

which may be two centuries or three, according to the rate at which the demand for coal happens to increase in the future. There is a possibility that our stock may be larger than we anticipate. . . . The geologist's share of the problem is to ascertain whether or no we possess other supplies of workable coal not included in the estimate of the Commissioners.¹

Every thoughtful man sees the seriousness of the problem, and yet there may be huge deposits still undiscovered. If all the researches of modern science have not penetrated the secret supplies of such a common thing entering into the services of our work-a-day life, if even here we see life's mysteries, then when we come to think of life in other phases, and of our relationship to the world of nature, and to God, we can only exclaim—

'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past tracing out!'²

Jean Paul Richter says: 'God called up from dreams a man into the vestibule of heaven, saying, "Come thou hither, and see the glory of My house." And to the servants that stood around His throne He said, "Take him and undress him from his robes of flesh; cleanse his vision, and put a new breath into his nostrils; arm him with wings for flight, only touch not with any change his human heart—the heart that weeps and trembles." It was done, and with a mighty angel for his guide, the man stood ready for his infinite

¹ Eric M. Ingamells.

voyage; and from the terraces of heaven, without sound or farewell, they wheeled away into endless space. Then came eternities of twilight that revealed, but were not revealed. To the right hand and to the left, toward mighty constellations, depth was swallowed up in height unsurmountable, height was swallowed up in depth unfathomable. Suddenly, as thus they rode from infinite to infinite; suddenly, as they tilted over abyssal worlds, a mighty cry arose—that systems more mysterious, worlds more billowy, other heights and other depths were nearing at hand. Then the man sighed, stopped, shuddered, and wept. His overladen heart uttered itself in tears; and he said, "Angel, I will go no farther. For the spirit of man aches under this infinity. Insufferable is the glory of God's house. Let me lie down in the grave, that I may find rest from the persecutions of the infinite; for end I see there is none." And from all the listening stars that shone around issued one choral chant, "Even so it is: Angel, thou knowest that it is: end there is none that ever yet we heard of." The Angel demanded: "And is this the sorrow that kills you?" But his voice answered that he might answer himself. Then the Angel threw up his glorious hands to the heaven of heavens, saying, "End is there none to the universe of God. Lo! also there is no beginning."

Mere infinity frightens the spirit; it is only from the teachings of revelation, and Christ as the manifested wisdom, power, and love of God, that the infinity of the Divine Being becomes a friend and not a fear to man.²

² C. Bentley Jutson.

The Revision of the Prayer-Book Psalter.

BY THE REV. F. H. WOODS, B.D., LATE FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD.

MOST of those who have the interest of the Church of England at heart will have rejoiced to hear that the Archbishop of Canterbury has promised to appoint a committee to revise the Prayer-Book Psalter. But doubtless there will be a great difference of opinion as to the extent and the spirit in which the work should be carried out. Some, like the Bishop of Oxford, will desire to have corrected only such passages as can hardly in honesty be described otherwise than as nonsensical. They would fear to part with language which, partly from familiarity, partly from its real beauty, has for centuries become sanctified as the expression of spiritual devotion. Others would go to the opposite extreme and desire to have a revision as thorough and exact as scholarship can make it. These, of course, would be actuated mainly by a desire for truth and honesty. They would very naturally urge that Christian Churchmen use these

Psalms under the impression that they represent in English dress what the Hebrew prophets wrote, and that the P.V. is from this point of view often inaccurate and misleading. The question then arises, Is it possible to effect a compromise between these two points of view; in a word, to do justice to both? We believe it is. Broadly speaking, the principle upon which the committee, I believe, should go, should be to correct all serious mistakes of translation, while conserving, so far as possible, the familiar language of the Prayer Book. But even if they were so far agreed, such a general principle might be very differently interpreted by different members of the committee. I venture, therefore, as an old student of the Psalter, to make a few suggestions under different heads as to the way in which this delicate task might be approached. I will only add that for convenience' sake I have taken my examples chiefly

from the first twenty Psalms, but the same methods will apply throughout.

