

familiar with the totally changed conditions of modern commerce all over the world, and if we may judge from certain signs and tokens which are to be observed, they will not without sore difficulty become reconciled to that change, or to the modifications which it must introduce into their own lot.

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## THE MONTH.

**A**N attack on the life of the President of the United States, which had not, in the good providence of God, a fatal result, called forth great sympathy throughout the Queen's dominions.

On the 19th, after a short illness, passed away the Dean of Westminster, Arthur Penrhyn Stanley.

An "Invitation to Prayer"—Intercession, mingled with Thanksgiving and Humiliation—has been signed by a large number of representative men in England, Scotland, and Ireland.

A debate in the House of Lords on the City churches will, probably, result in action next Session. The waste is deplorable; and credit is due to the *St. James's Gazette*, the *Daily Telegraph*, and other journals, for publishing, with pungent comments, the facts of this great scandal.

The *Record* has quoted the comments made by a Roman Catholic journal on the act of a Roman Catholic Lord Chamberlain. The *Weekly Register*, alluding to the license given by the Lord Chamberlain for such French plays as *La Dame aux Camélias*, says:—

We hold the Lord Chamberlain gravely responsible for allowing this infamy upon the stage. So high an office demands a little courage; not much, just so much as an independent man always has to incur, if need be; the enmity of those who put amusement before moral sense. If, however, we cannot acquit the Lord Chamberlain, we must condemn the English fathers and mothers who, for any plea or motive, exposed themselves, and still more, their children, to such subtle and poisonous imagination. There was a time when the matronly gravity and the maiden dignity of Englishwomen would have resented such a comedy as an insult. We hope, if the like shall come hereafter, some public reprobation will be branded on it.

Of the proceedings at the first gathering of representatives, lay and clerical, from Diocesan Conferences, a brief report has been published in the *Guardian* and the *Rock*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The meeting was held in the board-room of the National Society, the Right Hon. Cecil Raikes presiding. A provisional constitution, with rules, was adopted, and referred for consideration to an Executive Committee. A summary of measures now before Parliament affecting the Church having been given, and a short account of the organization and

Many tributes have been paid to that earnest, consistent, lowly-minded Christian, Lord Hatherley.

Of Dr. Fisch, of Paris, Dr. E. De Pressensé has written :—

The memory of George Fisch will ever be held dear and sacred among French Protestants. Others may have been more distinguished for learning and oratorical gifts, but he had no equal in the ceaseless activity, fertility of resource, and unflagging devotedness of his work among the Churches.

### ARCHDEACON PREST ON THE REVISED NEW TESTAMENT.

In his recent Charge, after recounting the abundant labours of the Revisers, Archdeacon Prest proceeds as follows :—<sup>1</sup>

It would have been an evil sign had not copious criticism been speedily evoked, for it would have argued indifference to the cause of revealed religion. Much of the criticism has been premature, much has been superficial: no small part of it has been based upon an acquaintance with the English version only; and some of it apparently due to the “*spretæ injuria formæ*.” The sceptic has eagerly scanned the new version in the hope that dogmas might have disappeared; and not a few sincere Christians have nervously anticipated heretical innovations. But over and above the cavils of prejudice or of ignorance, the apparatus of candid and sagacious criticism has been brought into play, so that we may already estimate with some degree of accuracy the gains and the losses of the Church. I trust that you will pardon my attempt to set some of these before you. I do so, not only in obedience to my own conviction of the paramount importance and of the intrinsic value of the work, but also for the purpose of deprecating any anticipatory disfavour of the attempt to modify or alter the familiar volume, the contents of which have, in our happy experience, often proved to be “the power of God unto salvation unto those that have believed them.” No one, I think, can question that the time had come for a revision of the English Bible. For not only have the efforts of the destructive criticism been persistently employed to bring it into discredit, so that it had become imperatively necessary to test our foundations; but it had pleased God that during

work of Diocesan Conferences, Mr. Stanley Leighton, M.P., opened a debate upon the following resolution: “That the attention of Churchmen should be directed to Church legislation, and that the resolutions of diocesan, archidiaconal, and ruridecanal conferences should be more immediately brought under the notice of the members of both Houses of Parliament connected with the several districts.”

