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THE SHORT BIBLE—ITS MEANING AND MENACE¹

THERE was a time easily within the memory of many now living when, throughout the English-speaking world, *The Bible* meant the Authorised or King James Version of Holy Scripture. It means that to many even to-day. But the last fifty years have been marked by revision and retranslation and by attempts to correct and improve the Scriptures.

The English Revision appeared in 1881, the American Revised Version in 1901. In addition to these revisions of the Authorised Version, several new translations of the entire Bible have been published, notably the "Moffatt" and the "American". The Moffatt Translation is a one-man translation made by Professor James Moffatt, now of Union Theological Seminary, New York. The American Translation is the work of five men. Professor J. M. Powis Smith with the aid of three other scholars translated the Old Testament; and Professor Edgar J. Goodspeed translated the New. Instead of being called an "American Translation" it should be called a "Chicago University" Translation, since all five translators were more or less closely identified with that institution. Both of these translations appeared within a decade: both emanate from liberal or higher critical circles and aim to apply its results to the work of Bible Translation.

In addition to these revisions and new translations, various attempts have been made to abridge the Bible and, in some cases, to modernize it. The publication by Scribner (New York) of *The Shorter Bible* created a mild furore about fifteen years ago. Its chief editor was Professor Charles Foster Kent of Yale and it was quite obviously prepared in the interest of destructive higher criticism.

Among the other so-called Bibles which should be mentioned are Moulton's *Modern Reader's Bible for Schools* and *The Bible for Youth* which was published in England about a decade ago. Both of these books omit large portions of Scripture while at the same time adding explanatory comments of a more or less

¹ An address delivered on November 11th, 1933, before the Regional Conference of the League of Evangelical Students held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

definitely critical type ; and the former makes extensive use of condensation and paraphrase.

*The Short Bible*² which has just appeared contains features of most of the books already mentioned. It uses the text of the " American " Translation. It is an abridged edition, it contains explanatory introductions and it goes beyond all of them in the way in which it rearranges the books. I shall ask you to consider with me these features of *The Short Bible* and the menace which they form to the historic faith of the Church as founded on the Holy Scriptures.

I

In the first place *The Short Bible* is correctly named. It is short. The fact that the two Testaments are given very nearly equal space is the first indication of this. Since the Old Testament is about three times the size of the New Testament this fact alone would mean the reduction of the Old Testament to about one-third of its full size even if *The Short Bible* contained the entire New Testament. But an examination of the New Testament portion shows that it has been reduced by about one-half, which means that the Old Testament has been reduced to about one-sixth and the Bible as a whole to about one-fourth of its full strength. This is a considerable reduction—about one-half—over *The Shorter Bible* of Professor Kent, which results in the anomaly that *The Short Bible* is shorter than *The Shorter Bible*.

Looking first at the Old Testament, since it has suffered most heavily, we note that the only book which appears intact is the little Book of Jonah. All the others have been more or less abridged and six of them—1 and 2 Chronicles, Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Obadiah and Malachi—have been entirely omitted.

In the Pentateuch, of the fifty chapters of Genesis, fourteen entire chapters are retained, eight of which are concerned with the life of Joseph. Seven of these chapters (Gen. xxxix.-xlv.) constitute the longest connected Old Testament passage in *The Short Bible*. In the case of Exodus we have six entire chapters and nine part chapters out of a total of forty. Leviticus suffers severely, less than one entire chapter being retained out of the twenty-seven. Of the thirty-six chapters of Numbers

² *The Short Bible: An American Translation*. Edited by Edgar J. Goodspeed and J. M. Powis Smith. The Chicago University Press, 1933. 8vo, pp. x, 549.

only two half-chapters are kept, and of the thirty-four of Deuteronomy two whole chapters.

