

THE
CATHOLIC PRESBYTERIAN.

No. I.—JANUARY, 1879.

CATHOLIC PRESBYTERIANISM.

THE meeting at Edinburgh, in July, 1877, of three hundred and thirty-three ministers and elders, commissioned by forty-nine Presbyterian Churches, in twenty-five different countries or colonies, representing 19,040 ministers, with 21,443 congregations, holding creeds in harmony with the consensus of the Reformed Confessions, was fitted to show that, at least in the more literal sense of *καθ' ὅλου*, Presbyterianism has some claim to the adjective Catholic. Certainly it has its foot on all parts of the globe, and is especially active and advancing wherever the English tongue is spoken. That gathering undoubtedly tended to free it from a prejudice that has long clung to it—of being a poor piece of provincialism, a troublesome but insignificant obstruction to the real catholicity of the Protestant Church. It is singular how many of the clouds of prejudice that gathered during the cold eighteenth century over Presbyterianism as a whole, and over its most distinguished leaders of former days, are now yielding to the daylight and fresh air of a more honest and wholesome age. What extraordinary vicissitudes of reputation have Calvin and Knox undergone! Calvin, honoured and loved in his lifetime above all other men, and pronounced by such a strong opponent as Richard Hooker, “incomparably the wisest man that ever the French Church did enjoy since the hour it enjoyed him;”^{*} then looked on by Anglicans in the eighteenth century as a mere incarnation of spite and mischief; and now again, despite some blots which it is vain to deny, restored to his pedestal as the great and venerable Calvin, with somewhat of the old halo shining round his head. The name of Knox has passed through a similar circuit. In his own time he was regarded as “a man of God, the light of Scotland, the comfort of the Church, the mirror of godliness, a pattern and example to all true ministers in purity of life, soundness of doctrine, and boldness in reproofing wickedness;”[†] in the eighteenth century he had become an

^{*} Ecclesiast. Polity, Preface.

[†] See M'Crie's “Life of Knox,” p. 350.

THE ANGLO-AMERICAN BIBLE REVISION.

I. **ORIGIN AND ORGANISATION.**—The Anglo-American Bible Revision movement, now in progress, is the first *inter-national* and *inter-denominational* effort of the kind, in the history of the Bible. The present and the older authorised English versions for public use in churches proceeded from the undivided national Church of England, before the various dissenting bodies were organised, and before the American people had an independent existence. The new revision took its origin, very suitably, in the Convocation of Canterbury (the cradle of Anglo-Saxon Christendom), 6th May, 1870, by the appointment of a committee of eminent biblical scholars and dignitaries of the Church of England, who were empowered to revise the Authorised English Version of 1611 for public use, and to associate with them representative biblical scholars of other Christian denominations, using that version. The English committee is divided into two companies, one for the Old Testament, the other for the New, and holds regular meetings in the historic Jerusalem Chamber of the Deanery of Westminster, London.

The American committee was organised in 1871, by the invitation, and with the approval, of the British revisers, and began active work in 1872. It likewise has been selected from different denominations, and divided into two companies, which meet once a-month, for several days, in two private rooms in the Bible House at New York (but without any official connection with the American Bible Society, or responsibility on its part). The British and American committees are virtually one organisation, with the same principles and objects, and in constant correspondence with each other. They do not intend to issue two separate and distinct revisions, but one and the same revision, for both nations.

II. **COMPOSITION.**—The two committees embrace at present 79 active members (52 in England, 27 in America). Besides these, the English Committee has lost by death and resignation 15, the American Committee 5 members. Adding these, the whole number of scholars, who at any time have been connected with this work, amounts to 99. Among these, are many of the best biblical scholars and commentators of all the leading Protestant denominations, in Great Britain and the United States. Not a few of them are well known by their works, in Europe and America. The American members are nearly all professors of Hebrew or Greek exegesis, in the principal theological seminaries in the Eastern States, and have been selected with regard to competency and reputation for biblical scholarship, denominational connection, and local convenience. Several distinguished divines, whose co-operation would have been very desirable, could not, for urgent reasons, be secured, but expressed great interest in the work, and confidence in its final success.

