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TORONTO, MARCH 17, 1881

NOTICE!

Mr. Wm. Revell has kindly undertaken the business management of the INDEPENDENT. In the future, therefore, all remittances and letters about the subscription, or complaints, should be addressed to him, Box 2048, P. O., Toronto, and all articles for insertion, news of churches, &c., to Managing Editor, same address.

Mr. A. Christie, 9 Wilton Avenue, will continue to attend to the business of the Congregational Publishing Company, including arrears for the INDEPENDENT and the Year Book.

We would call the attention of our readers to their labels. All whose subscriptions expired Jan., '81, or earlier, are now due another year. Will they please remit.

We want as many items of news of the churches as possible, but will our correspondents be brief; our space is limited, and we dislike to cut down.

THE REVISION OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE.

The English Bible, or the Bible in the English tongue. It must be remembered that the Bible, as held to be inspired by the Spirit of God, only comes to the ordinary public in a translation. A translator is not inspired, and his work may be ill or well done. Rare talents are needed for such a work. Scholarship is indispensable, it is desirable, also, that the translator should be in full sympathy with the writing he translates; in this case, moreover, it is needful that freedom from ecclesiastical bias and prejudice should be sought after, e. g., it is misleading, in the interests of Episcopacy, to translate *Episcopos* "overseer," in Acts xx. 28, and "bishop" elsewhere. Had the word been uniformly translated, it would have been patent to an English reader at once that the New Testament presbyter or elder was also a New Testament bishop. Yet, upon the whole, the English reader has been blessed with one of the best translations of the Word of God. Far back as the English language can be traced there are indications of an English Bible. Aldhelm's psalter and the Lindisfarne gospels, A. D. 709 and 724-40 respectively, are among the earliest. It would seem also that mediæval writers and teachers, in the absence of any generally received version, were in the habit of giving their own rendering of the texts quoted. These early translations were from the Latin Vulgate, an early and authorized translation of the Hebrew and Greek originals. Wickliffe's Bible was a translation of this Latin translation, and its influence upon all subsequent English versions is marked. Up to this time no printed Bible existed, but Tyndale, and after him Coverdale, gave, with the aid of the printing press, translations from the original texts as far as they could then be verified. Matthews and Taverner's Bible followed, then an authorized edition of Henry VIII. reign, "The great Bible." "The great Bible" revised gave the Geneva edition of 1560, another revision by "able bishops and learned men" under Archbishop Parker, 1568, produced the B. Bible, whose version of the Psalms

is still retained in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. Our present authorized version, begun in 1604 and published in 1611, is not a new translation, but a revision of the Bishops' Bible, which was to be "as little altered as the truth of the original would permit," and the versions of Tyndale, Matthew, Coverdale, and the Geneva were to be consulted and followed, "when they agree better with the text than the Bishop's Bible." Thus it will be seen that our present version has a direct descent from the old Wickliffe Bible, and is the heir of a rich heritage of Saxon scholarship and piety. In no sense, however, has it ever claimed for itself inspiration or infallibility.

The present revision also, is not a new translation, but a revision such as the advance of scholarship and material amply justify and imperatively demand. Our present revisers have adopted the intent of the translators of King James' Bible:—"Truly, good Christian reader, we never thought from the beginning that we should need to make a new translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one; (for then the imputation had been true in some sort, that our people had been fed with gall of dragons instead of wine, with wheal instead of milk); but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one, not justly to be excepted against, that hath been our endeavour—that hath been our mark." We are therefore to have neither a new translation nor a revised Bible, but a revised translation of the old Bible, giving to us, as far as possible, the old old story in the living language of to-day.

The reasons for revision may be briefly given and illustrated. First, errors of type and of copyists inevitably creep in. The oldest editions of the Scriptures are in manuscript form. Many were the work of monks, who thus employed their unoccupied hours. No miracle has been wrought to preserve without blemish these successive copies which, after being made, were frequently "put on the shelf," and eventually covered with dust and forgotten. This was the more readily the case seeing that the Church had an authorized version in the Latin Vulgate, itself a translation of the fourth century. It must be remembered that Latin was the common language of the learned world. The Vulgate was therefore the basis of our early English version, and of the versions generally. The old Greek MSS. were seldom consulted, and were virtually forgotten. Perhaps the oldest MS. of the Scriptures known has only been brought to light since 1859, having been discovered in a rubbish corner of an old monastery or convent on Mount Sinai; and all the other more ancient MSS. have been waiting for this present century to either discover or heed. It must be manifest that the nearer we can get to the originals, the more correct will be our translation, therefore the interest shown in the present collection of the old manuscript copies during this critical age; and though it is satisfactory to know that the substance remains unchanged, yet many forms of speech and interpolation call for correction. Of such changes as the better knowledge of manu-

script authority demands, we may note the entire omission of the doxology to the Lord's prayer, Matt. vi. 13; of Mark ix. 44, 46; John v. "waiting for the moving of the water," and verse 4; also Acts viii. 37.

