

News Department.

From Papers by Steamer Canada, August 9.

ENGLAND.

Mr. Heywood moved an address to the Crown, praying that her Majesty would be graciously pleased to give such directions as to her might seem meet for the appointment of a Royal commission, consisting of learned men well skilled in the original languages of the Holy Scriptures, and conversant with modern Biblical scholarship, to consider of such amendments of the authorised version of the Bible as had been already proposed, and to receive suggestions from all persons who might be willing to offer them; to point out errors of translation, and such words and phrases as had either changed their meaning or become obsolete in the lapse of time, and to report the amendments which they might be prepared to recommend.

The hon. member observed that it was a singular fact mentioned in *Disraeli's Curiosities of Literature*, that in this country the Bible was not much in use before the restoration of monarchy in 1660. Previously to that period it remained in the possession of the learned, and a very considerable time elapsed before it passed into the hands of the great body of the people. After the Restoration it was reprinted, and obtained a general circulation. About the year 1769 there was at Oxford a certain Dr. Blaney, a man of learning, who took great pains to revise the current version, and what was not a little remarkable was, that his revised edition had been the standard authority ever since, so that from 1769 down to 1856 the progressive discoveries of scholars, commentators and critics, which were found of such service in interpreting other books, had been disregarded by the University of Oxford in the case of the Bible. Mr. Parker, the bookseller of Oxford, who was one of the witnesses examined before the committee, had stated that the learned body had given peremptory orders that the edition of Dr. Blaney was the only edition to be followed, and it had been followed accordingly to the present day. He, (Mr. Heywood), thought that such a proceeding was a neglect on the part of those high authorities, and he really did not believe that we possessed a translation in that accurate form which was quite attainable and beyond question desirable. This was a matter which came within the province of the Crown. In the reign of Henry VIII. it was taken up by several very eminent men, and Lord Cromwell, who was Secretary of State and the Queen's Vicegerent in sacred matters, recommended to the King to give his sanction to a new translation of the Scriptures. A body of learned men was appointed for the purpose. They were assisted by Archbishop Cranmer and other eminent persons, and the version of the Bible published under their direction soon became popular throughout the country.—Then came the reign of Queen Mary, during which there was a bitter persecution of Protestants, many of whom had to fly for refuge to Geneva and other places. At Geneva a fresh translation, or to speak more correctly, a revision of the former translation, was undertaken and completed, and upon the revival of Protestantism, when Elizabeth came to the throne, that revised version was brought over to England. That edition had followed Beza, as also had all subsequent editions, and it was worthy of remark that when an erroneous translation was detected, it generally turned out that Beza was in fault. Beza was a decided Calvinist, and did not scruple to turn a text so as to suit his own purposes. However, he was esteemed a great authority, and his influence was paramount. At the beginning of the reign of James I. an application was made to the Crown to have the Bible again revised, and a commission was appointed for that purpose, in which the Puritan element was unrepresented. A reference to the preface of any family Bible would show that this body did not attempt to make a new translation, but merely to revise the old one—their object being to carry as much public feeling as possible along with them in the execution of their task. A similar spirit ought to actuate any commissioners selected at the present day to revise the existing translation. Unnecessary changes, which could only give offence to many persons, ought to be strictly avoided; but there were various passages at present incorrectly rendered that demanded alteration. There were portions of the Scriptures which it was painful to many clergymen of the Church of England to have to read to their congregations in the precise words of the authorised version; but, however faulty and repugnant to scholarship they might be, those clergymen had no alternative but to give them as they stood. This matter was felt to be so pressing among the learned, that Professor Sel-

wyn, of Cambridge, had given notice of a motion for directing the attention of the clergy in Convocation specially to it. Even so slight an alteration as that of the punctuation would render many passages clearer.