III. OBJECT.—The object of this Anglo-American enterprise is to adapt King James's version to the present state of the English language, without changing the idiom and vocabulary, and to the present standard of biblical scholarship, which, since 1611, has made very great advances, especially during the last thirty years, in textual criticism, Greek and Hebrew philology, biblical geography, and archæology.

It is not the intention to furnish a new *version* (which is not needed, and would not succeed), but a conservative *revision* of the received version, so deservedly esteemed wherever the English language is spoken. The new Bible is to read like the old, and the sacred associations connected with it are not to be disturbed; but within these limits all necessary and desirable corrections and improvements, on which the best scholars are agreed, will be introduced; a good version is to be made better; a clear and accurate version clearer and more accurate; the oldest and purest text is to be followed; errors, obscurities, and inconsistencies are to be removed; uniformity in rendering Hebrew and Greek words and proper names, is to be sought. In one word, the revision is designed to give, in idiomatic English, the nearest possible equivalent for the original Word of God, as it came from the inspired organs of the Holy Spirit. It aims to be the best version possible in the nineteenth century, as King James's version was the best which could be made in the seventeenth.

IV. PRINCIPLES.—The principles of the revision, as adopted at the outset by both committees, are chiefly the following:—

1. To introduce as few alterations as possible into the text of the authorised version, consistently with faithfulness.

(Faithfulness to the original, which is the first duty of a translator, requires a great many changes, though mostly of an unessential character.)

2. To limit, as far as possible, the expression of such alterations to the language of the authorised, or earlier English versions.

(So far as I recollect, only one new word has been introduced in the New Testament.)

3. Each company to go twice over the portion to be revised, once provisionally, the second time finally.

4. The text to be adopted to be that for which the evidence is decidedly preponderating; and when the text so adopted differs from that from which the authorised version was made, the alteration to be indicated in the margin.

(The text of the revised New Testament is taken from the oldest and best uncial MSS., the oldest versions and patristic quotations; while the received text, from which King James's version was made, is derived from comparatively late mediæval MSS.)

5. To make or retain no change in the text, on the second final revision by each company, unless two-thirds of those present approve of the same; but on the first revision, to decide by simple majorities.

6. In every case of proposed alteration that may have given rise to

discussion, to defer the voting thereupon till the next meeting, whensoever the same shall be required by one-third of those present at the meeting, such intended vote to be announced in the notice for the next meeting.

7. To revise the headings of chapters, pages, paragraphs, italics, and punctuation.

8. To refer, on the part of each company, when considered desirable, to divines, scholars, and literary men, whether at home or abroad, for their opinions.

If these principles are faithfully carried out (as they have been thus far), the people need not apprehend any dangerous innovations. No article of faith, no moral precept, will be disturbed; no sectarian views will be introduced. The revision will so nearly resemble the present version, that the mass of readers and hearers will scarcely perceive the difference; while a careful comparison will show slight improvements in every chapter, and almost in every verse. The only serious difference may arise from a change of the text, in a few instances where the overwhelming evidence of the oldest manuscripts makes a change necessary, and perhaps also from the omission of italics, the use of metrical and sectional arrangement, and the change of headings of chapters, which, however, are no part of the Word of God, and may be handled with greater freedom.

It is interesting to compare with these principles of the modern revision the rules prescribed by King James for the revisers of 1611, which are as follows:—

“1. The ordinary Bible read in the Church, commonly called the Bishops’ Bible, to be followed, and as little altered as the original will permit.

“2. The names of the prophets and the holy writers, with the other names in the text, to be retained, as near as may be, accordingly as they are vulgarly used.

“3. The old ecclesiastical words to be kept, as the word *church* not to be translated *congregation*.

“4. When any word has divers significations, that to be kept which hath been most commonly used by the most eminent fathers, being agreeable to the propriety of the place, and the analogies of faith.

“5. The division of chapters to be altered either not at all, or as little as may be, if necessity so require.

