

geniously spun together, that nowhere, so to say, is any seam visible. Tatian, indeed, is very far from having quoted the complete text of all four Gospels, and the work corresponds to Theodoret's account, that it was a compact and concise book. But he does use all of them, and uses no other source. The main fact, therefore, for which orthodox critics have contended appears conclusively established. Tatian is a decisive witness to the acceptance of our four Gospels in the time of Justin Martyr; and thus a vital portion of the argument of the author of *Supernatural Religion* falls at once to the ground. But although this affords a useful exposure of the value of that writer's discussions, it will be found to serve more important and more permanent purposes.

HENRY WACE.

THE REVISED VERSION OF THE NEW
TESTAMENT.

AN INTRODUCTORY PAPER.

I HAVE been asked to join with Mr. Beet in contributing to the EXPOSITOR some papers on different aspects of the Revised Version of the New Testament. But we are met by this difficulty, that while the adequate discussion of a work of such importance requires study which in the midst of other engagements cannot at once be given to it, the readers of the EXPOSITOR will yet naturally be anxious to know something about the New Version, and although the daily press has already taken up the subject with eagerness, there will still be some preliminary matter which ought to be stated if the Revision is to be approached with that sympathetic sense of its inner history which

makes every great work so much more intelligible. Reserving, therefore, for the present any more detailed examination and criticism, I propose to confine myself on this occasion to a brief outline of the circumstances in which the Revision had its origin, and a few remarks as to its general character.

Like most great undertakings of the kind, the Revision of the Authorized Version had been for some time "in the air" before it was actually taken in hand. Throughout the eighteenth century there had been a number of desultory and for the most part isolated attempts at revision by private individuals, the principal result of which is a feeling of thankfulness that no systematic revision was then attempted. It is true that the two greatest of English scholars, Bentley and Porson, belong, the one to the beginning, the other to the end of that century. But though we might well have wished that the present Revision had been assisted by their pre-eminent divining power, the time was not, in other respects, ripe for such an undertaking. So far as the text was concerned Bentley could only *plan* a scheme for collecting materials which it has taken more than a century to realize in any adequate manner. The enthusiastic hopes to which he gave utterance when he began, gradually die away or are smothered in the petty squabbles which embittered his later years. And even the broaching of his scheme raised an outcry that would have been enough to stop its progress. If Bentley himself could have been alive at the present day, none would have admitted more freely than he the enormous advantages which the present generation of scholars enjoy at starting—with the oldest and greatest of MSS. at last published with tolerable accuracy; with another MS., its equal probably in age and second only to it in value, newly discovered; with a version of the second century (the Curetonian) entirely brought to light, and our stock of collated MSS., both of the Greek text and

of other versions largely, and more than largely, augmented ; with the whole of this mass of material diligently sifted, and the principles underlying its use elicited by a succession of devoted labourers, the lives of men like Griesbach, Tischendorf and Tregelles, having been spent, and lavishly spent, in the cause.

But if the materials were not yet ready for anything like a critical recension of the Greek text, still less was the public taste in a fit condition for approaching a task which needed such delicate and reverent care as the revision of the venerable English of the Authorized Version. The eighteenth century has done great things in its way, and produced great men, but it did not possess the gifts—it was not in the proper frame of mind—for such a work. It had before it a false ideal ; and some of the attempts at revision made in the eighteenth century have become a byword and conspicuous example of all that was most to be avoided.¹

The general reaction which accompanied and outlasted the great French wars made its influence felt in the circles where there was a tendency to advocate revision. And on the whole between the years 1796–1832 the proposal must be said to have lost ground. At the latter date appeared the *Hints for an Improved Translation of the New Testament*, by Dr. Scholefield, then Professor of Greek at Cambridge. The movement which followed and which finally culminated in the work now so auspiciously accomplished, may be very largely traced to this beginning. It now, however, became what it had never quite succeeded in being before, a distinct movement assuming gradually wider and wider proportions. The years 1856–1858 mark another