1. *Meaningless Passages.* These should, *where possible* (see below, 9), be retranslated. In Ps 9⁶, instead of 'O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end, even as the cities, etc.,' it would be far preferable to render :

The enemy are come to an end,
They are desolate for ever ;
The cities Thou hast destroyed,
Their memorial has perished.

Curiously enough, the R.V. has here a hankering after the A.V. and P.V., and has retained their rendering in the margin; but a more meaningless and clumsy translation it is difficult to conceive.

In 58⁷, 'let them consume away like a snail' is barely intelligible. But the translation, 'let them be as a snail which melteth as he goes,' if neither true to natural history, nor in accordance with Christian sentiment, is intelligible enough as a quaint notion of popular belief. It is more difficult to suggest a suitable rendering of v.⁸. I would suggest :

Or ever your pots can feel the thorns,
Whether green or hot He sweepeth them away.

But it should be realized that no mere translation can suffice to make a passage like this clear without an explanation, and this is one of three alternative renderings of the passage, between which there is little to choose. If correct, it compares the suddenness of the destruction to a whirlwind which scatters the fire, when a large part is still unburnt, and before the pot has been placed upon it, or at any rate before the fire has reached it.

It is a great pity that such a glorious Psalm as 68 should be marred by much that is quite unintelligible to an ordinary congregation. In v.¹⁶ in place of 'why hop ye so, ye high hills?' we should certainly render 'why look ye so askance?' (R.V.), *i.e.*, at God's holy mountain. If 'askance' be objected to as unfamiliar, 'envious' might be preferred. V.³⁰ presents a hard problem. P.V. has neither beauty nor rhythm to recommend it. Something of this sort would be more satisfactory.

Rebuke the beasts of the reed (*i.e.* the crocodile, a symbol of Egypt),
The herd of bulls, with the calves of the people,
That they humbly bring pieces of silver ;
He hath scattered the peoples that delight in war.

He appeals to God to exact tribute from all classes of their enemy (or from all their enemies). But it must be admitted that the third line is very obscure.

Ps 141^{6a}, 'But let not their precious balms break my head,' is reminiscent of a certain witty Irish dean, who quoted the words at a meeting when a scent bottle from the ladies' gallery fell over into the room below. It is indeed difficult to suggest any other way in which 'precious balms' could have such a result; on the other hand, 'Their precious balm (*i.e.* the kindly reproof of the righteous) let not my head refuse' expresses a very beautiful and subtle thought.

2. A second class of passages would be those where, though *the meaning is fairly intelligible, it is certainly not what was intended*, and is, therefore, misleading.

In 4⁸ the words 'since the time that their corn and wine and oil increased' are pointless. The true rendering, 'more than in the time,' etc. (A.V., R.V.), contrasts the spiritual joy of the Psalmist with the temporal prosperity of his gainsayers.

In 7², 'Lest he tear my soul like a lion, and rend it in pieces' gives the true order of thought. A lion does not, as in P.V., devour and then tear in pieces.

In 8⁵, 'Thou madest him lower than the angels' (see below, 8) suggests an interpretation which is the exact contrary of the original. The point is not the lowering of man, but his exaltation in being made a little less than God, the reference being evidently to Gn 1^{26, 27}, as the context clearly shows.

In 12^{9b}, 'When they are exalted, the children of men are put to rebuke,' there is little, if any, point. R.V. gives the true sense, and is literally exact, 'When vileness is exalted among the sons of men.'

16² (P.V.) has no meaning suitable to the context. R.V. agrees with the vast majority of scholars in reading 'I have said' with the old versions. But probably the Hebrew, as it stands, will bear this interpretation. The rendering of ^{2b} (R.V.), 'I have no good beyond thee,' is probably the best of many doubtful renderings.

In 16¹¹, 'in hell' and 'corruption' are both errors. The Psalmist did not mean to foretell a resurrection from the dead, but a preservation of his life from death (see below, 8). We should render:

Thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol ;
Neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one (or holy ones,
chetibh) to see the pit.

