

THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

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REVIEW SECTION.

I.—SYMPOSIUM ON THE “NEW THEOLOGY.”

WHAT ARE ITS ESSENTIAL FEATURES? IS IT BETTER THAN THE OLD?

NO. VI.

BY GEORGE R. CROOKS, D.D., DREW THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

It is important that this discussion should begin with a precise definition of terms. The New Theology, as I understand it, is that which affirms the Christian consciousness to be the ultimate ground of certainty in doctrine. Whether this consciousness is that of the individual believer or that of the Christian community is not always stated. As far as appears, it is implied that the consciousness of the individual believer will not be found to be greatly variant from that of the Christian community. The forms of expression in which this principle of certainty is stated will clearly show the meaning of their authors. Professor Briggs in his “Biblical Study” affirms it thus: “Faith is the appropriating instrument, and it becomes a test of the Word of God itself, for faith, having appropriated the Gospel of the grace of God, is enabled to determine therefrom what is the Word of God and what is not the Word of God” (p. 408). Professor Ladd presents the principle thus: “The authority of the Bible cannot contravene the authority of the Christian consciousness; but the authority of the latter is the chief witness for the authority of the former in ethico-religious matters. . . . The above truth gives to the witness of the Spirit within the consciousness of the Christian community an authority to act as arbiter and judge over certain portions of the canonical writings, even such as deal in the ethico-religious matters.” (Doctrines of Scripture, Vol. II., Chap. X.) The modes of statement adopted by Professor Stearns will appear further on.

It is a notable sign of theological progress that the demands of the heart have at last been admitted. We mean that the attesting value of Christian experience to theological dogma has been recognized in our time as it has never been recognized by scientific theologians be-

IV.—WHAT SHOULD BE THE ATTITUDE OF THE AMERICAN CLERGY TOWARDS THE "REVISED" VERSION.

BY A. W. PITZER D.D., WASHINGTON, D. C.

NO. III.

THE term "Revised Version" is a misnomer, and is utterly insufficient as a designation of the work of the Canterbury Revisers. Every English translation or version, from the first complete Bible of John Wyclif, 1380, down to 1885, is a "revision." Tyndal's Bible of 1526; Matthews on Rogers Bible of 1537; Cammers of 1539; the Genevan of 1560; Parker's on the Bishops of 1568; King James' of 1611, were all "Revisions"; and this term, "the Revised Version," is just as appropriate to any of these Bibles as to the last Revision.

Nor is the term, the "Anglo-American Version," more appropriate as a designation; the American Revisers had no note on any single point under consideration; they made suggestions, and were allowed to read the MS. of the English Revisers, but they never voted; and, as the Americans had no official responsibility whatsoever for a single change, it is misleading to style the work the "Anglo-American Version"; and to call it the Anglo Version is simply to call it the English Version; and this term applies just as well to twenty other translations as to this one.

As the work was begun, continued and completed by and under the authority of the Convocation of Canterbury, it ought to be termed the Canterbury Version. And so the translation made in 1611 should be called "King James' Version," and not the "Authorized Version."

The *authority* that ordered that translation to be made, as is well known, was that of James, King of England, and it was ordered to be read in the churches by *his* authority—and, apart from its general use: this is all the "authority" it ever had, and this is all the right it had or has to the name of the "Authorized Version."

Let us begin, then, by getting rid of misleading names and call the translation of 1611 King James' Version, and that of 1885 the Canterbury Version; each is equally entitled to the name "Revised," or the name "Anglo."

The Canterbury Version, then, is simply one of many English translations made between the years 1380 and 1885: on what grounds, then, may the C. V. claim kindly consideration from English-speaking Christians?

(a) The number of revisers, 100. (b) The time spent, 15 years. (c) Access to three of the oldest and best manuscripts—the Siniatic, Alexandrian, and Vatican, and many others. A new translation of any classic, if made by competent scholarship, is eagerly looked for and cordially received by all persons interested in the classics. A new translation of Plato or Homer or Virgil will command the respectful

and kindly attention of critics; and if it should be announced that three manuscripts of any one of these classics, dating back to the fourth century, had been discovered, and that four-score eminent scholars were diligently preparing a new translation, we venture to state that scholars in all lands, where English is spoken, and Greek and Latin are understood, would hail with profoundest joy the new translation. And yet, when this very thing is done as regards the Bible, the ecclesiastical Modocs, on both sides of the ocean, grasp their tomahawks and scalping-knives and leap forth to destroy without mercy this wicked new-comer into the arena of English Versions. Why should this version be scalped, hewed and hacked, rather than Coverdale's, the Genevan, or King James' ? They are all translations, all are revisions, not one of them is perfect, any one or all of them may be still further revised and improved.

Less than forty men, in seven years, without the aid of the three best MSS. known to scholars, made the King James' Version. Why, then, should this be so much better than the work of one hundred men, for fifteen years, with more and better manuscripts ? Why, in the nature of things, should King James' be full of beauties and the Canterbury of blemishes ?

It has been published from Dan to Beersheba that Spurgeon said: "The Canterbury Revision was strong on Greek, but very weak on English." It is not clearly settled that this great preacher ever made the remark; if he did, his saying it does not make it true. If you will empanel a jury of twelve competent English scholars and submit the question to them, we are quite confident that their verdict, after a careful examination, would be one in favor of the English of the Canterbury Version. With all the talk about the beauties and strength of the old "Anglo-Saxon," not one American in a hundred can read a verse in it; we venture the assertion that the English of to-day is better than the English of 1611.

