

**THE LETTERS OF ST. PAUL
TO SEVEN CHURCHES AND
THREE FRIENDS WITH THE
LETTER TO THE HEBREWS**

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The letters of St. Paul to seven churches and three friends with the letter to the Hebrews by
Arthur S. Way

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ARTHUR S. WAY

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THE LETTERS OF ST. PAUL

TO SEVEN CHURCHES AND
THREE FRIENDS

WITH
THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS, ^H

TRANSLATED BY
ARTHUR S. WAY, M.A.

AUTHOR OF TRANSLATIONS INTO ENGLISH VERSE OF HOMER'S ILIAD AND ODYSSEY,
THE TRAGEDIES OF ÆSCHYLUS AND EURIPIDES, THE EPODES OF HORACE,
AND THE ARGONAUTICA OF AP. RHODIUS

"THE WORDS OF ST. PAUL ARE NOT DEAD WORDS; THEY
ARE LIVING CREATURES, AND HAVE HANDS AND FEET."
LUTHER.

^{F.D.17}
SECOND EDITION. REVISED.

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1906

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE very large number of changes—some five hundred—made in this edition will not, I hope, be attributed to carelessness or undue haste in the preparation of the first. It was as good as I was then able to make it, when 'I had no certain dwelling-place,' and so could not refer at will to an adequate library. I have also since had the benefit of much helpful and kindly criticism, for which I gratefully thank friends known and unknown. I may say that there is not a passage in this version which I have not carefully reconsidered, with full weighing of conflicting interpretations of scholars. I have, I hope, succeeded in indicating the connection of thought between those passages where it was previously not clear to me, of which Philippians iii, 2, may serve as an example. I have substituted what seemed worthier renderings for expressions which appeared unnecessarily colloquial or undignified, and have throughout aimed at making the translation not only as correct, but as reverent, as was possible for me.

I have in this edition added the Epistle to the Hebrews, in response to the request of readers who urged that it needed an explanatory translation no less than the letters of St. Paul.

VENTNOR,

1906.

PREFACE.

THE object of the present version of St. Paul's Letters is to set before English readers, not so much a translation in modern English, as one in which (1) the meaning of the original shall not be obscured by the condensed literalness of a word-for-word rendering such as is adopted in the Authorised and Revised Versions: (2) the connection of thoughts, the sequence of subjects, the continuity of the argument, shall, by the supply of the necessary links, be made throughout clear to the reader, without his having recourse to notes or a commentary.

1.—There are passages in the Authorised Version which have been understood in a sense totally different from that of the writer, not only by laymen, but by preachers, owing to the close literalness of the rendering: *e.g.*, 'Quench not the Spirit,' 'Have no confidence in the flesh.' There are others which, for the same reason, convey no definite meaning to the average reader: *e.g.*, 'The creature was made subject to vanity,' 'We stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you.'

The very limited range allowed in translating the prepositions has made the Authorised Version sometimes quite Oriental in the vagueness of the sense which it conveys to the unassisted reader. The prepositions *on*, *by*, *through*, *with*, are often compelled to do duty for

which they are inadequate, with the result that, being required to express too much, they express practically nothing. Hence we find such collocations as 'Shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith'—which, to a 'plain man' who has not a commentary at his elbow, sounds like a mere juggling with words.

Conceding all that is urged in praise of the dignity and beauty of the Authorised Version, and the charm of its rhythm, it can hardly be denied that, if the first requisite of a translation is that it shall convey with absolute clearness the meaning of the original, that version is in many parts of the Epistles far from adequate. If a student handed in such a rendering of a passage of Thucydides or Plato, as the Authorised Version supplies (to give but one instance) of 11 Corinthians, x, 13-16, he would be told by his tutor that he did not understand his author.

2.—To the mass of readers and hearers who are untrained in theology, who do not consult commentaries, a prominent feature of St. Paul's style is an apparent lack of continuity of thought, sometimes almost amounting to incoherence. The transition from subject to subject, from step to step of an argument, is not clear; there seem to be links wanting. The writer appears to pass from one thought to another which has no obvious connection with it. In multitudes of his sentences which begin with 'For,' the inference is by no means apparent. These peculiarities are especially noteworthy in Romans and 1 Corinthians. The consequence is, that to many, very many, Christians, St. Paul's Epistles are a treasury of precious texts, of inspiring passages; but to comparatively few is he a really connected thinker, or a writer whose language is characterized by sharp precision, and limpid clearness of expression.

I am far from condemning the Authorised Version on these grounds. For the purpose which its authors had in view it was almost as perfect as the conditions under which they worked allowed of its being. It was produced in an age of doctrinal controversy, when the final appeal was invariably to the letter of Scripture. Hence the one thing needful in the eyes of the theologians of that time was a version which represented the *ipsissima verba* of Scripture, the explanation being left to specialists. The Revised Version, being a revision, not a new translation, was executed under restrictions which necessitated the presence in it of the same advantages and disadvantages; hence almost all objections raised, on these particular grounds, to the Authorised Version apply equally to the Revised Version. Against the great advantages of a translation executed on such lines must be set one very serious disadvantage, which is more felt in these days than ever before. Readers and hearers who want to grasp the *spirit* of St. Paul's teaching, to follow intelligently his arguments in every detail, to enter into his thoughts and emotions, to appreciate the circumstances and mental attitude of the writer and those first addressed by him, are continually baffled by the lack of assistance afforded by what are practically the only versions generally accessible. We often hear the clergy complain that to the mass of their hearers the doctrines and claims of their religion seem to be something unreal, outside their lives. May not this be in some measure due to the literary form in which those doctrines, which are elaborated by St. Paul, and by him only, are presented to them in his writings? The somewhat archaic diction produces a sense of aloofness from the speech, and, by consequence, from the thoughts, of our daily life; the frequent seeming vagueness of expression, which leaves too much to the imagination, and the ap-

parent disconnectedness, one might almost say inconsequence, of the argument, create a feeling of unreality which may have something to do with making religion, for many professors of it, so much a matter of formal profession and ritual observance, that it and their daily life of thought and action seem to belong to two different spheres. *Saint Paul* is not quite Paul the man, with his weaknesses, his impulsiveness, his clinging affection, his clear-headed common-sense. His writings are not read as real letters; they are *Epistles*, religious and doctrinal treatises, grave, dignified, and somewhat stilted. Split up into chapters and verses as they are, they scarcely read as organized wholes, as outpourings of intense earnestness, dominated each by its leading thought, of which the writer never loses sight. Considerable portions of some of them are too often regarded as wastes of somewhat obscure reference to views and practices which have largely lost all interest for us moderns, yet interspersed with oases of exquisite charm and spiritual refreshment. They contain a large number of 'verses' which are (especially when removed from their context) very inspiring, suggestive, and comforting; but they also contain a multitude of admonitions, appeals, and warnings, the connection of which with the circumstances of the writer's life is but vaguely perceived, and which seem to be empty of interest and instruction for us.

I hope I shall not be supposed guilty of the folly of calling these versions 'blunders' on such grounds. Such a literal rendering as they present is, as a court of appeal in matters of faith, the only possible one. It is also the only form of translation about which there can be anything like general agreement: no expanded, explanatory translation could be final, as is evidenced by the immense variety of opinions as to the interpretation of very many passages in the *Epistles*. It is the only version