“6. No marginal notes at all to be affixed, but only for the explanation of the Hebrew or Greek words, which cannot, without some circumlocution, so briefly and fitly be enforced in the text.

“7. Such quotations of places to be marginally set down as shall serve for the fit references of one Scripture to another.

“8. Every particular man of each company to take the same chapter or chapters; and, having translated or amended them severally by himself where he thinks good, all to meet together, to compare what they have done, and agree for their part what shall stand.

“9. As any one company hath dispatched any one book in this manner, they shall send it to the rest, to be considered of seriously and judiciously; for his Majesty is very careful in this point.

“10. If any company, upon the review of the book so sent, shall doubt or differ upon any places, to send them word thereof, to note the places, and therewithal to send their

reasons ; to which, if they consent not, the difference to be compounded at the general meeting which is to be of the chief persons of each company, at the end of the work.

“ 11. When any place of special obscurity is doubted of, letters to be directed by authority to send to any learned in the land for his judgment in such a place.

“ 12. Letters to be sent from every bishop to the rest of his clergie, admonishing them of this translation in hand, and to move and charge as many as, being skilful in the tongues, have taken pains in that kind, to send their particular observations to the company either at Westminster, Cambridge, or Oxford, according as it was directed before in the king's letter to the archbishop.

“ 13. The directors in each company to be the deanes of Westminster and Chester, for Westminster, and the king's professors in Hebrew and Greek in the two universities.

“ 14. These translations to be used, when they agree better with the text than the Bishops' Bible : Tyndale's, Coverdale's, Matthew's [Roger's], Whitchurch's [Cranmer's], Geneva.”

V. MODE OF OPERATION.—The English companies transmit, from time to time, confidential copies of their revision to the American companies ; the American companies send the result of their labours to the British companies, likewise in strict confidence. Then follows a second revision on the part of both committees, with a view to harmonise the two revisions, and the results of the second revision are transmitted in like manner. The work is not distributed among sub-committees, as was the case with the revisers of King James, but the whole Old Testament company goes carefully through all the books of the Old Testament, the New Testament company through those of the New ; and in this way, greater harmony and consistency will be secured. If any differences should remain, they will be indicated in an appendix or preface.

The revision has been wisely carried on without publicity, and the actual results of the labours are not yet made known. Any public statements, therefore, which may have been made, in England or the United States, concerning particular changes, are wholly unauthorised and premature. The committees, by publishing parts of their work before a final revision, would become entangled in controversy, and embarrassed in their progress. When the revision is thoroughly matured, it will be given to the public as the joint work of both committees. When adopted by the Churches and Bible societies of the two countries, the revised English Bible will become public property, like King James's version.

The labour of the scholars in both countries is given without compensation. The necessary expenses of the British committee are paid by the University presses of Oxford and Cambridge, who will print the work ; those of the American committee by voluntary contributions of liberal friends, under the direction of an auxiliary committee of finance.

VI. PROGRESS AND RESULT.—It was calculated, at the beginning of the work, that the revision would be completed in ten years of uninterrupted labour. At this time (December, 1878) the two New Testament companies have finished the first, and a part of the second revision (the English company being several months ahead of the American); the Old

Testament companies have done more than half of their work. It is probable that the New Testament at least—possibly also parts of the Old Testament—will be published in 1880, just 500 years after John Wycliffe finished the first complete version of the Holy Scriptures in the English language.

After they have finished their labours, the committees will disband. It will then be for the Churches and Bible societies to take up the revision, and to decide whether it shall take the place of King James's version, or at least be used alongside of it in public worship.

The revision will no doubt be opposed, like everything new, and will have to pass through the fire of martyrdom. Many will condemn it as too radical, others as too conservative; but it will be found ultimately to occupy the sound medium between the two opposite extremes. The Churches will have either to adopt this Anglo-American Bible, or to abandon an œcumenical revision for an indefinite number of years. In the one case, we shall retain the bond of union in a common Bible; in the other, the irrepressible task of correcting King James's version will be carried on, more zealously than ever, by unauthorised individuals and by sectarian enterprise, which will increase the difficulty, by multiplying confusion and division.

