

**TEXTS AND MARGINS OF THE  
REVISED NEW TESTAMENT  
AFFECTING THEOLOGICAL  
DOCTRINE BRIEFLY REVIEWED**

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Texts and Margins of the Revised New Testament Affecting Theological Doctrine Briefly  
Reviewed by G. Vance Smith

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**G. VANCE SMITH**

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# TEXTS AND MARGINS

OF THE

REVISED NEW TESTAMENT

AFFECTING

THEOLOGICAL DOCTRINE

BRIEFLY REVIEWED.



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## INTRODUCTORY.

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THE varied criticism to which the revised New Testament has been subjected has gone far to establish a conclusion of considerable importance,—one, too, which has been widely accepted even by persons of the most different theological opinions. It has led to a very general recognition of the substantial accuracy of the new text, regarded as the representative of the Greek original. A few instances may no doubt be pointed out in which this statement is open to question; but on the whole, notwithstanding various inconsistencies of rendering, and some faulty deviations from usual English idiom, it is acknowledged that the work of revision has been well done, and that it places before the modern reader the oldest original text which is now accessible to us more fully and literally than is done by the Authorised Version.

This result was to be anticipated. The revisers, as a body, were men of competent learning, and well acquainted with their subject; nor can they have had any motive in their work but to render their original faithfully to the best of their own understanding. This will probably be allowed by every reader of the corrected version who is at all competent to form an opinion on such a question.

At the same time it may be well to remember that even a body of such men was not infallible. Nor is there any thing improbable in the supposition that they may have been influenced by the bias of their own theological opinions. It was at least natural, perhaps it was inevitable, that they



should have been so. Whether there be any traces of this in their work, we need not at present stop to inquire. The reader will no doubt be able to make his own inferences on the point, as he proceeds with the following pages.

At all events, it will be seen that the changes which have been introduced in the revised version have, in several conspicuous instances, an important bearing upon theological doctrine, as usually derived from the New Testament. It is the design of the present Tract to point out some of these instances, and to offer a few remarks in elucidation of their theological import. I need not add that I wish to say what I have to say with every regard to literary fidelity, and with the desire to present each case honestly and truly, as it is, so far as I can myself appreciate its character. Without *bias*, I suppose I must not claim to be ; but I will at least endeavour not to allow my own private opinions to influence me unduly; and it will always remain with the reader to judge for himself whether or not I have succeeded in giving a fairly true and impartial account of what I have undertaken here to discuss.

It will be convenient in what follows to take the passages to be noticed, with one or two exceptions, in the order in which they occur in the New Testament books. And it will be understood that it is only certain passages of prominent theological interest that it is proposed to notice.

## TEXTS AND MARGINS.

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§ 1. Matt. i. 18: 'Holy Ghost;' margin, 'Or, *Holy Spirit*; and so throughout this book.'—This margin is an acknowledgment by the revisers, repeated in several books, to the effect that the original term, rendered 'Ghost,' is the *same* word, which is also rendered 'Spirit.' Such is the case in every instance, without exception.\* It requires no argument to show that one and the same rendering of the one original word ought to have been adopted throughout. So obvious a neglect of uniformity in so important a case is the more remarkable, because the revisers, as a rule, have been careful, and profess to be careful, to render the same original word by the same English, so far as possible—as for example in the insignificant case of 'straightway,' many times in the second Gospel. Why then have they not been equally particular in the greater case of Holy Spirit,—one of real interest and importance.†

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\* In several N. T. books the words Holy Ghost—or Spirit—do not occur at all. In John, the rendering 'Ghost' has been retained once only, viz., in xx. 23.

† One of the revisers has given us a reason which, I must say, too clearly suggests the influence under which the rendering Holy Ghost was retained. He observes, 'England would have risen up and protested against the loss of that most holy name.' And yet 'that most holy name' *does not occur* in the original Scripture, as a word distinct from that which is rendered Spirit!—See Rev. W. G. Humphry's Tract, 'A Word on the Revised Version,' published for the Christian Knowledge Society.

In some instances, again, the Revision has not only retained the old expression, but has gone so far as to alter the pronouns, so as to impart a more distinctly personal character to the rendering—as in Rom. viii. 16, 'the Spirit himself,' instead of the Authorised 'itself,' which exactly represents the Greek; so in Ephes. iv. 30, which is a similar case. In these places, no doubt it may be urged, a personal meaning is expressed in the context; but then is it not simply a figurative personality, of exactly the same kind as that attributed to other objects of thought, as, for example, to Charity (love) in 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5. (Here, it must not be overlooked, the Revision has altered the personal pronoun, in the opposite sense, so as to *take away* the personal meaning, and injure the Apostle's metaphor.) But indeed, as probably all will admit, the expression Holy Spirit denotes the Divine Being himself, especially in His influence upon the mind of man. Hence, it is easy to understand, the Spirit may quite intelligibly be spoken of under the personal conception of it, while yet it is unnecessary to go to the length of the popular Creeds and attribute to it a real or separate personality of its own, making it in effect a distinct and separate God—as in the Athanasian Creed. Of this extreme perversion of the idea there is no example within the pages of the New Testament. Accordingly there is nowhere in the Bible to be found any instance of prayer being offered to it, or any ascription of praise or adoration, as there so often is in the case of the Almighty Father.

It ought not to be forgotten that the American revisers (List of Readings, No. III.) express their desire that instead of 'Holy Ghost,' the rendering 'Holy Spirit' should be uniformly adopted. In this they have shewn themselves more faithful to the original than the English Company: inasmuch as the New Testament has everywhere been contented to express the idea intended by a single word; while also the deep and comprehensive word Spirit is