The Historical Books (Joshua to Esther) contain two hundred and forty-nine chapters. Of these, thirteen complete chapters are retained with parts of nine others: or, eleven verses each from Joshua and 2 Samuel and fifteen verses from 2 Kings; one complete chapter and parts of one or two others, in the case of 1 Kings, Ezra and Nehemiah; two complete chapters of Ruth and 1 Samuel; two complete chapters and one incomplete of Judges; and four complete chapters of Esther. That the history becomes very "scrappy" to say the least, need hardly be pointed out. We have for the career of David only the story of the fight with Goliath and his lament over Saul and Jonathan. No subsequent king of either the Northern or Southern kingdom is mentioned except Ahab, and he appears only in the brief extracts from the career of Elijah. From 2 Kings we have only the fifteen verses which describe the translation of Elijah. How little the editors of *The Short Bible* were interested in Old Testament history is made clear by these simple facts.

Passing to the Poetical Books (Job to Song) we note the same severity of treatment. Only six of the forty-two chapters of Job are preserved, and nearly four of these belong to the prose prologue and epilogue. Of the great argument of the book there is very little to be found. Of the one hundred and fifty Psalms only fifteen are preserved, of these only five exceed ten verses in length, the longest having seventeen verses. Among the missing are the 51st, 103rd and 139th. All of the Royal Messianic Psalms, all of the Penitentials are missing. Proverbs has suffered severely, portions of only five of its thirty-one chapters being preserved. Ecclesiastes has one complete chapter and parts of three out of its twelve chapters.

Passing to the Prophetical Books, we note that only four out of the sixty-six chapters of Isaiah are kept entire (6th, 53rd, 55th, 60th), there being portions of twenty others. Forty-two chapters are entirely wanting. Jeremiah receives even more scant courtesy. Only one chapter of the fifty-two is complete and there are parts of five others. From Ezekiel we have the first three chapters nearly complete, also the 18th and parts of two others. The so-called Minor Prophets have a total of sixty-seven chapters; fifteen are given in full and fifteen in part. Among the heavy sufferers are Amos, Micah and Zechariah.

II

Turning to the New Testament, we find that 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John and Jude are entirely omitted. Of the other twenty-three books not one has entirely escaped the pruning knife. Of the Gospels, Mark has suffered the least, losing ten verses in Chapter 6 (verses 35-44) and twelve verses at the end of the last chapter, the so-called long ending. Matthew loses nearly one-half, John more than half, Luke nearly two-thirds, Acts nearly one-third. The Pauline Epistles are cut approximately as follows :—one-third, 1 Thessalonians, Philemon; one-half, Philippians, Colossians, Titus; two-thirds, 2 Thessalonians, Galatians; three-fourths, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians; only seventeen verses of 1 Timothy are left and fifteen of 2 Timothy. The severe treatment of Romans and 1 and 2 Corinthians is especially noteworthy. That nineteen verses should be cut from the 8th of Romans and seventeen from the great resurrection chapter (1 Cor. xv) is a proof that there was no lack of boldness on the part of the shorteners. Of the remaining books, James and 1 Peter lost one-half, Hebrews and 1 John lose about two-thirds, Revelation three-fourths. In this way the New Testament is reduced one-half and the Old Testament five-sixths. As a consequence it becomes a handy volume of 550 pages which is bound like and which might easily be taken for a “best seller” and needs no India paper or small type to make it easy to handle. But at what tremendous cost this has been brought about is indicated by this brief summary.

III

The second important feature of *The Short Bible* is that it represents a *rearrangement* of the books of the Bible. We read in the Preface :—“After consultation with many experienced teachers of the English Bible it has become clear that, to be most useful, it should present the various books in the chronological order of their composition, so that earlier religious ideas come first and more developed ones later. So arranged, the book becomes an introduction to the development of Hebrew and Christian religious thought, and the great messages of the prophets and evangelists stand out in their full originality.”

This feature of *The Short Bible* will prove very startling and disconcerting to many a reader. He turns to the Old

we come to excerpts from the historical books Samuel, Kings and Judges (note the *order*). Samuel tells us of the childhood of Samuel, David's victory over Goliath and his lament over Saul and Jonathan, Kings tells of some of the stirring events in the life of Elijah, Judges sings for us the song of Deborah's victory over the Canaanites and of Gideon's triumph over the hosts of Midian in the days when the judges ruled. We turn the page and we are with Haggai and Zechariah who prophesied in the reign of Darius the Persian. Then comes Joel, followed by Ruth, who lived when the Judges ruled and was an ancestress of David. Finally we are at Genesis. Genesis tells of Creation, the Fall, the Flood, of Abraham and especially of Joseph. Exodus is more abridged, then a few verses from Leviticus, a couple of Balaam's prophecies from Numbers, the standing-still of the sun from Joshua and we are back with Ezra and Nehemiah in the Persian period. Then follow Jonah, Proverbs, Daniel, Psalms, Esther and finally Ecclesiastes.

