

REASONS FOR THE CHANGES MADE IN THE REVISED NEW TESTAMENT.*

BY A MEMBER OF THE REVISION COMMITTEE.

No attempt has been made to modernize the style of the Authorized Version. On the contrary, "innocent archaisms"—to use an expression which was frequently on the lips of the Company—have invariably been allowed to stand. It was felt that these tend to give a dignity and solemnity to a translation of the Scriptures, and that to change them into a language of present every-day life would have been to insure loss instead of gain. As has been well remarked, "These (archaisms), shedding round the sacred volume the reverence of age, removing it from the ignoble associations which will often cleave to the language of the day, should on no account be touched, but rather thankfully accepted and carefully preserved. For, indeed, it is good that the phraseology of Scripture should not be exactly that of our common life: should be removed from the vulgarities, and even the familiarities, of this; just as there is a sense of fitness which dictates that the architecture of a church should be different from that of a house."†

In accordance with these sentiments, the same antique air which belongs to the Authorized Version will be found also to distinguish the Revised Translation. Every archaism that still continues generally intelligible has been left untouched. Hence, such forms as *hath*, *whiles*, *thoroughly*, *holpen*, etc., have been retained, and the relative "which" has been allowed to stand, as in old English, when the antecedent is a person.

But it is manifest that an archaism ceases to be *innocent* when it has

become altogether obsolete, or has wholly or to a considerable degree changed its meaning. And not a few such words or phrases are to be found in the Authorized Version. They are now either quite unintelligible or seriously misleading; and to substitute other expressions for them was clearly one of the plainest duties to be kept in view in preparing the Revised Version.

The following words may be given as examples of those that have, of necessity, been replaced by others. "Let" now means to *permit*, but is used with exactly the opposite meaning of *hinder* at Rom. 1: 13; 2 Thess. 2: 7. "Worship" is now used only with reference to the service of God, but occurs in the sense of *respect shown to man* at Luke 14: 10; while "room," now meaning *apartment*, is used in the same verse to denote a *seat*. "Wealth" reads strangely indeed at 1 Cor. 10: 24, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's *wealth*," where the word means *welfare*." "Prevent" now means to *hinder*, but at Matt. 17: 25 and 1 Thess. 4: 15 it is used in the sense of *anticipate* or *precede*. "Quick" is used for *living*, as at Heb. 4: 12, and is barely intelligible to the ordinary reader of that passage. "Ensnare" is quite obsolete in the sense of *pursue*, which it has at 1 Peter 3: 11. The word "conversation," as used in the Authorized Version, is a most fruitful cause of mistake. It always means *conduct*, except at Philipp. 3: 20, where it is translated "citizenship" in the Revised Version, and might perhaps mean "city" or "home." The dreadful word "damnation," which stands at 1 Cor. 11: 29, has had the very worst consequences in many cases, and means no more than *judgment*. "Honest," at Philipp.

* Condensed from the "Companion to the Revised Version."

† Abp. Trench, "On the Authorized Version," p. 22.