

# The Desirability of Keeping the Authorized Version

by J. C. Philpot

(Written in 1857 when the Revised Version was contemplated)

We take this opportunity to express our opinion upon a question much agitated of late--whether it would be desirable to have a new (or at least a revised) translation of the Scriptures. We fully admit that there are here and there passages of which the translation might be improved, as, for instance, "love" for "charity" all through 1 Corinthians 13; but we deprecate any alteration as a measure that, for the smallest sprinkling of good, would deluge us with a flood of evil. The following are our reasons:

1. *Who are to undertake it?* Into whose hands would the revision fall? What an opportunity for the enemies of truth to give us a mutilated false Bible! Of course, they must be learned men, great critics, scholars, and divines, but these are notoriously either Puseyites or Neologists (We should say: Anglo-Catholics and Modernists.)--in other words, deeply tainted with either *popery* or *infidelity*. Where are there learned men sound in the truth, not to say alive unto God, who possess the necessary qualifications for so important a work? And can erroneous men, men dead in trespasses and sins, carnal, worldly, ungodly persons, spiritually translate a book written by the blessed Spirit? We have not the slightest ground for hope that they would be godly men, such as we have reason to believe translated the Scriptures into our present version.

2. Again, *it would unsettle the minds of thousands* as to which was the Word of God, the old translation or the new. What a door it would open for the workings of infidelity, or the temptations of Satan! What a gloom, too, it would cast over the minds of many of God's saints to have those passages which had been applied to their souls translated in a different way, and how it would seem to shake all their experience of the power and preciousness of God's Word!

3. But besides this, *there would be two Bibles spread through the land*, the old and the new, and what confusion would this create in almost every place! At present, all sects and denominations agree in acknowledging our present version as the standard of appeal. Nothing settles disputes so soon as when the contending parties have confidence in the same umpire and are willing to abide by his decision. But this judge of all disputes, this umpire of all controversy, would cease to be the looser of strife if the present acknowledged authority were put an end to by a rival.

4. Again, *if the revision and re-translation were once to begin, where would it end?* It is good to let well alone, as it is easier to mar than mend. The Socinianising (Denying the Godhead of Christ) Neologist would blot out "God" in 1 Timothy 3:16, and strike out 1 John 5:7,8, as an interpolation. The Puseyite would mend it to suit Tractarian views (Led by Newman and Keble, the Tractarians were moving towards Romanism). He would read "priest" where we now read "elder," and put "penance" in the place of "repentance."

Once set up a notice, "THE OLD BIBLE TO BE MENDED," and there would be plenty of workmen, who, trying to mend the cover, would pull the pages to pieces. The Arminian would soften down the words "election" and "predestination" into some term less displeasing to Pharisaic ears. "Righteousness" would be turned into "justice," and "reprobate" into "undiscerning." All our good Bible terms would be so mutilated that they would cease to convey the Spirit's meaning, and instead of the noble simplicity, faithfulness and truth of our present version, we should have a Bible that nobody would accept as the Word of God, to which none could safely appeal, and on which none could implicitly rely.

5. Instead of our good old Saxon Bible, simple and solid, with few words really obsolete, and alike majestic and beautiful, *we should have a modern English translation in the pert and flippant language of the day*. Besides its authority as the Word of God, our present version is the great English classic generally accepted as the standard of the English language. The great classics of a language cannot be modernised. What an outcry there would be against modernising Shakespeare, or making Hooker, Bacon or Milton talk the English of the newspapers or of the House of Commons!

6. *The present English Bible has been blessed to thousands of the saints of God;* and not only so, it has become part of our national inheritance which we have received unimpaired from our fathers, and are bound to hand down unimpaired to our children.

(Taken from pages 103-105, *Sin & Salvation*, Selections from J. C. Philpot)