Looked at from the standpoint of the *events described* it would be hard to find a more perplexing arrangement. It is confusion worse confounded. If the books are arranged chronologically—and this is only partly the case—then certainly the time when the books were written is according to the editors far more important than the events which they describe. The way the writers looked at things concerns us more than the things at which they looked. And it is far less dangerous to get the facts all mixed up than it is to get the documents that record them out of order. If, for example, Deuteronomy was written in the days of Josiah, many centuries after the time of Moses, its interest for us, its value to us is not what it tells us about the Mosaic age, about Egypt, the Red Sea, Mount Sinai and the forty years' wandering. Much of this may be quite wrong, even utterly untrustworthy. The value of Deuteronomy to us will lie in what it indicates that great religious thinkers of this later period thought about religion, especially since it is held that with fine disregard of the facts of history they placed their own ideas and ideals on the lips of Moses, representing them as coming from him. This is what is meant by saying that when its books are arranged chronologically according to the alleged date of composition they become "an introduction to the development of Hebrew and Christian religious thought, and the great messages of the prophets stand out in their full

originality"—an originality, as we have seen, which may be quite untrammelled by history or fact.

The New Testament has suffered what will appear to many as an almost equally startling rearrangement, except that the period to which the books are limited is, of course, much briefer. We begin with the Pauline Epistles, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon. These are put first as being earlier than the Gospels. Then come Mark, Matthew, Luke and Acts, followed by Ephesians, Revelation, Hebrews, 1 Peter, James, the Gospel and 1st Epistle of John, and finally the Letters to Timothy and Titus.

The first objection to this allegedly chronological arrangement is that it adopts radical views regarding the date and authorship of the New Testament books. The Epistles of Paul are placed first as being earlier than the Gospels. But only nine are so placed. This means that four (Ephesians, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus) are not by Paul. Similarly the late position of 1 Peter, James, the Gospel of John and his 1st Epistle, indicates that they, too, are late and pseudonymous. The arrangement is consequently highly important because it indicates the opinion of the New Testament editor as to the authority of a number of the books of the New Testament.

A further point of interest connected with this arrangement is that the placing of the Epistles before the Gospels reverses the logical order. Broadly speaking, the Gospels give the narrative of the life of our Lord, the factual record; the Epistles expound the meaning of those facts. They presuppose a competent knowledge of the facts, as they had been learned from Paul or others. They presuppose just such facts as are recorded in the Gospels. To put the Epistles first in a New Testament intended for the modern reader, is like plunging a man into a course on the *significance* of history or of current events without giving him first an account of the *facts* and *events* themselves. It is to put the cart before the horse. The only logical and satisfactory order is the familiar one:—first Gospels, then Epistles. The chronological order is illogical and unpractical.

IV

The third noteworthy feature of *The Short Bible* is that it is an *interpreted* Bible. Each book or small group of books is pre-faced with an introduction. It is needless to point out that the

including of introductory or explanatory comments in editions of the Bible is not new and, within certain limits, may be quite helpful to the average reader. But in this instance several things are to be noticed. The book under discussion is called *The Short Bible*. How short it is, how ruthlessly the knife is applied, in some cases only a chapter or a part of a chapter being retained from a long book—this we have already noted. Consequently if brevity is to be secured at such cost, we would expect that if any explanatory notes were included they would be extremely short. In most instances they *are* relatively brief, usually about a page in length. But taken together they cover fifty-five pages or approximately one-tenth of the book. The notes must be quite important, it would seem, if they are allowed so much space in an edition in which, for the sake of brevity, the Biblical text is subjected to such a severe abridgment.