But we have never had the least fear of the final result. There never has been such a providential combination of able and sound biblical scholars from all the Evangelical Churches of the two great nations speaking the English language, or so favourable an opportunity for the holy work of our common Christianity, as is presented in the Anglo-American Bible Revision Committees. This providential juncture, the remarkable harmony of the revisers in the prosecution of the work, and the growing desire of the Churches for a timely improvement and brightening up of our venerable English version, justify the expectation of a speedy and general adoption of the revision, in Great Britain and America.

PHILIP SCHAFF.

[In a recent number of the *Sunday School World*, published in Philadelphia, we find an interesting sample of the spirited way in which it is sought there to educate the mass of Bible-reading people to an appreciation of the process of Bible revision.

So far as Great Britain is concerned, hardly anything has been done to prepare the people for dealing intelligently and dispassionately with the results of a movement now drawing towards completion, and it is not easy to see what will take place when the revised version is published. The Americans, however, are taking pains to place their people in a right position for dealing with it, as soon as it comes into their hands. The editor of the *Sunday School World* has issued a "Bible-Revision number," made up of papers contributed by several of the most eminent revisers in the United States. A brief *résumé* of these papers, which fill nearly forty columns of the *Sunday School World*, will be of interest to our readers.

First, Dr. Woolsey, ex-President of Yale College, and Chairman of the New Testament Revision Committee, gives a summary of the reasons that make a revision desirable. He finds a general warrant for it in the frequency and only partial success of past endeavours to produce a translation as near as possible to the meaning of the original. Then, coming to our own Authorised Version, he points out that the gradual changes of

language in idiom, vocabulary, and meaning, and the modern advance, both in textual criticism and biblical linguistic scholarship, render the present version eminently desirable. The deficiency of our present version demands a new revision, and the efficiency of those who have undertaken the work promises a good one.

Next comes a historic sketch of our English Bible, by Dr. Charles P. Krauth, of Philadelphia, who is recognised as among the ablest living exponents of Lutheranism. Beginning with the entrance of Christianity into Britain, and the early consequent buddings of a Christian literature, in the shape of Anglo-Saxon paraphrases of parts of Scripture, he gives an admirable narrative of the gradual preparation for our grand Authorised Version, along the line of those which preceded it, and from which, in a sense, it was evolved. The first complete English Bible, by Wycliffe (1480); the greatly superior translation of Tyndale (1534), which, by the help of paper and printing, made "the boy who driveth the plough" more familiar with Scripture than most learned men had been before; the version of Miles Coverdale (1535), from his five "Douche (German) and Latin interpreters;" the Matthew's (1537), the Cranmer (1539), the Genevan (1560), and the Bishop's Bible (1568), are all shown to have contributed their quota to "that remarkable version which, in its aggregation, stands almost unique as a miracle of providence and history, the symbol of England itself, whose greatness has so largely sprung from appropriating what others have produced, and actualising what others have dreamed." An interesting account is then given of the origin and methods of the Great Revision Committee of forty-seven members, appointed by James VI. at the suggestion of the Puritan Reynolds. It is shown that our Authorised Version—issued in 1611 and finally revised in 1661—is still in the main *a revision*, based chiefly on the Bishop's Bible, and only professing, as the translators themselves tell us in the preface, "to make a good translation better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one." Herein is found a fair warrant for the present efforts at improvement by the help of modern appliances. We need, and may have, a revision of our Bible. *Its own wonderful growth reveals the secret of the approach to perfection.* At the same time, concludes the writer, this version is, and will be, perhaps, to the end of time, the mightiest bond of English-speaking nations. A revision we may have; but a substitute not now—perhaps never.

