, because the same two hundred years have in some cases changed the English language.

The Author, for his translation of the New Testament, made use of the Greek text formed by Griesbach from a comparison of all the known MSS., ancient versions, and ancient quotations. Griesbach's good judgment, careful accuracy, and strict impartiality, were such that his labours met with a general approval. Since his time, other scholars have followed in his steps, have examined the MSS., and formed also their texts of the New Testament. The difference between these corrected texts and the received Greek text, from which the authorised version was made, is considerable. But the difference between any two of the corrected texts is not much in the Greek, and still less if looked for in an English translation. A very few changes would fit the author's translation to the text of either Lachmann, Scholtz, or Tischendorf. But without discussing the merit of these several editors, he sees no reason to depart from the text formed by the very judicious Griesbach.

The Author's aim in his translation was to be as literal as the difference between the two languages would ; not to put the writings of the apostles into

a modern dress, but to show the peculiarities of thought and expression which belonged to the times in which they wrote; that is, to show difficulties, not to hide them, and thus to make the reader ask for historical information, rather than to make it unnecessary for him. His aim was to show, not what the writers might have written for our instruction, but what they did write for the instruction of those who were then living, and who understood the circumstances by which they were surrounded. He thus makes the expressions in most cases more particular, as if addressed to fellow-countrymen, rather than general, as if to be understood by strangers. When reading a difficult passage in any ancient writings, there is no better rule for determining what it is probable that the writer meant, than to consider what it is probable that those for whom he wrote would understand him to mean.

Among the words which may be mentioned as gone out of use, or now used in a different sense, are: 'gospel,' meaning good news; 'to let,' meaning to hinder; 'to prevent,' meaning to go before; 'to wit,' meaning to make known; 'by and by,' meaning without a moment's delay; 'atonement,' meaning reconciliation. Other words which ought to be removed from the translation are the ecclesiastical words, often of Latin origin, which were retained by the king's order; such as 'bishopricks' for charge, 'Easter' for Passover, 'presbytery,' 'predestinate,' and 'Calvary.' On the other hand, there is

another class of technical words which ought to be retained, which have been weakly rendered by some general terms. Such are 'proconsul,' 'demoniac,' 'gnosticism,' the 'Magians,' the bay of 'Syrtis,' and rebels called 'the Sicarii.'

The eighteen centuries which separate us from the times when the New Testament was written will mislead us in the translation if we do not make allowance for those places, and objects, and thoughts, which were then well known, but are now unknown to us. So when the writers speak of the Pinnacle of the temple, the Synagogue, the Mountain, the Fables, the Lamp that burneth and shineth, with countless other such objects, we are wholly ignorant of what particular objects are meant; and our translators have rejected the definite article before each of these words, and critics have written volumes to justify the omission, and to say that in such cases the Greek definite means in English the indefinite. On the other hand, the same eighteen centuries during which the Christian religion has become known and has been revered by so large a portion of the world, have impressed on our minds many words in a manner to make them more familiar to us than even to those who wrote them. Hence we are tempted to make definite what they spoke of as indefinite. A man marked out by God, our translators have made 'the man;' a son of God they have altered to 'the Son of God;' and they write 'Christ crucified,' as if the word 'Christ' were a proper

name, when the apostle meant a crucified Christ or Messiah.

The following pages are written in the form of notes pointing out the Author's proposed changes in the authorised version, with remarks to justify those changes. But he has had a further aim in view, namely, to explain some of the peculiarities in the language of the New Testament, for which these notes are not an inconvenient form. The best way at all times to study language is by the comparison of languages; and so we can best study translation by a comparison of translations.

Every note begins with the words of the authorised version. Then are added the Greek words, always taken from Griesbach's text, and the Author's translation of them in Italics. These are followed, when necessary, with reasons to support the proposed translation. The proposed translation is for the most part that already published in the Author's Translation of the New Testament, third edition, 1856. But in some few cases he has seen reasons to change his opinions since that volume was published. Perhaps the most important of these is in the introductory verses of John's Gospel.

Since the publication of the Author's first edition of his Translation of the New Testament, Griesbach's text has hardly kept the undisputed rank that it then held. Two or three other critical editions have been published, and have received the examination and