But it is not their length which is the most startling thing about these comments. In fact they are shorter than the comments in some unshortened editions of the Bible. What is especially significant is that these introductory and explanatory statements are printed in *larger type* than the Biblical text. From the days of the Authorised Version of 1611, it has been customary to print the notes and comments deemed helpful or important for the understanding of the Biblical text, in smaller type than the text itself. This was not a mere printers' device. Its aim was obviously to make perfectly clear the difference between the Word of God and the explanations of men. The subordinate and secondary position of the latter was thus made obvious to the most casual reader. They were not on a par with the Bible itself. This safe and reverent attitude has been followed in countless editions of the English Bible. I have no hesitation in calling it the established usage. But there are exceptions. The most regrettable feature of Moulton's *Modern Reader's Bible for Schools*, aside from its critical tendencies, is the way in which Biblical text, paraphrase, and comment are all printed in the same type with so little effort to distinguish one from the other, that often it is only through his familiarity with the Bible itself that the reader can tell which is which. A regrettable feature of the widely used *Scotfield Reference Bible* is that the footnotes and the more elaborate introductory statements are printed in the same type as the Bible itself. Dr. Scofield never intended, I am sure, that his comments should be regarded as

having the same authority as the Word of God. But, unfortunately, there are many to-day who practically invest them with that authority. In a book which is called a *Bible*, and which prints the Biblical text connectedly, that text should always be given the first place and be distinguished by difference in type. This is the established usage. To do otherwise is neither safe nor reverent.

In this important regard *The Short Bible* occupies a position which is unique, startlingly so. It prints the editorial comments in *larger* type than the Scripture passages; and with a view to further emphasizing them, it employs italics as well. I do not know of any book which calls itself a *Bible* and contains only the Biblical text with a relatively small amount of comment, in which the comments are made more conspicuous than the text on which they comment. This is an exalting of the word of man *above* the Word of God which is most reprehensible. Since it is customary to emphasize important matters by printing them in large type, this procedure can only mean that the editors of *The Short Bible* consider their comments upon the text of Scripture more important than the text itself, or at least as so indispensable to the proper understanding of those portions of Scripture which are retained in this abbreviated edition that the reader must have his attention directed to them first of all. An excuse for doing this would be the fact that many readers of annotated Bibles pay little attention to the comments, contenting themselves with the Bible itself. Consequently the editors may have felt justified in giving special prominence to their comments, especially since the extreme abridgment and the drastic rearrangement are likely to give the average reader a feeling of bewilderment when he picks up such a topsy-turvy volume as *The Short Bible*. But the main reason for the prominence given these comments is made inescapably clear by an examination of the notes themselves. A few examples will suffice.

V

The Book of Jonah occupies a unique position in *The Short Bible*. It is the only book in the Old Testament, in fact the only book in the entire Bible, which is given in *full*. This may seem like a testimony to the conservative and reverent scholarship of the editors. Does not the Book of Jonah contain

the miracle of Jonah and the whale, which is scoffed at by liberals and dubbed the "fish story"? And was not this oft-challenged incident declared by our Lord to be a sign of His coming resurrection? Is not, then, the fact that *The Short Bible* retains this book in full a proof that its editors believe in the Supernatural, in the reality of miracle and prophecy? The answer to this question is found in the introduction to the Book of Jonah. It is brief, only about half a page. I shall give it in full:

The Book of Jonah is a prophetic message in the form of a story. Jonah is not its author but its hero. It was told at a time when the Jews were for the most part intensely narrow-minded and self-centered. But there was an element of the Jewish people that thought of their God as God of the Universe and lover of all mankind, and this is the view of him embodied in the book. It is not a piece of history but of religious fiction, and it constitutes the first real missionary document in religious literature. The story was written probably some time in the third century before Christ. The unknown prophet who wrote it had grasped something of the wideness of God's mercy. He realized that the love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind, and he cast his message in forms of such vividness and power that his little story is among the masterpieces of the world.