The third paper, by Dr. Talbot W. Chambers, on "The English Bible as a Classic," emphasises the glory of its union of a sublime yet simple diction with such a fidelity to the original as perhaps only the Dutch translation, which was subsequent to it, has surpassed. Even the literary merit of our Bible, approved by its past history and, by the present consensus of opinions from most divergent quarters, is shown to have been due in no small degree to the devout character of its translators, and the relation borne by their own souls to the book on which they wrought. It is indicated that the principles which underlie the present enterprise are the same as in the former case,—that *not a translation but simply a revision* is aimed at; and that "improvements," like those of the coxcomb who changed "Jesus wept" into "Jesus burst into a flood of tears," will not be brought in to mar the grand simplicity of our present version, which has done so much to preserve our language, as well as our people, from corruption.

Professor Ezra Abbot, of Cambridge, Mass., next vindicates the necessity of a thorough revision of our New Testament text. He brings out the differences which have crept into MSS. through the inadvertent substitution, omission, or addition of words or clauses. After accounting for and exemplifying these, he diminishes the alarming grand total of 150,000 to 7500 various readings, by sweeping off all that are obviously unlikely and unsupported. Those that really in any degree affect the sense are stated at about 400; and even concerning these the comforting assurance is given that no Christian doctrine or duty rests on the portion of the text affected. Thus the exuberance of resources, instead of alarming, gives us confidence and precision now in determining the true text. Accuracy here is evidently desirable; and it demands at least a thousand slight corrections on the Greek text of our common English version. The editions of

Erasmus, Stephens, Beza, and the Complutensian, on which it is based, are shown to have been in turn founded on only a few inferior and imperfectly collated MSS. Surely there is need and encouragement to apply our present resources, which go back to the Uncial MSS. of the fourth and succeeding centuries, and embrace, besides the comparatively modern Cursive MSS., various ancient versions and numerous patristic quotations, which ascend almost to apostolic times. The labours of men now dead, and of some now living in foreign lands, who have spent years in collecting the material and expiscating results, will be of unspeakable service. And the scholarship, character, and candour of the acting committees give a further guarantee of success, through able, cautious, and yet faithful work.

Professor J. H. Thayer, of Andover, in a paper on "Unwarranted Verbal Differences and Agreements in the English Version," stigmatises as a grave error the decision of King James's translators to disregard verbal identity. He adduces various instances, and shows how they hinder the study of the Bible; conceal from the English reader some delicate allusions; obscure the inter-relations of the several parts of Scripture; hide the individualities of different writers; and even affect matters of doctrine, by conveying different ideas through terms which, representing the same Greek word, were intended to be synonyms of each other. He infers that a new revision must go on the opposite principle, of sacrificing sound, if necessary, to sense.

Dr. Howard Crosby, Chancellor of New York University, exposes the considerable admixture of archaisms in our version. He furnishes interesting examples of words that have changed in spelling or meaning, or have even gone out of current use altogether. These, he argues, ought not to be retained in a revised translation, especially in cases where they are calculated to mislead.

Professor James Strong, of Drew Seminary, N.J., strongly advocates the paragraph system in preference to our present method of dividing Scripture books into chapters and verses, which, in the case of the New Testament, was hastily introduced by the printer, Stephens, for his concordance of 1594. The present arrangement, he affirms, often injures the sense and entails such a loss in all respects, that "nothing but slavery to a custom that was never appropriate could reconcile us to it in these days of literary and mechanical improvement."

Dr. Philip Schaff, Chairman of the American Bible Revision Committee, concludes the series, briefly touching on some of the points dwelt on by him in the preceding article, prepared for *The Catholic Presbyterian*.—ED.]

THOUGHTS AFTER A MISSION TOUR ROUND THE WORLD.

THERE is scarcely a community of Christian people that is not connected in some practical way with missions to the heathen, and there is not at present a country where some missionary does not labour, and scarcely a language through which some missionary does not teach. There are missions in Greenland and Labrador in the extreme north, and Patagonia and the Falklands in the extreme south. The red man is followed by the Gospel as he roams over the vast tract of hunting-ground between the Atlantic and the Pacific. There are islands in the South Seas where an idol is as great a rarity to the young as it would be in London; the Sandwich group is a Christian State, and elsewhere, as in