¹ It is hardly necessary to remind the reader of the volume in which Harwood (1768) professed to translate the New Testament “with freedom, spirit, and elegance,” or of the often quoted specimens of this spirited and elegant version “The young lady is not dead” (Mark v. 39), “A gentleman of splendid family and opulent fortune had two sons” (Luke xv. 11), etc.

well-defined stage.¹ In the first edition of his *Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, published in 1856, Dr. Ellicott argued strongly in favour of Revision, at the same time by his careful and accurate translations of these as of other Epistles in the two preceding years, making an important contribution towards it. Still more important, because the result of combined labours undertaken in the hope of paving the way for a larger combination, was the Revision of portions of the Authorized Version of the New Testament by "Five Clergymen" (Dr. Barrow, Dr. Moberly now Bishop of Salisbury, Dean Alford, Mr. W. G. Humphry, and Dr. Ellicott), the first part of the first edition of which appeared in 1857. The same year saw a plea in the same direction from the side of the Nonconformists in Dr. J. R. Beard's *A Revised English Bible the want of the Church*. And meanwhile in America the first step, though not a very successful one, towards a systematic revision was taken by the American Bible Union, who brought out the Epistle to the Hebrews in 1857. The eventful *triennium* closed with the publication of the weighty treatise of Archbishop Trench (at that time Dean of Westminster), *On the Authorized Version of the New Testament*. The writer it is true did not think that the time for an authoritative revision had yet come, but his own work helped much to hasten it.

While the leading English scholars were thus advocating a careful emendation of the Authorized Version, attempts were made to give practical effect to their views in the Convocation of Canterbury by Canon Selwyn (Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, who had also written upon the subject), in February, 1856, and in the House of Commons by the late Mr. Heywood in July of the same year. Both

¹ This will be apparent if reference is made to the list of works on Revision in the Appendix to Abp. Trench's treatise *On the Authorised Version*, pp. 216-219. Out of forty works ranging between 1659-1858, twenty-one belong to the last three years.

these attempts failed ; but much had already been done to educate public opinion, and the process went on rapidly up to the time (1870) when in Convocation at least the attempt was renewed. Bishop Ellicott, in the little volume in which he supported the resolution proposed by the late Bishop Wilberforce, and seconded by himself, justly calls attention to the different reception which it met with as a proof of the altered attitude of the public mind towards the proposal.¹ Not only was the motion for a committee to report "on the desirableness of a Revision of the Authorized Version of the New Testament" unanimously carried, but it was also with general consent agreed to extend the motion so as to include the Old Testament.

The work was now fairly launched. It fell into the hands of energetic and able men who had long been bent upon the object before them. By the summer of the same year a further committee of the two Houses of the Southern Convocation was definitely entrusted with the work of revision, with instructions to invite the co-operation of eminent scholars both from the Church of England and from the Nonconformist bodies. Among the names best known to the general public of those who have taken part in the New Testament Revision throughout, would be, as representing the former body, the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol (Dr. Ellicott), the Bishop of Durham (Dr. Lightfoot), the Deans of Westminster (Dr. Stanley), Rochester (Dr. Scott, the joint editor of the famous Lexicon), Llandaff (Dr. Vaughan), Dr. Westcott, Dr. Hort, and Dr. Scrivener ; among the Nonconformist representatives may be mentioned Dr. Angus (President of the Baptist College), Dr. Newth (Principal of New College), Dr. Moulton (the translator of Winer's Grammar), Drs. Milligan and Roberts of Aberdeen, and Dr. Vance Smith. Dr. J. H. Newman declined an invitation that was sent to him, and the veteran

¹ *On the Revision of the English New Testament*, p. 7.

Dr. Tregelles, to whom, after his lifelong labours, a revision so thorough as that which was promised, must have been a veritable Pisgah-prospect, was prevented by failing health from taking his seat.

Steps were further taken to form a committee in America, which should work in concert with the English Committee. Of this the members who have acquired the widest reputation on this side the Atlantic would probably be Professor Ezra Abbot (whose recent work on the *Authorship of the Fourth Gospel* has met with much appreciation in this country), Dr. Hackett, the author of an excellent¹ Commentary on the Acts, and Dr. Schaff, the eminent Church historian, commentator, and divine.