Notice a few statements that are made here. The Book of Jonah is a "story". Jonah is its "hero". Its date is "probably some time in the third century before Christ". If this means the middle of the century, or about 250 B.C., the Book of Jonah was written about 350 years after the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C. and about 500 years after the time when Jonah the son of Amittai prophesied in the days of Jeroboam II (2 Kings xiv. 25). In other words this story of which Jonah is the hero is farther removed from his time than a story of Christopher Columbus just off the press would be from the momentous day when America was discovered. This naturally suggests that its historical value may be slight. But we are not left to infer this: on the contrary it is quite positively stated, "It is not a piece of history but of religious fiction". In a word, the book is not to be regarded as a record of *fact*. What, then, is its purpose as a religious romance? It is "the first real missionary document in religious literature". In what sense?—because Jonah went to Nineveh and, being accredited by a unique experience, announced to them the destruction of their city as the punishment of their sins? Not at all. This incident is not history but fiction. An unknown prophet "had grasped something of the wideness of God's mercy" and "cast his message in forms of such vividness and power that his little story is among the masterpieces of the world".

You observe the *importance* of this introduction to the Book of Jonah! Brief though it is, it tells us plainly that the book contains not fact, but fiction. Consequently, the "fish story" and the preaching to the Ninevites are not to be taken *seriously*. The seemingly historical incidents of the narrative are *fictitious*. Whether they actually happened we do not know: we do not need to know: it is a matter of no importance. You note the subtlety of the method. To cut the "fish story" out of the Book of Jonah would mar it, perhaps spoil it as a masterpiece of literature. It would be crude. It is far better to leave it there and warn the reader not to take it seriously. And then, lest the reader feel defrauded because the story of Jonah and the whale, which may have thrilled him as a child, has been relegated like William Tell and the apple to the limbo of legend and folklore, he is told that the real point of the story is something entirely different. The book is not a record of fact dating from the time when Nineveh was the centre of a mighty empire: it is a missionary romance or tract designed to rebuke the "hard-boiled" attitude of the Jews of a far later age. The fact that the book says nothing of the conversion of the Ninevites and that Nineveh later perished and has been for centuries nothing but a name, the fact that Jesus did appeal to the "fish story" and the preaching to the Ninevites as history, and that the great Apostle to the Gentiles never appealed to Jonah as the Magna Carta of foreign missions—this is ignored. Jonah is not historical, the fish story may be a myth, Jonah's visit to Nineveh may be pure fiction. But the book is "the first real missionary document in religious literature". It is "among the masterpieces of the world". Therefore it deserves to appear in full in *The Short Bible*. You observe how extremely important it is that the reader should not skip the introduction! Were he to do so he might miss the entire point of the Book of Jonah. He might regard the fish story as true and important; he might fail to see the missionary motive of the book.

VI

We have seen that the rearrangement of the books makes Amos the first in order. The introduction to Amos contains some striking statements. It is too long to quote in full, so we must confine ourselves to a couple of sentences. "Amos", we read, "preached probably between 765 and 750 B.C. With him

begins what has been called the ethical monotheism of the prophets." The statement is significant. We are accustomed to think of Abraham and Moses as monotheists and of the Decalogue, given at Mount Sinai in the days of Moses, as very definitely monotheistic. Yet we are told that the "ethical monotheism of the prophets" began with Amos at the beginning of the Assyrian period. What does this mean? Simply this. It is, as we have already seen, one of the fundamentals of Higher Criticism in its most widely accepted form that the Pentateuch is not Mosaic, that the Law is later than the Prophets. That is the reason that the passages from the Pentateuch (except Deuteronomy) come after most of the prophets, being placed later than the post-exilic prophets Haggai and Zechariah. Under the caption "Genesis to Joshua" we are told that "some great Hebrew of the post-Exilic age toward 350 B.C. [i.e. about the time of Alexander the Great] wrought the literary inheritance of his people" into our Pentateuch or rather Hexateuch since Joshua is included with the five books of Moses. This means that the Pentateuch as a finished product dates from a thousand years or more after the time of Moses; and therefore its contents dating from various periods and representing quite varying traditions must be, to say the least, of very varying value and credibility. If Mosaic monotheism is a myth and Gen. i belongs to "the latest and post-exilic stratum of the Bible", then to Amos and the prophets of his time may be given the honour of being the discoverers of ethical monotheism. Nothing illustrates more clearly the radical tendencies of destructive Higher Criticism than the change in the order of the books, and the introductions that are designed to explain and justify it.

