

The English Revised Version (1881,1885) – American Standard Version (1901)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Not until May 25,1870 was there any major effort to revise the King James Version. Dr. Samuel Wilberforce, bishop of Winchester, proposed the revision. A resolution was passed in the Upper House of Convocation of the Province of Canterbury.
2. Reasons for revision:
 - a. Tischendorf's Sinaiticus manuscript had been discovered- 1859. It was a fourth century uncial containing part of the Old Testament, and all of the New Testament- some 600 years older than any of the Greek texts used to translate the King James Version.
 - b. Scholarship of old languages had improved.
 - c. Recognition that the English language had changed since the 1600's.

I. THE REVISED VERSION (1881, 1885)

- A. Sixteen scholars were appointed to supervise the project and fifty-four people were chosen to do the translating.
 1. Old Testament Translators: E.H. Browne, A.B. Davidson, F. Field, C.D. Ginsburg, J.J.S. Perowne, E.H. Plumptre, N. C. Thirlwall, C. Wordsworth; chaired by Dr. E.H. Browne, bishop of Ely.
 2. New Testament Translators: F. J.A. Hort, J.B. Lightfoot, W. Milligan, W.F. Moulton, F.H. A. Scrivener, S.P. Tregelles, B.F. Westcott; chaired by Dr. C. J. Ellicot, the bishop of Gloucester and Bristol.
 3. An additional thirty American scholars under Philip Schaff – Began work in October 1872.
 - a. Two committees set up in the United States: One for the Old Testament, and One for the New Testament.
 - b. Offered suggestions that the English Translators did not agree with, and included in an appendix at the end of this translation.
- B. Policies:
 1. Render the King James Version closer to the original languages and not modernize the English unduly.
 2. Alterations due to the adoption of Greek text different in 5,788 instances where about one fourth of which altered the reading of the text.
 3. Alterations where the King James Version inconsistently rendered the Greek through the use of more than one English word.

4. Alterations where the parallel passages were not rendered consistently.
- C. Westcott and Hort's Greek text was an influence.
1. While working on the translation of the Revised Version, they were completing an new text of the Greek New Testament .
 2. They placed their critical work before their colleagues on the revision committee – often found approval by the majority.
 3. Westcott and Hort were devoted to the text of the Vatican and Sinaitic codices.
- D. Using variety of words to translate repetitious Greek and Hebrew words reversed.
1. Aided the use of an English concordance for biblical study.
- E. Passages of King James Version *absent* from Revised Version
1. John 5:3-4
 2. Acts 8:37
 3. I John 5:7
- F. Reception of Revised New Testament
1. Made available in England on May 17, 1881.
 2. Made available in America on May 20, 1881.
 3. Three million copies sold in England and America in first year.
 4. Chicago Times and Chicago Tribune published the entire New Testament on May 22, 1881.
 5. Entire Bible was completed in 1885.
 6. Did not enjoy lasting popularity since its literal rendering of the text made it less readable. Charles Spurgeon's comment on new version: "strong in Greek, weak in English."

II. THE AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION - 1901

- A. The English translators, helping with the Revised Version, differed with their British colleagues - but agreed to not publish a separate American version for a fourteen year period.
- B. Americans had continued their work going beyond the suggestions that had been in the appendix of the Revised Version.
1. William H. Green – Princeton University
 2. George E. Day – Princeton University
 3. Timothy Dwight – Yale University

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4. J.H. Thayer - Harvard University
 5. John DeWitt – University of New Brunswick
 6. Charles M. Mead – Andover – Newton
 7. Howard Osgood, Colgate – Rochester
 8. Joseph Packard – Protestant Episcopal Seminary, Alexandria
 9. Matthew B. Riddle – Hartford Seminary.
- C. Published by Thomas Nelson in 1901. It was quickly received the Presbyterian church to replace the King James Version.- “The American Standard edition is by far, and in every respect, the best English translation of the Bible in existence...” (Clyde A Votaw).
- D. British wording change from:
1. “Which” – to “Who” or “that” when referring to people.
 2. “wot” – to “know”
 3. “wist” – to “knew”
 4. “Lord or God” – to “Jehovah”
 5. “Holy Ghost” – to “Holy Spirit”
 6. “grave”, “pit”, or “hell” – to “Sheol”
 7. “hell’ – to “Hades”
 8. “charity” – “love”
 9. “fray” – “frighten”
 10. “seeth” or “sod” – “boil”
- E. Strengths and Weaknesses of Translation
1. It attempted to render the nuance of the Greek aorist tense – “an excellent translation for those who wish to work back to the original Greek from the English” (The Journey from Texts to Translations, p. 320).
 2. An improvement over earlier translations because it relies much on Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus.
 - a. Philip Schaff stated in 1877 there were 1,500 manuscripts of the Greek New Testament that had been compared- However, now there are 5,358 manuscripts and fragments known.
 - b. Some papyri had been known before the twentieth century, but now over 86 papyrus portions have been found.
 3. Has archaic wording like its counterpart the Revised Version.
 - a. “blains” (Ex. 9:10)
 - b. “emerods” (Deut. 28:27)

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- c. Quaintness of language due to word order – “wash not” (Matt. 15:2); “defileth not” (Matt. 15:20), “they marveled all” (Lk. 1:63); “brother beloved” (Philm. 16).
4. “Every Scripture inspired of God” – 2 Tim. 3:16 gives impression to some that some Scripture is not inspired of God.
5. “The only begotten Son” – John 1:18 is the translation of “God only begotten” which is regulated to the footnotes in the Translation.
6. “Late on the Sabbath” – should be “after the Sabbath” (Matt. 28:1).
7. Instead of translating “baptizo” – immerse- the translators transliterated it “to baptize”.