The bodies thus constituted have laboured on with unwearied diligence and unbroken harmony, holding in the case of the English Committee some forty sittings in the year, for ten years and a half. Of these, six years were occupied in a First Revision, two and a half in the Second Revision, and the remainder in the consideration of suggestions from America. The result of these prolonged labours is now before us.

It is not easy to over-estimate the importance of such an event. The scholarship of the English-speaking people has girded itself for a bold and responsible but noble task. It has carried out its work with a due sense of its gravity. It has undertaken to offer to the English-speaking race throughout the globe a purer and more strictly faithful Version of the Book which tells, beyond all others, of "the wonderful works of God." Its work is now done, and

¹ I use this epithet advisedly in face of the sneer of Dr. Overbeck (Preface to fourth edition of De Wette's *Commentary on the Acts*, p. xiii.). Dr. Overbeck's own idea of editing the work of an eminent predecessor seems to be to pour into it page by page a running broadside of adverse criticism. It is a relief to turn from Dr. Overbeck's far-fetched reasonings and arrogant dogmatism to the unpretending and perhaps somewhat old fashioned but sober and sensible scholarship of Dr. Hackett.

has gone forth to the world. "Is it a success, or is it a failure?" will be a question that will rise anxiously to many minds, a question on the answer to which much of deep moment will depend.

In spite of some hasty expressions in certain portions of the daily and weekly press, few who are at all competent to form a judgment will hesitate to say that, speaking broadly and upon the whole, it is a success, and a success not unworthy of the magnitude of the task. The object has undoubtedly been attained. A purer and more strictly faithful Version has been placed in the hands or within easy reach of all who speak the English tongue. Adventitious growths, which in the course of centuries had found a place in the very imperfect Greek text used by the old translators, have been removed, true readings substituted for false, and probable readings at least placed alongside those that are doubtful. The meaning of the original has been more accurately and clearly rendered. Much that used to be obscure has now been made plain, and that which was comparatively plain has been made plainer. Many a fine shade of thought has been brought out, which would otherwise have passed unnoticed.

There cannot be the smallest doubt that this has been done, and done to a very large extent. The only possible question is to *what* extent, and whether the gain may not, in some greater or less degree, be accompanied with loss.

It is to the striking of this balance of loss and gain that Mr. Beet and I have been asked to contribute. I think I can undertake that we shall do so in no presumptuous spirit. The English Committee was formed of such commanding names that few were left outside who were competent to criticize it. And I at least should not claim for a moment to be among those few. But it is desired to elicit the verdict of general public opinion; and as one item in the mass, I shall venture candidly to give my own. "Prove

all things," assay and test all things, as metal is assayed, was the advice which the Apostle gave to the Thessalonians. And by the gradual convergence of opinions, many of them insignificant in themselves, insensibly grows and spreads the sum of assured truth. Error cannot cleave to it permanently, but the smallest particle of truth helps to swell the aggregate. Even the widow's mites went to the building or repair of the temple, and surely the Word of God is his temple. We then will throw into the box such mites as we may, in the hope that He to whom they are offered will Himself apply them as He will.

W. SANDAY.

THE VISION OF ISAIAH.

ISAIAH vi. 1-8.

I. HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

THIS was the Prophet's first vision, first in the order of time, if not the first recorded,—a vision of the eternal realities which underlie the fleeting phenomena of time. Vouchsafed to him while he was still in the flower of early manhood, it set him apart, consecrated and impelled him to the prophetic function. When once he had seen it, the events and changes of time could no longer sway him with their former power. Henceforth the monarch who sat on the throne of Israel was but a passing shadow, a frail and imperfect symbol, of the true King of men, Adonai, Jehovah Sabaoth. The earthly temple, with its sacred emblems and priestly ministrations and ravishing choirs, was but a poor and dull reflexion of "the pattern on the mount," the house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. The motley crowd which thronged its courts was no longer wonderful or impressive to him as compared with the