How unreliable the early books of the Bible are considered by the editors is shown by this comment on the Book of Judges:—"It [that is, the period] was a shadowy, half-legendary interval between the conquest and the kingdom." But it is not only the early books which are thus discredited. We are told regarding Esther, "Its religious and historical value is certainly slight, but it lives in literature as a vivid oriental story of a brave and beautiful Jewish girl, who attained the highest possible position but did not forget her people, and in an hour of extreme crisis risked everything to save them." Here we are warned against inferring from the fact that three whole chapters of Esther are retained that this means that the editors present them as anything

more than a beautiful oriental story. Some passages from *The Arabian Nights* might perhaps answer the purpose just as well.

Turning to the New Testament, we find in the introduction to the Epistle to the Galatians, which follows that to the Thessalonian Epistles, this statement regarding Paul :—" He was an apostle, commissioned by Christ himself, through inward experience and conviction." Is this intended to suggest that Paul did not really *see* the risen Lord on the Damascus Road ?

A startling statement is made regarding Mark's Gospel :—

It was written in the popular Graeco-Jewish vocabulary of demon and marvel, and was lightly esteemed in the ancient church in contrast with the later, richer works of Matthew and Luke, but no more dramatic and convincing account has even been written of the heroic effort of Jesus to execute the greatest task ever conceived—to set up the Kingdom of God on earth.

Note these statements, especially " It was written in the popular Graeco-Jewish vocabulary of demon and marvel." Does this mean that the supernatural element in the Gospel is to be largely rejected as due to the mistaken notions widely held in Jewish and pagan circles ? It would seem so. It is intimated that Matthew and Luke were preferred to Mark by the Early Church and it is suggested that this was because they avoided this popular but erroneous vocabulary. It may be said in reply that no such discrimination against Mark as is alleged is to be found in the Early Church and, furthermore, that the reason alleged for it does not exist. Demonology (i.e. allusions to the devil, or Satan, and to devils and unclean spirits and their baleful influence on mankind) also appears prominently in Matthew and Luke. We may note that they, and not Mark, record the temptation of our Lord by the devil at the commencement of His public ministry. As to the " marvels ", we find that of the eighteen miracles recorded in Mark, all but two are also found in either Matthew or Luke, more frequently in both. What is true of Mark is true of Matthew and Luke and, if it is an unworthy feature, there is little to choose between it and the other two Synoptic Gospels. Finally, it is rather significant that this relatively inferior Gospel, as the editors of *The Short Bible* esteem it, is the only one of the four which is retained almost in full in the volume under discussion.

This introduction further tells us that " no more dramatic and convincing account has ever been written of the heroic effort of Jesus to execute the greatest task ever conceived—to

set up the Kingdom of God on earth". Is this a true representation of the meaning and purpose of the life of our Lord? Was Jesus' death merely the inevitable result of His heroic but unavailing attempt to bring in the Kingdom? Or, did He come "to give His life a ransom for many"? Perhaps the words in the introduction explain why the verse just quoted is rendered in *The Short Bible* :—"For the Son of Man himself has not come to be waited on, but to wait on other people, and to give his life to free many others." Nothing is said in this introduction to intimate that Christ came to die as a sacrifice for sin.

VII

The same defect appears in the introduction to Romans. There we are told that it is the design of Paul in this epistle to "present the great features of the Christian faith as he sees them". They are summarized as follows :—

Jew and Greek alike have fallen short of the truest uprightness, but a way to such uprightness has now been revealed through Christ. It is the way of faith—that inner attitude of trust and dependence upon God which must be the germ of any real achievement in character. God has forgiven the world, and man has only to accept that forgiveness through faith and live the life of the spirit.

The omissions here are significant and ominous. Let me repeat a few verses from the Epistle to the Romans to which this is the introduction (chap. iii. 21-26), using the familiar Authorised Version :—

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Now with these words of Paul still ringing in our ears, let us hear again the words of the introduction already quoted :—

Jew and Greek alike have fallen short of the truest uprightness, but a way to such uprightness has now been revealed through Christ. It is the way of faith—that inner attitude of trust and dependence upon God which must be the germ of any real achievement in character. God has forgiven the world, and man has only to accept that forgiveness through faith and live the life of the spirit.