It is a pity that some of the best things of the "C. V." are not in the text. I mean the unaccepted revisions of the American Committee, printed in the Appendix. Had these suggestions been adopted, the version, we think, would have been vastly improved. No student of the Bible should, on any account, neglect to read and master all these criticisms. If the Americans had been allowed, not merely to read and suggest but also to vote, we should have had a better translation.

For one, I use the "Canterbury Version" in my study, family, lecture-room, class-room and pulpit—not to the exclusion of King James'—and am greatly helped by it to a better understanding of the Word of God. And any fairly good translation will be helpful in this direction; and if we had fifty versions from different sources so much the better. Anything and everything that will help to a better understand-

ing of the Scriptures ought to be kindly received and properly used. This Revision is not sufficiently radical to meet my own views of what was needed, and I do most earnestly hope that an American Revision will be undertaken under proper evangelical auspices and denominational authority.

In common with many others, I have often wondered what Ps. xvi: 2, "my goodness extendeth not to thee," did or could mean. I turn to the Canterbury and read, "Thou art my Lord, I have no good beyond thee."

In Exodus xii: 35, 36 (K. J.), the statement is made that the Hebrews *borrowed* of the Egyptians, etc.; and laborious and unsatisfactory have been the efforts made by expositors to justify this "borrowing." I turn to the Canterbury, and there is no *borrowing* whatever. The Hebrews "asked" or demanded, and the Egyptians "gave" what was asked.

Who has not wearied himself to understand the "mark that God set on Cain" (Gen. iv: 15, K. J.)? The Canterbury translates properly—reads, the Lord "appointed a sign," or gave a token to Cain, lest any finding him should smite him; no mark was set on him, but a sign or token was given him. (Ps. lxxxiv: 5): "In whose heart are the ways of them," says King James', while the C. V. reads, "In whose heart are the highways to Zion."

In Isaiah (viii: 21) there is a striking instance of the superiority of the suggestions of the American Committee. The Canterbury revisers have retained the old form hardly "bestead" instead of "sore distressed" of the Am. Com.

Ps. xxi: 3. "For thou '*preventest*' with the blessings of thy goodness." The American Committee, here and elsewhere, use the word "*meet*," "*meetest*."

Ps. lxxix: 8. "Let thy tender mercies speedily '*meet*' us."

Many of the best changes proposed will be found in the Appendix. These changes proposed by the Am. Com. were declined by the Eng. Com., but they graciously allowed the Americans "leave to print" in the Appendix.

We note the following, viz.: (a) In the O. T., nearly all the suggestions under head VII. were modern, and proper English words were substituted for obsolete and improper terms. (b) In both texts, substituting "*who*" or "*that*" for "*which*," when used of persons. Why the Revisers should persist in retaining this intolerable form of expression passes comprehension. (c) In the N. T., to strike "spirit" from the titles and headings. (d) Holy Spirit instead of Holy Ghost (everywhere). (e) Use demon instead of devil. There is but one devil, Satan—there are many demons.

"This 'C. R.' marks an era in Biblical scholarship, and its publication meets and tends largely to satisfy the general and urgent de-

mand for the more accurate rendering of the original Scriptures into the English tongue. Its circulation and use will result in the wider diffusion and more correct understanding of God's Word."

The above quotation is from a report made the Washington City Bible Society by a special committee of eight prominent ministers representing six different denominations.

The attitude of all English-speaking people towards the "Canterbury Version" should be one not of captious, carping criticism, but of unprejudiced and kindly consideration.

V.—SHORT PASTORATES: SUGGESTIONS AS TO A REMEDY.

BY REV. A. McELROY WYLIE.

SOME may ask, "Well, after all, are short pastorates really an evil in the Church?"

The late distinguished Dr. Bethune is quoted as having said that more than five years as pastor over one flock is not desirable for the average American clergyman. And another eminent preacher of our land has said: "That short pastorates in the ministry are merciful interpositions of Providence in behalf of the congregations."

The order and the experience of the M. E. Church (the great pioneer) show that there are two sides to this question. This much, however, we may say, that, whereas an itinerant ministry is the better (certainly in some communities) for *bringing in*, a permanent pastorate is the best for *building up*.

On a certain occasion, when this question was amicably discussed between the writer and a number of brethren of the M. E. Church (some of them being presiding elders), the concession was generally made on their part, that for edification generally, and particularly in large cities, long pastorates are decidedly preferable. Then, as a country becomes more settled, and older in its institutions and orders of society, long-continued pastorates become more and more desirable. Yet, if we are to have short pastorates, we heartily endorse the wit of a M. E. brother: "It is far better to be moved" (in order) "on a wheel than to be ridden on a rail."

We think, however, that very much may be gathered from a due study of the methods adopted and carefully pursued by men who have continued in long pastorates. From the fact that a man has remained ten years or more in one field, with abiding or increased acceptance, shows that he is a man of power and parts, and that his plans and habits are well worth the study.

In a previous article * the writer suggested no less than ten causes which largely prevail in our land, each and all of them tending toward

* Vol. X., p. 364, HOMILETIC REVIEW.