

does not "boast") that he had preferred the service of the Commonwealth to his eyesight, and with the subsequent passage, less often quoted, in which he meets the taunt levelled by his adversary against his blindness. "If the choice were necessary, I would, Sir, prefer my blindness to yours; yours is a cloud spread over the mind which darkens both the light of reason and of conscience; mine keeps from my view only the coloured surface of things, while it leaves me at liberty to contemplate the beauty and sublimity of virtue and of truth. . . . There is, as the Apostle has told us, a way to strength through weakness. Let me then be the most feeble creature alive, as long as that feebleness serves to invigorate the energies of my rational and immortal spirit; as long as in that darkness, in which I am wrapped, the light of the Divine presence more clearly shines, my weakness will be strength invincible, my blindness will be clearness of sight. O! that I may thus be perfected by feebleness and illuminated by darkness! And, indeed, in my blindness I enjoy in no small measure the favour of the Deity who regards me with more tenderness and compassion, as I am able to behold nothing but Himself." The subject of "Paradise Lost" can hardly be said not to be political: the poem is the Puritan Epic; if Milton had not been identified with militant Puritanism, we should probably have had a poem on King Arthur. Goethe stands by himself: he took refuge in art, thinking that in the chaos of opinion which weltered round him, no truth was to be found elsewhere, and cultivated a sort of statuesque impassivity: but "Faust" could hardly have been written except under the influences of the Revolution. Dramatists in general must be neutral, yet Æschylus and Euripides are political. Dante is political in the highest degree. Coleridge, Wordsworth and Shelley are all political; at least they all clearly reflect the great movements of their day, in which each of them took the keenest interest. Shelley has been strangely said to be destitute of a subject, and to have missed through that defect the highest place as a poet. But his all-pervading theme is the Revolution. There is an undertone of it even in his most purely lyrical poems, and in his drama. If Mark Pattison himself succeeded in mentally standing aloof from the great controversies of his day, his soul, as his Memoirs and even his "Life of Casaubon" show, was full of petty squabbles and personal animosities, which could not have found a place by the side of interests and sympathies such as those which he condemns in Milton. If he had written an Epic the subject would have been the fight for the Rectorship of Lincoln.

THE REVISED BIBLE.

THE great work of revising the authorized English Version of the Bible, begun in the year 1869, is now completed. The Apocrypha will probably follow before long; but in this part of the undertaking the great majority of English-speaking Christians will take small interest. For them the Old and New Testament constitute the Bible. Whatever may be thought of the work which is now in our hands, it is at least certain that never, in the case of any previous translation or revision, has so large an amount of labour or labour of so high a quality been devoted to the task. Whether we consider the number of men engaged, the time over which their labours have extended, the qualifications of the revisers as scholars, the wise precautions taken against ill-considered judgments, the enormous pains taken to prevent one-sided views from prevailing, we may safely say that no such work as this has ever been accomplished in the history of the Church or of the world. Surely these are reasons for giving a very respectful consideration to the volume which is now presented to us as the result of such labours.

It will probably gratify the ordinary reader to hear that the revised Old Testament has a look of being more conservative than the New Testament. But the ordinary reader is not quite an infallible judge on a subject of this kind. And we must earnestly caution him against drawing from the newly published work unfavourable inferences with reference to the revision of the New Testament. It is quite true that the proportion of changes in the revision of the New Testament is enormously greater than in the Old; and if the circumstances were the same, this would prove that, in one case or the other, the principles adopted were indefensible. But the cases are widely different. In the first place, there is practically but one text of the Old Testament original. It is rarely that any weight can be attributed to the Greek Septuagint, or to the ancient versions, when they are at variance with the Masoretic text. Every one knows that it is far otherwise with the New Testament. The Textus Receptus, which is virtually that of Erasmus, was not founded on ancient manuscripts, and has no real authority.

