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I.

THE SILENCE OF SCRIPTURE A PROOF OF  
ITS DIVINE ORIGIN.

SILENCE is sometimes big with testimony. Evidence does not all get syllabled in speech. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language." The praise does not get spoken audibly to the ear of men; but the swinging worlds are forever testifying to the "eternal power and divinity" of Him who fashioned them in the past, and holds them still in his resistless and measureless leash. All the starry hosts of the sky are "moving their rounds in silent rhythm and inaudible song."

Robert Hall has a sermon on the text: "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing,"\* in which he says it is difficult to determine whether the glory of God appears more in what He displays or in what He conceals. "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself." Hiding, while yet revealing, He, in the very revelation, has given proof of the divinity that shaped it by the silences that thunder along the sacred text.

It would ill befit silence to claim for it everywhere the place of "Sir Oracle." Silence is not always a pearl of great price. It is not a pearl of any price when enforced by ignorance. It must be "cunning in dumbness"—not dumb from mere stupidity. Its worth lies in its withholding speech with a purpose, and for some high end. When it is of necessity, because of the utter paucity of its own

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\* Works of Robert Hall, London, 1845, vol. vi.

## VII.

### CRITICAL NOTE.

#### ITALICS IN OUR ENGLISH BIBLES.

THE King James Bibles italicize all the words supplied in translating, even the pronominal subject which is implied in the verb by its inflection, or the copula-verb implied by the juxtaposition of words. The Revisers, in their preface, lay down a rule which is, for substance, that they will italicize only the words that are *supplied* for making good sense in English, and not those which are properly *implied* in the phraseology of the Hebrew. But in their use of this rule, they seem to count all the ordinary conjectures by which the translator into English supplements the Hebrew phraseology as implied; it is only in extraordinary instances that they count anything as supplied. That their rule, properly understood, is a correct one, I do not dispute; but I am constrained to question its correctness as interpreted by the use they make of it.

That their usage is that which ordinarily obtains in popular translations into English from other languages will readily be admitted; but the English Bible, though a popular translation, is in some important respects different from most other popular translations. If there was any reason why the Revisers should spend so much time upon it, that reason is found in the fact that the Bible is a religious book—a book which people are expected not merely to read and lay aside, as they do the latest novel or poem, but to study carefully and accurately. It follows that all means not inconsistent with the flowing character of a popular book should be used to make the translation an accurate reproduction of the original. The Revisers recognize the use of italic type as a means of this sort. We are familiar with it. It does not offend the eye. It does not interfere with continuous and fluent reading. It ought to be retained, therefore, wherever it actually conduces to the more accurate expression of either the meaning or the characteristic style of the original. Probably half or more of the omissions of italics in the Revised Version are in violation of this principle.

Let me illustrate this by a few instances taken at random from Malachi.

(1) “My name *shall be* great among the Gentiles” (Mal. i. 11), the Revised Version translates “my name is great,” putting “shall be” into the margin. The Revisers, therefore, here recognize the fact that it is a matter of difference of judgment whether the copula should be supplied in the present or in the future—that is, whether the passage is a statement of fact or a prediction. The in-

sersion of the word *is* to make out the sense in English is not merely the insertion of the copula which is implied in the Hebrew, but is also the insertion of the opinion of the translator that the statement is that of a fact and not of a prediction. I think that this opinion is correct, but manifestly it is supplied as a matter of critical judgment, and not implied in the Hebrew of the clause. The italicizing of it would indicate this, and would thus avoid the stating of the conjecture as if it were a fact. In this instance, the matter is somewhat less important, because the marginal note calls attention to the difference of opinion as to the tense ; but in hundreds of similar instances there is no marginal note.

(2) " Pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it*" (Mal. iii. 10). Here the Revised Version omits the italics except with the last three words. The Hebrew is here obscure. Different scholars give several different explanations of it. The translators of King James take one explanation, but make it evident that they obtain it by filling up from the Hebrew. The Revisers take the same explanation, and conceal the fact that it is mostly explanation. If one should re-translate the King James version into Hebrew, he would be very likely to hit upon the exact words of the original ; if he should re-translate the Revised Version, he would obtain a result entirely different from the original.

(3) A very different instance is " a son honoreth *his* father, and a servant his master" (Mal. i. 6). Here the Revision omits the italics. In this case it is true that the word *his* is implied, which would ordinarily be a sufficient reason for leaving it undistinguished. But here it is also true that it would be as natural for the Hebrew to express the pronoun as for the English ; that the omission of it is a mark of peculiar style ; that this peculiarity might be transferred into perfectly good English : " A son honoreth a father, and a servant his master" ; that the peculiarity is at least indicated in the old version by its noting that the word *his* is supplied ; that it is buried out of sight in the Revision ; and that the test of re-translation would here vindicate the old and condemn the new.

The instances thus objected to must be nearly half as numerous as the verses in the Old Testament. They may be relatively fewer in the New Testament. In this matter, the Bible of King James, with all its superfluity of italics, is greatly to be preferred to that of the Revisers, with its thousands upon thousands of supplied conjectures, undistinguishable from the other parts of the text.

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