Ps 68¹⁸ (P.V.) is not altogether meaningless, if it be supposed that the dove here is symbolical of Israel, and it be realized that the change from second to third person is quite common in Hebrew poetry. The meaning would be that in spite of her past degradation, after her God-given victory, she would shine forth in all her glory. But the Hebrew text will not permit this translation. The rendering is simple enough :

If ye lie (R.V. 'will ye lie') among the sheepfolds,
The wings of the dove are covered with silver,
And her feathers with burnished gold.

The difficulty here lies in the interpretation. Not improbably it gives an idyllic picture of the peaceful, if not strenuous, country life after the victory. The men lie at ease listening to the shepherd's pipe, while the women are decked in garments resplendent with the colours of the dove, as it shines in the sun. Examples under this head might be multiplied indefinitely. I pass on to another class.

3. *Passages where a better translation makes the meaning clearer.* In 8¹, 'Oh LORD (or Jehovah), our lord,' is better than 'O LORD, our Governour,' lord being here practically equivalent to God.

In 10⁴ we have a more correct rendering in R.V. We might perhaps translate

The wicked is so proud that he saith He will not require it.
There is no God are all his thoughts.

11³ is better rendered

If the foundations be destroyed,
What can the righteous do?

In 12⁷ the words 'from the earth' read awkwardly, nor is their meaning clear. The rendering

Even as silver which is melted to the ground
is at once more accurate and more intelligible.

4. Again, there are many cases where a *better translation adds force to a passage.* It frequently happens that P.V. gives an explanation of some metaphorical expression, where the literal meaning is much more poetical and suggestive, as 'defender' for 'shield' in 3³, 'beauty' for 'eye' in 6⁷, 'power' for 'arm' in 10¹⁷, 'desireth' for 'panteth after' in 42¹. In 10⁵, 'As for all his enemies he puffeth at them' (A.V.) is certainly preferable to 'therefore defieth he all his enemies.'

In 12⁴, 'we are they that ought to speak' is

quite an unnecessary paraphrase of 'our lips are our own' (R.V.).

In 10¹¹, 'he falleth down and humbleth himself' certainly loses sight of the picture of the lion crouching to catch his prey, which is well preserved in R.V., 'He croucheth, he boweth down.'

In 2⁴, 'shall laugh' and, in 6³, 'how long?' are more suggestive than the fuller paraphrases of P.V. The latter is probably left purposely somewhat indefinite. It might, e.g., mean 'How long will it be before thou deliverest me?' (cf. Rev 6¹⁰).

95⁸ is a very interesting passage. Here R.V. renders 'To-day, oh that ye would hear his voice!' joining it to v. 7 (see lower down, 11). Would it not be better to keep the division of verses as it is, and render the clause, 'To-day, if only ye would hear his voice'? This expresses the wish which the words seem to imply and gives a better connexion.

5. A very interesting number of questions arise out of the *difference of the LXX and Hebrew*, especially where the former points to a different text. The P.V. has through the Vulgate been largely influenced by the LXX. In several cases P.V. thus preserves readings which are not less likely, and sometimes even more likely, to be correct than the Massoretic text. To correct these so as to correspond with A.V. or R.V. would be a serious though a natural blunder.

Thus in 1³ the additional words 'from the face of the earth' represent a very ancient reading. They are thoroughly Hebraistic and might well be retained.

In 3² 'his God' is more forcible than 'God,' a reading which may easily be accounted for on the supposition that the last D of Elohim has been confused with the initial letter D of Selah.

11⁵ points to an interesting variant. The Hebrew text has omitted the word עני ('poor') probably from its close resemblance to עיני ('his eyes'). The P.V., following the LXX, retains the parallelism, which A.V. and R.V., following the Hebrew, have thus lost. (See also below, 12; Ps 42^{6,7}.)

Another interesting case is presented by 15⁵. Here the Massoretic text reads 'swareth to his own hurt—he moveth not.' But the LXX points to a variant 'to his neighbour' for 'to his own hurt.' The P.V. has curiously combined both these readings. In this case that of the Hebrew (A.V. and R.V.) is undoubtedly to be preferred, the reference being probably to Lev 5⁴.