Secondly, great advance has been made in the study of the dead languages. Greek is much better understood in its minute shades of meaning than when Latin was pre-eminently the language of the learned. Perhaps one of the most marked changes that will be made under this head is in Acts xxvi. 28-29, which it is said will read thus, as very manifestly, to a Greek student, it ought to be read:—"And Agrippa said unto Paul, With but a little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds."

A third reason for the revision, is the change which, in process of time, comes over all languages by the friction of society. Of these, a few may suffice for examples, and they from among the more important. Matt. vi. 25, 31, 34, for "thought," read anxiety, solicitude, a now almost obsolete meaning. Read "world" in one of the old significations, "age." In such passages as Matt. xxiv. 3; xxviii. 20, "vile," at first meant simply humble. A villain was self. Thus read Phil. iii. 21, "body of our humiliation." The word prevent (*prevenire*) signified—"to go before," to anticipate—hence let Matt. xvii. 25, be read "Jesus spake first," instead of "prevented him, saying," and in 1 Thess. iv. 15, understand "prevent" as meaning "have the advantage over."

Many changes will be but the more exact rendering of a Greek tense or article, e. g., Matt. iii. 1, "cometh" for "came;" iv. 5, a pinnacle becomes *the* pinnacle; Acts xvii. reads, "To an unknown God."

Through an indiscretion of a London (Eng.) paper we are put in possession of a few revised verses. We instinctively ask, How has the revision left the Lord's Prayer? Here it is, as given respectively by Matthew and by Luke. Matthew thus reads: "Our Father which art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

That in Luke appears much changed, but our old associations being so little disturbed by the revision in Matthew we can calmly view the terse beauty of Luke's rendering:—"Father, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted unto us. And lead us not into temptation."

Only the New Testament work is done. We look with confident anticipation to its appearance, and the reverent scholarship which has been brought to bear upon the work bespeaks for it a general, though perhaps not an absolute, reception.

May its advent deepen our reverence, stimulate our study, and as a new presentation of an old friend may it in this age of novelties lead us back to the fountain of living waters, that our thirsty spirits may drink anew, and springs of life make lighter this weary, restless labor wherewith the world is burdened. Amen.

WHO ARE THE BOERS?

In the peace treaties of 1815, Cape Colony was ceded by the King of the Netherlands to Great Britain. At this time the European population there consisted of a mixed influx of Dutch, Germans and Flemings, a few Poles and Portuguese, with a number of French refugees who left their country in consequence of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The history of the country thus far has been summarized thus:—Partly by contracts, so-called, partly by force, the Quaque or Hottentot inhabitants, were deprived of their country, as generally the uncivilized peoples have been dispossessed by the civilized. A large proportion of the unfortunate aborigines were reduced to slavery. Malays and Negroes were also introduced as slaves. A policy was adopted by the Dutch East India Company prescribing to the *farmers*, or *Boers*, the nature of the crops they should raise, and otherwise restricting industry and enterprise. To this policy has been traced the determined restlessness and dogged desire for independence which characterizes the Boers, who, in the last century, made efforts by rebellion and emigration to escape from Dutch rule. Great Britain, by the treaty, became possessed of the colony as above stated and heir to all the trouble. In 1834 the great measure of slave emancipation took effect in the British Colonies, and the agriculturists—the Boers—not yet submissive to the new rule, or, indeed, to any, found occasion for increased dissatisfaction in the manumission of their slaves. In 1835-6 a large number of these people resolved to free themselves from British rule, and, selling their farms, crossed the Orange river into the unexplored regions north and avowedly beyond British jurisdiction, which they formally left behind. This tendency to emigrate beyond Colonial boundaries appears to be characteristic. On the statute book of some of the earliest Dutch governors are to be found laws seeking to restrain this tendency. After suffering great hardships, with ranks thinned by privation, wild beasts, and savage tribes, a part of these determined emigrants crossed the Drakenberg Mountains into the district of Natal, broke the Zulu power and established themselves, as they supposed, in their promised land. Already at Port Natal a few English settlers had obtained grants of land from the Zulu Chieftains. In 1842, a body of regular troops appeared, and possession was taken of a boundless province in the Queen's name. Negotiations were attempted between the Boers and the government at the Cape, but failed; there was another "trek" into the bleak wilds of the Orange and Vaal rivers. Still British jurisdiction followed as continued disturbances on the borders with Zulu or Kaffir