You notice the difference! The one clearly aims to suppress what the other aims to make so clear and definite, that it is

faith in Christ as Saviour, reliance upon His finished redemption, that is the only way of reconciliation with God.

The effort to minimize the saving work of Christ to make Him a teacher of religion, a great prophet, rather than the High Priestly Saviour, is brought out in the introduction to Matthew where we read :—" Mark's picture of Jesus shows him as a doer, a man of action, but in Matthew Jesus is pre-eminently the teacher, and it is to his presentation of the teaching of Jesus that the world has turned ever since. The depth, beauty, and understanding of that teaching have caused Matthew's gospel to be called the ' greatest book in the world.' "

An even more striking passage is found in the introduction to John. " Historically less convincing than Mark, ethically less exalted than Matthew, the Gospel of John strikes beyond either of them to the very heart of Christianity, as above all an inner spiritual life, of sonship to God and friendship with Christ."

All of the introductions are informing because indicative of the theological bias of the editors, who are not impressed with the unity and harmony of Scriptures. On the contrary they recognize marked contrasts and even conflicts between the different books. Thus we are told that the Book of Revelation was written at the time of Domitian to strengthen the martyr spirit of the Church and prevent compromise with Rome and its emperor-worship. Dr. Goodspeed speaks of this book, of which he retains only one-fourth, as " a great super-opera ". He objects to its " grotesque imagery " though he is impressed by its power. Turning to 1 Peter we read the following :—

The collision with emperor worship made the Christians of Domitian's day acutely conscious of persecution. How was it to be met? One might submit to it most heroically and even die for the faith, yet do it with such inward bitterness and resentment as to make the last hard battle not a victory but a defeat.

This was the weakness of the Revelation. With all its magnificent faith, it had borrowed from the old prophets their vindictive hatred of the persecuting state, and gloated over the fate in store for its new Babylon, the Roman Empire. If such counsels were to prevail, the church would become a seditious and revolutionary group within the Roman world, and while it might unsettle the empire, it would lose its own soul.

This means, to put it bluntly, that 1 Peter was written to correct and offset the unchristian spirit of the Book of Revelation! We are also told that this epistle was not really written by Peter. But the name of Peter was used by some unknown

writer to give weight and apostolic authority to a book whose aim was to remind the Christians of "the sound Christian way of obedience to the state, respect for the emperor, and love even for one's enemies". You observe how the authority, not to say infallibility, of Scripture is undermined by such introductions as these.

VIII

I have had occasion to call attention to the way in which the familiar verse, "For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many", appears in *The Short Bible*. Before closing, let me say a word about the translation that is used. It should be borne in mind that *The Short Bible* uses the text of the so-called "American Translation". I cannot discuss this translation in detail. It has that characteristic, to which I have already alluded and which is the most serious fault of many modern translations, the aim not merely to bring the Authorised Version up-to-date, but to bring the Bible itself up-to-date, that is to make it say, as far as possible, what the higher critics think it *ought* to say, either by *wresting* or *altering* the text.

I shall cite only two illustrations: one from the Old Testament, the other from the New Testament.

The verses in the first chapter of Isaiah, beginning with the words "Come now and let us reason together", are so familiar that I need not read them in the Authorised Version. This is the rendering of *The Short Bible* :—

"Come now, and let us reason together,"

Says the Lord :

"If your sins be like scarlet,
Can they become white as snow ?
If they be red like crimson,
Can they become as wool ?
If you prove willing and obedient,
You shall eat the good of the land ;
But if you refuse and rebel,
You shall taste the sword ;
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

You notice what a difference the changing of two of these great affirmations into interrogations makes. "If your sins be as scarlet, can they become white as snow ?" What is the answer ? Is it Yes, or No ? There is nothing in the original Hebrew to justify such a rendering except the fact that in Hebrew as in

English a question *may* be indicated by the inflection of the voice. But there is nothing here to favour such a rendering. It is not found so far as I am aware in any ancient version. It is a discovery of the modern higher critic. And the thing that makes it almost ludicrous is this. These four "if" sentences are all alike. No one of them has an interrogative particle. So why stop with two ?