Other speakers were Hon. Wilbraham Egerton, M.P., Archdeacon Emery, Lord Henry Scott, and Mr. F. S. Powell. The *Guardian* says: “The one important thing is that Churchmen should bestir themselves to meet the actual condition of things.” The *Rock* remarks that “as the laity have a considerable representation on the Executive Committee they may counteract the clerical element if it were to verge in any degree on sacerdotalism.”

<sup>1</sup> In compliance with our request Archdeacon Prest sent us a copy of his Charge, and as the portion of it relating to the Revised New Testament has not appeared in print we gladly insert it in our pages.—Ep.

recent years manuscripts should be discovered of far higher antiquity and of much greater value than those which were accessible to the translators of 1611. Although it was not in terms devolved upon the revisers to settle a new text of the Testament, they were compelled in faithfulness to ascertain what was the text underlying the Authorized Version; and they were equally in honesty compelled to adopt more ancient, and truer, readings, if supported by a preponderating mass of evidence. Our translators appear mainly to have followed Beza's Edition of 1589, which was based upon Stephens's Edition of 1550, that being itself derived from the Fourth Edition of Erasmus, in 1527. Now for the Gospels Erasmus used principally a cursive manuscript of the 15th or 16th century, which is still to be seen at Basle. In the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles he chiefly followed a similar manuscript of the 13th century. Whilst for the Apocalypse his materials were so imperfect that he was compelled to adopt the Vulgate, and conjecturally to re-translate its Latin into Greek. Stephens, indeed, had at his command Beza's codex, which is referred to the sixth century. It contained, however, the Gospels only, and it was little used by him. And Beza, though he received from Stephens a collection of the various readings of five-and-twenty manuscripts, rarely deserts the Fifth Edition of Erasmus. Not one, therefore, of the four most ancient manuscripts was known to be in existence when the revisers of the Bishops' Bible compiled our present Authorized Version. No examination had been then made of the testimony to the primitive text borne by the Fathers. Textual criticism was almost unknown, for the materials upon which it was to be exercised had not yet been discovered. It was not until the Authorized Version had been seventeen years in existence that the Alexandrian manuscript of the fifth century was brought to this country. The Ephraem palimpsest of the same date was not rendered legible until 1834. The Vatican manuscript, of the fourth century, was not completely published until 1868. Nor was Tischendorf's Sinaitic manuscript, also of the fourth century, published until the year 1862. All these manuscripts are Uncials, being written throughout in capital letters. And even a short examination of them suffices to convince us that they are on that account much less liable to errors of transcription than the less ancient cursives.

The translators of 1611 were far from claiming finality for their work. Not only were they conscious of the need of further research after more trustworthy copies of the original, but they knew too well the difficulties of translation to conceive that their own renderings were in every respect satisfactory. They had entered into other men's labours, and on that account they would have deprecated the attempt to make their own success a barrier to further improvement; and would have declared that the best expression of gratitude for their services was to imitate them. To use, indeed, their own language, their translation needed "to be maturely considered and examined, that being rubbed and polished it might shine as gold more brightly."

By various voices, and from different quarters, this opinion has been re-echoed: by no one with more convincing force than by the present Bishop of this Diocese, who has been happily able to prosecute to the end the labour which he loved.

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The losses which, at first sight, we seem to have incurred are principally of two kinds. Certain sentences which used to run smoothly and with the apparent ease of correctness have given place to phrases sometimes rugged, sometimes incoherent. But the majority of these less welcome changes are due to the operation of two fundamental principles of textual criticism:—the one, that a difficult expression, nay, even one almost unin-

telligible or ungrammatical, is generally to be accepted as the genuine reading in preference to another which is easy and symmetrical; for that the transcriber was far more likely to alter an unintelligible or unwelcome expression into one more acceptable and elegant, than to substitute for a correct or common word one that was unusual or irregular:—the other, the principle that the shorter is generally preferable to the longer reading, in consequence of the tendency of a transcriber rather to enlarge than to abbreviate.

The other alleged disadvantage, which has, however, been rather apprehended than actually incurred, is, that the confidence of the average English reader in his Bible must be shaken, when he learns that three alterations of the text have been found requisite in every ten verses of the New Testament, with thirteen more variations of the English rendering in every ten verses of the Gospels, and twenty-seven for every ten verses of the Epistles, in order that the meaning of the original may be accurately and perspicuously represented. This is unquestionably a high numerical standard of correction. It denotes, however, the firmness and faithfulness with which the revision has been conducted; and it also obviates the unsettling effect which must otherwise have ensued from the suspicion that a repetition of the process might, ere long, be demanded. The translation of 1611 was subjected to the same charge of shaking men's faith.

