

able example is furnished by the treatment of the word which is now almost naturalised among us as "Paraclete." As applied to the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of St. John this is rendered "Comforter," and as applied to the Son in St. John's first Epistle, "Advocate." In each case a note is added (John xiv. 17, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7; 1 John ii. 1), which brings the identity of the original term clearly before the reader. So again, a peculiar word (ἔξοδος) is rendered closely "departure," and a marginal note records this sense in the two other places in which it is found (Luke ix. 31; 2 Pet. i. 15).<sup>1</sup>

The illustrations which have been given are of very unequal interest. Some include changes of great importance; others may appear to be trifling. Some are obvious; others are required by considerations which spring from careful study. But no one, I believe, will question that they are required by faithfulness; that they give fresh vigour and meaning to the apostolic words when they are allowed to have their full weight; that any disturbance of familiar phrases is far more than balanced by the fuller expression of the original message. And, so far, it may be added, no change has been noted which involves alteration of the "received" Greek text.

B. F. WESTCOTT.

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*THE GERMAN AND THE ANGLO-AMERICAN  
REVISIONS OF THE BIBLE.*

WE live in an age of revision and reconstruction, which will probably be followed by a new reformation. The modern progress of discovery and research in Biblical learning in Protestant countries is so great, that it imperatively demands a revision of the translations made in the sixteenth

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Acts iii. 15; Heb. ii. 10, xii. 2.

and seventeenth centuries, when Hebrew and Greek were imperfectly understood, Biblical geography and archæology were yet in their infancy, and the science of textual criticism was not yet born, and the material for it not yet collected. Hence all the authorized versions which have been in public use in Protestant Churches during the last two or three hundred years have undergone, or are now undergoing, a revision.

The two most prominent and important revisions are those of the German Luther Bible and of the English version which bears the name of King James; that is, of the two versions which have exerted by far the greatest influence upon theology, religion, and literature, and which have the largest constituency. Both are now completed, and extensively used as commentaries in the pulpit and in private, but not yet accepted by the Churches for which they were intended in lieu of the old versions which they were to supersede. A brief comparison of them may not be without interest to the readers of THE EXPOSITOR.

The official revision of Luther's version was inaugurated, after long previous agitation and discussion, by the "Eisenach German Evangelical Church Conference" in 1863, and published under the title, *Die Bibel oder die ganze Heilige Schrift des Alten und Neuen Testaments nach der deutschen Uebersetzung D. Martin Luthers*: Halle (Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses), 1883. It is called the *Probibibel*, or the *Proposed Bible* subject to the verdict of the Churches. The revised New Testament had been published several years before, and is printed by Dr. O. von Gebhardt, together with the Greek text, in his *Novum Testamentum Græce et Germanice*: Leipzig, 1881.

The revision was prepared with extraordinary care, but in an ultra-conservative spirit, by a number of distinguished Biblical scholars appointed by the ecclesiastical authorities of the German governments.

The work was very severely criticised by opposite schools for changing too much or too little, and was recommitted by the Eisenach Conference of 1886 for final action. The history of this revision is told in the preface and introduction to the *Protebibel*, and in Grimm's *Geschichte der luth. Bibelübersetzung* : Jena, 1884, pp. 48-76.

The Anglo-American revision of the Authorized English Version of 1611 was set in motion by the Convocation of Canterbury, and carried out in fifteen years, between 1870 and 1885, by two committees, one in England and one in the United States (each divided into two companies, one for the Old Testament, one for the New, and each consisting of scholars of various Protestant denominations). Dr. Dorner, on his visit to America in 1873, desired to bring about a regular co-operation of the two revision movements, but it was found impracticable, and confined to private correspondence. A brief history of this English revision is given in Schaff's *Companion to the Greek Testament and the English Version*, second edition, 1885.

The two revisions are similar in spirit and aim ; and as far as they run parallel, they agree in most of the improvements. Both aim to replace the old version in public and private use ; but both depend for ultimate success on the verdict of the Churches for which they were prepared. They passed through the same purgatory of hostile criticism, both from conservative and radical quarters ; but the chief objection to the English revision, at least, of the New Testament, is that the changes are too many, while in the German they are too few. They mark a great progress of Biblical scholarship, and the immense labour bestowed upon them can never be lost.

The difference of the two arises from the difference of the two originals on which they are based, and its relation to the community.

The authorized German and English Versions are equally

idiomatic, classical, and popular; but the German is personal, and inseparable from the overawing influence of Luther, which forbids radical changes. The English is impersonal, and embodies the labours of three generations of Biblical scholars, from Tyndale to the forty-seven revisers of King James, a circumstance which is favourable to new improvements in the same line.

In Germany, where theology is cultivated as a science for a class, the interest in revision is confined to scholars; and German scholars, the most independent and bold in theory, are very conservative and timid in practical questions. In England and America, where theology moves in close contact with the life of the Churches, revision challenges the attention of the laity, which claims the fruits of theological progress. Hence the Anglo-American Revision is much more thorough and complete.

It embodies the results of the latest critical and exegetical learning. It involves a reconstruction of the original text, which the German Revision leaves almost untouched, as if all the painstaking labour of critics since the days of Bengel and Griesbach down to Lachmann and Tischendorff (not to speak of the equally important labours of English scholars, from Mill and Bentley to Westcott and Hort) had been in vain.

As to translation, the English Revision removes not only misleading errors, but corrects the far more numerous inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the minor details of grammar and vocabulary; while the German revision is confined to the correction of acknowledged mistranslations, or rather, the most glaring of them. The German Revision of the New Testament numbers only about two hundred changes, the Anglo-American thirty-six thousand. The Revised German New Testament is widely circulated; but of the provisional *Probibibel*, which embraces both Testaments, only five thousand copies were printed and sold by the

Canstein Bibelanstalt at Halle (as I learned there from Dr. Kramer, July, 1886). Of the Revised English New Testament, a million copies were ordered from the Oxford University Press before publication, and three million copies were sold in less than a year. The text was telegraphed from New York to Chicago in advance of the arrival of the book. The Bible, after all, is the most popular book in the world, and constantly increasing in power and influence, especially with the English-speaking race.

Both Revisions have met with much commendation, but perhaps with a larger amount of adverse criticism, especially from ultra-conservative quarters. We should not be surprised at this, nor at the slow progress which they are making in public recognition and use. No perfect work can be expected from imperfect men. Nor is it possible to please everybody. It took fifty years before King James' Version superseded the Bishops' Bible and the Geneva Version.

No translation is an absolute reproduction. This, in the nature of the case, is impossible. Every translation reflects the spirit of the age, the state of learning, and the ecclesiastical and religious atmosphere from which it proceeded, and is therefore necessarily imperfect.

But there is a gradual progress in translation, going hand in hand with the progress of the understanding of the Bible. A future generation will make a still nearer approach to the original text in its purity and integrity. If the Holy Spirit of God shall raise the Church to a higher plane of faith and love, and melt the antagonisms of human creeds into the one creed of Christ, then, and not before then, may we expect perfect revisions of the oracles of God.

PHILIP SCHAFF.

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