On this point it is necessary to say a few words; for, although we have at present chiefly to do with the Old Testament, yet the whole book is now

given to us for the first time. Many persons will probably now for the first time give attention to the revised New Testament, and it is of the highest necessity that they should not be misled by the exaggerated statements of those who have unfavourably criticized the work of the New Testament company. Dean Burgon, who has been the most violent assailant of the work, while denouncing the English of the revised version (in which denunciation we do not agree with him), pours out the vials of his wrath most copiously upon the revised Greek text which was taken as the basis of the work. The revisers, he said, had no business to concern themselves about the text; and they not only did so, but gave themselves into the hands of Drs. Westcott and Hort, whose text is the very worst ever seen. And Dr. Burgon blames them especially for not adopting the counsels of Dr. Scrivener, whom he regards (and here we are inclined to agree with him) as the most eminent textual critic alive.

But what does Dr. Scrivener himself say to all this? Happily we have his answer in the preface to a recent edition of his work on the "Criticism of the New Testament," published about a year and a-half ago. Dr. Scrivener says: "First, that the task of scrutinizing the Greek text was one which the Revisers could not shrink from without reducing their labour to a nullity: Secondly, that the text as adopted by them, especially in passages of primary interest and importance, is far less one-sided than is generally supposed." This testimony we commend to those who may have been misled by the Dean of Chichester. On the subject of the revised New Testament we will only further add, that it is certainly not revolutionary, that the greater number of its departures from the received text are supported by all the greatest critics of modern times, such as Lachmann, Tischendorf and Tregelles, and that it is nearer to the received text than any of these. We should like to go further into this subject, but we must now return to the Old Testament.

Besides the question of text, there are other reasons for the smaller number of alterations in the revision of the Old Testament; and chiefly two, the comparative simplicity of the language and the much less subjective and abstract character of the thought. This latter difference is illustrated in an interesting manner by comparing together different portions of the Old Testament itself. Thus we find in books in which narrative prevails that the alterations are comparatively small in number, whilst, in the poetical and allegorical books they are much more numerous. In the first Chapter of Genesis, containing thirty-one verses, there are not above twelve distinct alterations—a good many more if we take every separate instance of an alteration, perhaps somewhat fewer if we count every distinct change only once. On the other hand, in the beautiful "Song" of Moses, contained in the thirty-second Chapter of Deuteronomy and comprising forty-three verses, we find more than fifty distinct alterations, rather more than one in each verse. Some of these changes may be here noted. In verse 8, the "sons of Adam" becomes "children of men"; in verse 4, "a God of truth" becomes "a God of faithfulness." In verse 22 "the lowest hell" becomes "the lowest pit," and this is an instance of the principle adopted by the revisers and explained in their preface, to make such alterations as were necessary to prevent a misunderstanding of the meaning, but to reduce as far as possible the number and degree of them. Thus the English word "Hell" in its original meaning represented very well the Hebrew *Sheol*, but from having been used as equivalent to *Gehenna* it can no longer be used in the other sense without a danger of misapprehension. The revisers have therefore substituted "the pit" or "the grave" for it, although in the poetical books, for quite intelligible reasons, they have not hesitated to retain the original *Sheol*. In verse 27 for "lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely," we have "should misdeem." This is a somewhat extreme instance of the determination of the revisers to retain the archaic character of the translation. Both Companies laid down the rule that no word was to find a place in the new version which was not employed at the time the authorized version was made, in the reign of James I. They also agreed to remove only those words which had become unintelligible or equivocal. It must be confessed that, in introducing the word "misdeem," they have gone to the very end of their tether. It is very likely that "misjudge" would have sounded a little modern in that connexion; but we fancy a good many persons will hesitate for a moment before they attach a definite meaning to this (to them) new word, which, we believe, does not occur in the authorized version.

Turning to another part of the volume, we find a fresh illustration of the simplicity of the narrative compared with the poetical portions. Thus in the first chapter of the Book of Job, containing twenty-two verses, we find about eight distinct changes; in the sixteenth chapter, with the same number of verses, more than double the number. We must say, however, that we are agreeably surprised to find the changes in this book so much fewer than we had expected, judging from the ordinary commentaries, and