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I have not as yet discovered that a single fundamental doctrine of our religion is shaken, a single vital truth imperilled, by the changes which have been made. The result, on the contrary, is, that obstacles are removed; false, though apparently strong, buttresses of the fabric of our hope are pulled down; but essentials, on the contrary, stand out far more pronounced and clear. And the very fact that from the less perfect versions hitherto current there have been, by the help of God's Spirit, deduced great doctrines identical with those which the Revised Text and the new translation yield to the candid student of our own day, is surely a conclusive proof of the Divine Authorship of the sacred records. And this, my brethren, is a momentous consideration if we regard the Revised Version as bidding fair, if not at once, at all events after another recension, to become the Bible of the future. For I doubt whether a version, which should be under the faintest suspicion of bringing in "another Gospel," would ever be permitted to supplant that with which we and our children are familiar.

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Even within the present year a work has become accessible to Biblical students which adds more to our knowledge of the original Gospels than any work issued since Tischendorf's discovery of the Sinaitic manuscript. Four years ago our Bishop had collected all the ancient evidence in favour of Tatian's Diatessaron, the credit of which had been on many grounds impugned. But it is only during the last few months that an Armenian translation of the Exposition of the Diatessaron by Ephraem Syrus in 378 has been fully brought to the knowledge of German scholars, from which we are enabled not only to identify, as being current in Tatian's day, the Four Gospels which we venerate, but also to substantiate the text of large portions of each of them.

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"All endeavours," the revisers frankly confess, "all endeavours to translate the Holy Scriptures into another tongue must fall short of their aim, when the obligation imposed is to produce a version that shall be alike literal and idiomatic, faithful to each thought of the original, and

yet, in the expression of it, harmonious and free." But the fact that a human translation of the Inspired Word contains blemishes and imperfections (far fewer, however, and much less serious than those of the version which it replaces) must not be suffered to abate one jot from the gratitude which English-speaking Christians owe to the learned and laborious revisers, whose great work will survive the cavils that assail it, "*momentum ære perennius.*" It was the noble aspiration of our own William of Tyndale that "the boy who driveth the plough should know more of the Scriptures" than the Divines of a past generation. And it has been the accomplishment of the present revisers to make that, which has hitherto been the almost exclusive possession of scholars and divines—namely, the exact understanding of the mind and thought of St. Paul, and the comprehension of many an obscure passage in the Gospels, the common property of all English readers, who can follow a chain of orderly reasoning. Nor do I think that a better test can be proposed of the rhythm, the accuracy, and the perspicuity of the New Version, than a comparison, verse by verse, of the texts, and the translations of St. Paul's great Epistle to the Romans. We are all familiar with the style of his writings. We know how frequently obscurities arise from the wide sweep and sudden digressions of an ardent and subtle mind struggling to express its lofty, heaven-breathed thoughts through the imperfect channel of even the plastic and expressive Greek tongue. Never was it more necessary that every other aim should be postponed to the paramount obligation of elucidating the thought and developing the argument of the Epistle which by the Holy Spirit's aid declares how man is to become "just with God."

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### ROCHESTER DIOCESAN CONFERENCE.

The first session of the Rochester Diocesan Conference, held at Rochester, June 30th, July 1st, was a decided success.<sup>1</sup> Of the 326 members of the Conference, the proportion of clergy to laity being as two to three, only twenty-eight members were absent. This fact speaks well for the practical concern both the clergy and laity take in the welfare of the diocese. During the two days' session more than fifty members "spoke." The general arrangements were admirably planned and skilfully carried out.

The President, after a few words of welcome, said that the imminence of his Primary Visitation inevitably, and perhaps conveniently, limited his Address; nor would he fatigue them by an antiquarian inquiry into the history and position of Synods. His Lordship continued:—

Nay, let me be bold enough to cut the knot of any controversy in the matter by emphatically vindicating the Church's right (in matters not essential to her Divine life and organization) to modify, improve, and, if needs be, develop either her ceremonial or her machinery, so

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<sup>1</sup> One who was keenly interested in the Conference writes: "The good hand of our God was upon us. Much prayer had been offered. All went off well."