" If your sins be like scarlet,
Can they become white as snow ?
If they be red like crimson,
Can they become as wool ? "

Let us be consistent and carry it right on through all four :—

" If you prove willing and obedient,
Can you eat the good of the land ?
And if you refuse and rebel,
Can you taste the sword ?
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

You see how absurd it is ? Yet it is offered as a substitute for the familiar words of the Authorised Version :—" They shall be whiter than snow ". Let those who would rather have their faith depend upon a question mark of the higher critics—" Can they become white as snow ? "—than upon the solemn promise of sovereign grace—" They shall be whiter than snow "—adopt the new rendering if they will. For ourselves, we think the old is better.

Romans viii. 3 begins in the Authorised Version as follows :—" For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh ". *The Short Bible* has, " For though it was impossible for the Law to do it, hampered as it was by our physical limitations," etc. Here we have a change which is most dangerous. For the word " flesh ", we are to substitute the word " physical ". I need hardly remind you that Paul is careful to distinguish between the " body " or the " physical " and the " flesh " or the " carnal ". This difference is well brought out in Gal. v. 19f., " Now the works of the flesh are manifest which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like." Some of these sins are sins of the body, others of the mind, the heart, the will. They are the result of man's fallen nature which is corrupted, body, soul and spirit. But this is not due to the fact that man has a body, a physical nature.

Man's body was made by God as truly as his soul. Sin does not confine itself to the body, or the devil could not be a fallen angel. The doctrine that matter and so the physical is inherently evil is an ancient heresy in Christendom and it has been the curse of many pagan cults as well. Think but a moment of the attempts made by monkish flagellants and by Indian fakirs to mortify their bodies and crush out natural and normal desires and you will realize something of the tragedy that has resulted from the failure to distinguish between the physical and the carnal. Sad to say, the modern doctrine of evolution has helped to revive this ancient error and bring it back to life and respectability. We are told that man's difficulty is not *sin*, the result of the *fall*. Man has never fallen, perhaps scarcely even tripped. His fall, if we use the word at all, was a fall upward, which is a contradiction in terms. Man has been hampered from the start by the entail of an animal ancestry. There is in him the ape and the tiger—nature red with tooth and claw—and he has been struggling steadily and in the main successfully to overcome his base heredity. Consequently—and here is the most awful thing about this doctrine—sin, instead of being the one thing that ought not to be, is most natural and inevitable, because man is first of all an animal and has not fully mastered his heredity. Or, as we have it in this translation, body and flesh, physical and carnal, are the same.

A few years ago there appeared in the *British Weekly* a letter from a clergyman who was an examiner of candidates for the ministry or to be more exact for holy orders. This man wrote as a theological liberal, an advocate of the higher criticism. His letter was something of a Jeremiad. He lamented that the young men whom he examined knew so little about the Bible. We would all share his regret as to this. But his second and even greater sorrow was that the little that they did know usually represented the old traditional view of the Bible and indicated that despite the great efforts that were being made to circulate and inculcate the conclusions of the Higher Criticism, most people still took the Bible as it stood in the familiar Authorised and Revised Versions and had not learned to interpret it in the terms of Higher Criticism. How far that would be true in America to-day it would be difficult to say. In the Schools and Colleges, Sunday Schools and Bible Classes of our land there is much of this teaching. Its great enemy, the great Gibraltar

that blocks its path, is the Bible itself. People who really study and know and love the Bible cannot fail to see that between its teachings and the destructive Higher Criticism there is a great gulf fixed. In a word, rationalistic criticism is an attempt to restate the redemptive supernaturalism of the Bible in terms of naturalistic evolution.

Here we have the meaning and the menace of *The Short Bible*. The Bible is *abridged, arranged, interpreted and translated* from the standpoint of Modernism in the hope that the reader, by using as it were the higher critic's goggles, will read it as the critic wants him to do. My friends, *The Short Bible* is not *The Holy Bible*. If it and similar so-called Bibles take the place of this Holy Book, the evangelical faith of our fathers will perish. It is for us a solemn duty to cherish and maintain the precious heritage which we have received from our fathers, the whole Bible, the Holy Bible, the open Bible, to be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path, for us and for those who come after us, until He come.

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