

the origins of the Christian Church as an organized body, have not been without influence upon the mind of a genuine scholar, always open to conviction. On the other hand, the Pope having shut the door to all hopes of any rapprochement of the Anglican and Roman churches, it is natural that those who seriously desire church unity should turn their attention to a closer consideration of the various phases of the question presented by the relations of Anglicans and Nonconformists in England. Should the indirect result of the Papal decisions be to bring together the sundered elements of our common English Christianity, the Pope will unwittingly have accomplished far more for Christian unity than he could have expected. When we consider the vitality of the Anglo-Saxon people, and the rapid increase of their influence upon the destinies of the nations, we can scarcely doubt that the power of an united Anglo-Saxon Christianity to spread the principles of Jesus Christ in the world, would far exceed that of the Latin Communion. The real problem of Christian unity for all bodies of reformed Christians, is the problem of the perfect combination of liberty and love. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." A re-united Anglo-Saxon Church will not be united on the basis of cast-iron laws or customs, but upon the basis of universal principles. It is the child who is bound by outward laws. The true man is directed by freely adopted principles. The difference between the Old and the New Testament is the difference between a Divine code of laws and the enunciation of the Divine principles, which it is true all the time underlay the laws, but which were only revealed in Christ. The Roman Church is in reality only a revived Judaism. Its members are children in bondage to law. This revived principle of Judaism—the principle of definite precepts—was a necessity to the conversion and civilization of Europe in the Middle Ages. Our forefathers were mentally and spiritually children, and "differed nothing from servants." The Reformation was the movement of youth realizing that the time for the freedom of sons had come. Youth has not the wisdom of experience, and generally speaking, passes through its period of "storm and stress." In like manner Reformed Christendom has had its season of youth, its long period of the storm and stress of controversy and division. The signs of the time indicate that it is entering upon the calm maturity of manhood. Controversies about prelates, and surplices, are seen to be not of principle, but of detail. Many a supposed essential is now coming to be regarded as only for the well-being of this or that group of Christian people, and by no means incompatible with unity. What is needed is a calm, but perfectly free and candid discussion of the principles of Christian unity, and of the various steps which one by one may be taken towards that goal, only to dream of which is an inspiration. Towards this end the brave, loving, truly Christlike words of the Bishop of Salisbury are a most hopeful contribution.

—The sneer of a cynic and the bite of a lamb are alike harmless.

#### THE REVISED NEW TESTAMENT.\*

It is the unexpected that happens. When the New Testament Company sent forth the fruit of their eleven years' labour in 1881, it was hoped that the work of a body of scholars so distinguished might have been received with universal approval and acclamation. But there were a good many persons who wanted no revision, who had declared that they would oppose and resist everything of the kind; and a representative appeared in the pages of the Quarterly review in the person of Dr. Burgon, the late Dean of Chichester, denouncing the whole work—both the amended text and the revised translation. The reactionaries were jubilant. There was no more to be said. The revised version was dead; and even many who held a totally different opinion were cowed by the chorus, some going back to their authorized version in a kind of despair. But the pendulum swings the other way. The appeal to the mob has been made, and scholars begin to speak. Critical editions of New Testament books quote almost exclusively the revised version. Preachers give out their texts in the same form, and, when they suggest improvements in the renderings, no longer speak of commentators, but refer to the revised version. And here comes Bishop Westcott, probably the greatest living Biblical critic, who tells us that "the revisers have no reason to complain of the reception which their labours have found. It does not appear that the 'Authorized' Version made more rapid progress in public favour in the sixteen years after its publication; and," he goes on, "as far as I can judge, the Revised Version is more commonly used by preachers now than the 'Authorized' Version was after the same period of trial." With regard to the opposition offered to the revision by King James' translators, the Bishop tells a story of a scholar of that period, Hugh Broughton, a fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge. Broughton was not included in the company of revisers; and this is the way he handled the book which is now made an idol of. He says: "It bred in me a sadness that will grieve me while I breathe. It is so ill-done. Tell his Majesty that I had rather be rent in pieces by wild horses than any such translation by my consent should be urged upon poor churches," and more to the same effect. A considerable literature of vituperation has gathered round the Revised New Testament; but nothing quite so bad as that has been said of it. Bishop Westcott refers to the fact that when the Authorized Version began to be read in English churches, there were three others also in use—the Great Bible, the Bishops' Bible, and the Geneva Version. "The Authorized Version slowly won its way to universal use"—not by any special authorization; there is no evidence of anything of the kind, but, "by its merits in competition with earlier English Bibles." He also believes that there is no legal impediment to the reading of the new version in church. He says: "I am not aware of any law, ecclesiastical or civil, which forbids the

\*Some Lessons of the Revised Version of the New Testament. By the Lord Bishop of Durham: \$1.50. Toronto: Revell Co.

practice. No doubt long custom must be dealt with very reverently; the utmost consideration must be shown to the feelings of congregations. But if the use of the Revised Version is welcomed by a congregation, I do not think that a Bishop has any power, even if he had the will, to prohibit it." And he believes that, as with the earlier version, "the fittest prevailed, we may still trust to the action of the same law." As an illustration in point, we may refer to a case already mentioned in our columns. The Vicar of Dudley, in England, Mr. Gray Maitland, referred the question to his parishioners; and out of many returns only two objected to the reading of the Revised Version; so that now the two editions lie side by side on the same lectern. Stripped of all prejudice and appeals to ignorance, the question is simply this: Is it desirable that the English reader should have a translation representing as nearly as possible the original text of the New Testament? Granting the general excellence of the "Authorized," fully acknowledging the literary beauty of the work, and making all allowances for the hold which it has gained upon the affections and sympathies of English-speaking Christians, it would be sheer absurdity to say that it could not be amended in the light of our present means of information. In regard to the text, it is a simple matter of fact that the Authorized Version was made from one based upon no ancient manuscripts, the chief of which (Sinaitic, Vatican, Alexandrine, and others) have all been discovered or made available since that version was made. Then the aim of the revisers was not so much to furnish a readable book (although they have done that) as to put the English reader, as far as possible, in the position of the Greek scholar. "The claim which they confidently make," says the Bishop of Durham, "is that they have placed the English reader far more nearly than before, in the position of the Greek scholar; that they have made it possible for him to trace out innumerable subtleties of harmonious correspondence between different parts of the New Testament which were hitherto obscured; that they have given him a copy of the original which is marked by a faithfulness unapproached. I will venture to say, by any other ecclesiastical version." And the Bishop states, as a fact which may easily be believed, no objection has ever been raised to the revision which had not been considered by them while the work was in progress. Bishop Westcott admits that here and there the rhythm of the older version may be better. We believe that this is much less frequently the case than is generally supposed. But such changes were made because "there is something in the words more precious than the music of a familiar rhythm." And the changes were made, as he reminds us, not on the "irresponsible opinion of a single scholar," however eminent, but on the judgment of "an overwhelming majority of representative scholars after keen discussion, and reconsidered after a long interval." As a matter of fact, no fresh reading or rendering was adopted without a majority of two-thirds of the whole company, whilst those rejected readings which were supported by a mere majority, or by the strongly-expressed