Another example where P.V., following the LXX,

is certainly wrong is 14⁵⁻⁷. These verses are obviously an interpolation, as is clear from their omission in 53, an Elohist recension of the same Psalm, as also from the fact that they are taken *en bloc* from Ro 3¹²⁻¹⁸, where they are a collection of quotations made by St. Paul, together with Ps 14^{3b, 4} to prove the depravity of the human race. They probably got into the text of the LXX through a marginal gloss.

But there are other cases, where a LXX reading, *not followed by P.V.*, deserves consideration. Ps 2¹² is a crux of unusual difficulty. Probably no competent scholar is quite satisfied with the rendering of P.V. and A.V., 'kiss the son.' Here LXX gives a more suitable, if more prosaic, rendering, 'lay hold of instruction,' but it is by no means easy to conjecture of what text it is a translation. On the whole, the committee might perhaps be well advised to leave the passage as it stands.

6. Another question arises with reference to more or less *technical terms*. Might it not be better to leave Sheol untranslated, as in R.V.? If it be objected that the word is meaningless to an English reader, it might be answered, This is because the thing itself is not understood. But surely this is better than a misleading translation, such as 'hell,' 'the grave,' or 'the pit.' Might it not be well to translate Goyim invariably by Gentiles, which suggests a very kindred thought, and should not LORD be always spelt in capitals as in R.V., where it stands for the Divine name?

7. *The retention, or otherwise, of archaisms* is an interesting point. I must confess to a sneaking affection for 'tush,' though I admit that where it occurs in Ps 10^{12, 14} and 73¹¹ it is a purely rhetorical interpolation. Should not 'leasing' (as in 4²), which in some parts of the country is a local word for 'gleaning,' be corrected to 'lying'? 'ports' in 9¹⁴ should certainly be corrected to 'gates.' It is the same word as in the previous verse. Again, 'just' seems better than 'equal' in 17².

8. The question may arise, How far should the committee be influenced by *the application of passages by N.T. writers*? To this I would venture to answer emphatically, Not at all. Nothing so tends to make the enemy blaspheme as to permit a mistranslation for anything like doctrinal reasons. Let us confess candidly that the interpretation made by St. Peter and St. Paul of Ps 16¹¹, according to Ac 2²⁷⁻³¹ and 13³⁵⁻³⁷, is based on a mistranslation of the Hebrew text made, no doubt, in all

innocence. But we should not be innocent in perpetuating a mistranslation. In retaining the word 'corruption' in text (marg. 'the pit'), we fear that some of the Revisers allowed themselves to be prejudiced (see also above, 2; Ps 8⁵; cf. He 2⁶⁻⁹).

9. *Untranslatable passages.* A further difficulty arises in certainly some few cases where a passage is still so obscure that little or nothing can be made of it. 2¹² is perhaps a case in point (see above, 5). Another is certainly 16^{3, 4}, and we should probably add 73¹⁰. Possibly the best plan would be either to retain P.V. or adopt some rendering which has more meaning of a sort and mark all such passages with an asterisk.

10. Another set of questions arise in connexion with methods of arrangement. Should not the psalms be printed in lines? This would help the ordinary English reader to realize their poetical character. This should be done, not by blindly following the Massoretic text, but with some regard to the meaning. It might be urged, on the contrary, that it would interfere with the present division of verses into two parts by means of a colon, where a verse is composed of three or five lines. But it may be pointed out that the arrangement proposed does not alter the number of actual lines. It merely points them out. The colon might be retained, and, as hitherto, two lines could be sung to one half of the chant and one to the other.

11. But the *place of the colon wants revision.* E.g. in 99 the refrains in vv.^{5, 9} are obviously triplets. But P.V. in v.⁵ puts the colon at the end of the first line:

O magnify the Lord our God:
And fall down before His footstool,
For He is holy.

In v.⁹ the colon is placed at the end of the second line:

O magnify the Lord our God,
And worship Him upon His holy hill:
For the Lord our God is holy.

