

THE
PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

No. 7.—July, 1881.

I.

THE PLAN OF THE NEW BIBLE REVISION.

WITHIN a few weeks past there has appeared a volume which has for some time been looked for with great and growing interest. This is the New Testament as revised by a number of British and American scholars, which is now given to the world without waiting for the Old Testament, the completion of which is not expected for two or three years to come. In the next number of this REVIEW there will be a careful critical estimate of the characteristic features of this interesting and important volume. What is now proposed is to give some account of the origin and progress of the whole movement for revision, and to consider the plan upon which it has been and is to be conducted.

In regard to the authorized version there has been for a long time a substantial agreement among all the learned upon two points: first, that in point of fidelity and elegance, the English Bible, as a whole, is equal if not superior to any other version, ancient or modern; but, secondly, that in particular places it is defective, owing to the progress made in grammar, lexicography, exegesis, criticism, and archæology since the days of King James, and also to the inevitable changes in the meaning and use of many English words and phrases. Attempts, therefore, at a new version in whole or in

prayers which may be used before Holy Scripture is read." There are also occasional Prayers to be substituted for the usual one for the day; and special petitions to be inserted in the prayer for the day; and also children's daily prayers. These prayers are Scriptural and devout. The daily use of them in the family will instruct and edify both old and young. Many of the prayers are tender and beautiful in tone, in sentiment, and in expression. Dr. Dykes is a master of the English language. In accuracy, elegance, and precision of style he has few equals; and, indeed, it is just at this point that these prayers are open to criticism. Fervor, and the simplicity which is essential to unctio, are sometimes sacrificed to elegance of style. In such compositions the mind should not be diverted by felicities of expression, or by the use of uncommon words. The desires of the heart should find expression in the plainest, simplest forms of speech.

S. J. WILSON.

A SELECTION OF SPIRITUAL SONGS: with Music for the Sunday-school. Selected and arranged by Rev. CHARLES S. ROBINSON, D.D. Wholesale, 40 cents; retail, 50 cents. Scribner & Co., New York.

This "Selection" is worthy of its place in the incomparable series of books of religious praise collected and edited by Dr. Robinson. It is admirably adapted to its special purpose, and full of hymns of permanent merit, of the highest doctrinal and spiritual character. The Rev. J. H. Vincent, D. D., the great Sunday-school leader of the Methodist Church, says, "I commend this new singing-book, without hesitation or reserve, to all Sunday-schools."

A. A. HODGE.

DR. C. V. S. FREIH. VON BUNSEN'S Allgemeines evangelisches Gesang-und Gebetbuch zum Kirchen-und Hausgebrauch. In völlig neuer Bearbeitung von ALBERT FISCHER. Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes. 1881. N. Y.: B. W. & Co.

This is a reconstruction of Bunsen's Hymn and Prayer-book, which appeared in 1833, and created an epoch at that time by introducing a reform in hymnology. German Rationalism played sad havoc with the good old hymns of the Reformation and the period of faith. It turned wine into water, and substituted morals for religion, and prose for poetry. Chevalier Dr. Bunsen, at that time Prussian ambassador at Rome, and closely associated with the late King of Prussia (Frederick William IV.), and with such eminent divines as Rothe and Tholuck (who served as chaplains of the Prussian embassy in Rome and lived in his family), was then among the leaders of a revival of evangelical piety. He afterward changed very much in the liberal rationalistic direction, but never lost his faith in Christ as the only ground of salvation. He was one of the most remarkable men of his age, a true Christian nobleman, a man of genius, comprehensive scholarship, princely hospitality, and most charming manners. I shall never forget my interviews with him at Carlton Terrace, London, and in his villa on the banks of the Neckar, near Heidelberg. In his delightful family there was a rare combination of culture, social refinement, and piety. In his last and painful sickness (he died in Bonn, 1860), he derived much comfort from his favorite hymns, such as "*Jesu, meine Zuversicht*," "*Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*," "*Jerusalem, du hochgebaute Stadt*."

Since the appearance of Bunsen's collection German hymnology has made great progress. The edition of Fischer is a considerable improvement. He was well qualified for the work, being the author of a very useful Hymnological Dictionary, which we noticed in a previous Number of this REVIEW. He gives in all 690 hymns. The rest of the book contains prayers for family devotion and a brief history of German hymnology. Like Knapp's *Liederschatz* it is not calculated for public worship, but an admirable collection for private use. We ought to have a similar collection of English hymns in their original form, with biographical and critical notes and a historical introduction.

P. SCHAFF.