In 3⁵ the colon is again misplaced. The verse should be

I laid me down and slept:
I rose up again, for the Lord sustained me.

It is the waking to a new day which is a sign of Jehovah's protecting care.

12. Some *revision in the division of verses* seems

also to be required. The position of the first clause in 95⁸ has already been touched upon (see above, 4).

In 7⁶ the line of R.V., 'And awake for me : thou hast commanded judgment,' though correctly translated, is very clumsy. The last words should be in a distinct line, and they would go better with the following verse. We thus get two triplets :

6. Arise, O Lord, in thine anger,
Lift up Thyself against the rage of mine adversaries,
And awake for me.
7. Thou hast commanded judgment,
And let the congregation of the people compass them
about,
And over them return Thou on high.

The connexion of thought in the second triplet is thus :

Jehovah has appointed a judgment. The people are invited to assemble as witnesses. Jehovah is requested to take His seat on His heavenly throne of judgment.

In 10^{15, 16} the division of verses is clearly faulty in P.V. They should run as follows :

15. Thou hast seen it ;
For Thou beholdest travail and grief,
To take it into Thine hand.
16. The poor (or helpless, R.V.) committeth, etc.

In 42^{6, 7} there has been a very curious division of verses handed down in the Massoretic text. The refrain should end as in v. 15 and 43⁶, 'who is the help of my countenance and my God.' This involves no alteration whatever in the Hebrew consonantal text. The mistake arose merely from a faulty division of verses, and a different vocalization. The eighth verse should begin with the words 'my soul.' The LXX is here quite correct.

In 69³ the first clause, which might be rendered 'I had to pay back what I never took,' is better placed, as in the Massoretic text, with A.V. and R.V. at the end of v. 4. The P.V. of v. 5 suggests that the Psalmist feels that he has acted as a foolish child in giving back what he had not taken.

13. A further question arises whether it would not be better to unite *Psalms which have been divided into two*. That this has been the case with Pss 9 and 10 is clear from the fact that the two form

parts of an original acrostic alphabetical Psalm, though now largely interpolated and otherwise modified. This accounts for the absence of title in Ps 10. That the division is comparatively recent is shown by its not being found in LXX. That Pss 42 and 43 were also originally one Psalm, though in this case not supported by LXX, is clear both from the absence of title in Ps 43 and by the refrain in 42^{6-7, 14-15} and 43⁵⁻⁶. The occurrence of the gloria at the end of Ps 42 interferes with the flow of perhaps the most beautiful Psalm in the Psalter.

14. Again, would it not add to an intelligent appreciation of the poetry of the Psalms if the refrains were marked off in some way, as, e.g., by being printed in italics, as in Pss 42-43 just referred to, in 99^{3 (9)}, 5, 9, 107^{8-9, 15-16, 21-22, 31-32}, Ps 136 *passim*.

15. It might also be questioned whether a still further division into stanzas is not desirable. This is often a work of great difficulty ; but it is only where the stanzas are fairly obvious, that it becomes important. Thus in 107 we have first a preface (vv. 1-8). Then we have a series of four distinct parts arranged on a symmetrical, but an artistically varying, plan, containing the trouble, the cry unto the LORD, the deliverance and the doxology, the second half of which varies with the occasion. These four parts are followed by a supplement, or possibly a later expansion describing God's providential dealings with men. All this could be more easily seen by having spaces between 5 & 6, 7 & 8, 12 & 13, 14 & 15, 18 & 19, 20 & 21, 27 & 28, 30 & 31, and larger spaces between 5 & 4, 9 & 10, 16 & 17, 22 & 23, and perhaps 32 & 33.

16. Finally, we might ask (though this would have to be the work of a special committee of musicians and Hebrew scholars collaborating) if it might not be possible to introduce, at least in Cathedral and similar choirs, a better method of singing the Psalms than is possible with the simple chant, and some arrangement which shall emphasize both the refrains and lines of poetry. This would surely be a greater help towards devotion than the elaborate services and anthems on which the best talent of composer, organist, and choir are now expended, not to say wasted.