A recent article in the *Edinburgh Review* also pointed out the advantages of a division of the chapters of the Bible into paragraphs instead of verses. As an illustration of the errors of the present translation he might mention the text of the celebrated sermon on 'Religion in Common Things,' preached before the Queen by the Rev. Mr. Caird. The text chosen on that occasion was, 'Be not slothful in business,' and it was remarkable that the word 'business' did not appear in the original Greek. The correct word was 'zeal,' and the passage read 'Be not backward in zeal.' So that there was really no connection between the subject of this excellent discourse and the true interpretation of the text in which it was ostensibly based. Other examples of careless translation might easily be cited. In the Acts of the Apostles, for instance, the phrase 'Those matters which are written in the law and the prophets' was put into the mouth of St. Paul in lieu of the exact words, which were, 'These matters which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets.' The correct reading showed that St. Paul, who was a believer in tradition, held tradition in connection with the law, but took the prophets literally. The passage in the first chapter of the First Epistle of St. John relating to the three heavenly witnesses, on which an important doctrinal point turned, was not in the original Greek but had been interpolated by some interpreter. This text was, however often used in argument by the learned, and sometimes also by the learned but disingenuous. On one occasion it was quoted by a theological disputant, when his opponent asked him, 'Did you not know the verse is not in the original Greek?' His reply was rather singular; it was—'I did know it, but I was not aware that you did.' (A laugh.) The people of the United States were so impressed with the importance of having the correct sense of the sacred writers made public that they had formed a society to revise the existing translation of the Bible. This body which was supplied with funds from voluntary subscriptions, has gone through a considerable portion of the Old and New Testaments. The new version being printed by them on the same page with the old translation, to enable the reader to judge between the two. It might be asked, why not form a voluntary society to carry out the same object in this country, and thus avoid the necessity of applying to Parliament on the subject? His answer was that the work could be most efficiently done under the authority of the Crown, the labors of the Commissioners appointed by whom, if impartial and competent for their task, as no doubt they would be, would command the largest amount of public confidence. Opposition to such an undertaking might be apprehended from the Bible Society; but that body would have timely notice of the intended change and could easily dispose of all its copies in the old version before the new one was ready for publication. Eminent divines belonging to all the leading denominations of Christians were convinced of the necessity of the alteration now proposed, and it was to be hoped that during the approaching recess hon. members would consult with the clergy and ministers of their respective neighbourhoods on this important subject. The more public attention was called to the subject the more every reflecting mind must feel the urgency of the revision he suggested. He could not reasonably expect that immediate steps would be taken for giving effect to his views, but he believed that in no more fitting assembly than that of the representatives of the people, coming from all parts of the kingdom, could so grave and serious a question be launched for full and fair discussion. Trusting, therefore, that the object which he contemplated would gradually make its way into public favour, and be ultimately accomplished to the satisfaction of the country, he begged now to move the resolution of which he had given notice."

Sir G. Peckell seconded the motion.

Sir G. Grey said the hon. gentleman had intimated that he did not intend to take the sense of the house upon the motion, and he (Sir G. Grey) conceived that the house would do wrong to move in a matter of so much importance unless it was well supported by public opinion. For his own part he believed that the object of the address was not at all in accordance with the existing state of public opinion, and that the appointment of such a commission as the hon. gentleman proposed would create general apprehension and alarm, and would have a tendency to unsettle the faith of a great body of the people, and to lessen their respect and

reverence for the authorised version of the Scriptures. There were, no doubt, certain errors in the translation of that version; it might contain some words the meaning of which had altered since the date when the translation was made; some slight inaccuracies might be found in it; but, speaking of it as a whole, he believed he expressed the general opinion of the Christian community of this country when he said that, owing to the accuracy and fidelity of the translation, and to the purity, beauty, and simplicity of the language employed, it was justly entitled to the respect and reverence with which it had been regarded. His hon. friend had said that it was very hard upon clergymen that they should be obliged to read from the authorised version of the Scriptures, in the services of the Church. Certain passages which they believed not to be literal translations of the original, and not fully convey its meaning. He (Sir G. Grey) thought, however, that there were few passages the reading of which would oppress the consciences of clergymen, and they certainly had the less reason to complain because it was their duty not only to read but to explain the Scriptures. If, therefore, they conceived that there were any errors in the translation they were at liberty to point out what was the true meaning of the text. If the motion had been presented he (Sir G. Grey) would have dealt with the subject more in detail, but as the hon. gentleman did not intend to take the sense of the house, he (Sir G. Grey) would only say that he thought it would be most inexpedient to entertain the question, or to do more than to allow the learned men to whom the hon. member had referred to continue the practice they had hitherto pursued of publishing critical notes upon the Old and New Testament.

The motion was then by leave withdrawn.

Archdeacon Denison's case, which has excited so much interest during the past few months, was commenced yesterday before his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, at the Guildhall, Bath. The court was opened at 11 o'clock, some time before which it was well filled with one of the most intelligent and respectable audiences we have ever witnessed, among which was a great number of clergy. His Grace was accompanied by Dr. Lushington, Dr. Heartley, Margaret Professor of Divinity at Oxford, the Very Rev. G. S. Johnson, Dean of Wells, assessors; Dr. Twiss, Vicar-General, T. H. Dyke, Esq., Registrar, were also present.

Dr. Bayford, instructed by T. Blackburn, Esq., was counsel for the prosecution, and Dr. Phillimore, assisted by H. A. Bathurst, Esq., appeared for the Rev. defendant, Archdeacon Denison. The Mayor of Bath, together with some of the leading members of the Town Council, were seated on the right of his Grace.

Dr. Bayford succinctly stated to the court the steps which had been taken by the promoter, the Rev. Mr. Ditcher, of South Brent, to bring the case before his Grace, and briefly stated that the commission of inquiry which sat at Clevedon in 1852 had reported that there was a *prima facie* case against Archdeacon Denison. The learned gentleman proceeded to mention the various preliminary steps that had been taken by the rev. promoter, and which the law required to be taken, concluding his observations by saying that although it was the intention, he believed, of the legislature, that the depositions already given and filed in the registry should be considered sufficient proof of the matter they referred to, yet he was prepared with the witnesses, if his Grace should deem them necessary upon the present occasion.

Dr. Phillimore said he wished to know if he were called upon to make any answer?

Dr. Lushington—Any answer to what?

Dr. Phillimore—Any answer to the statements of my learned friend. The whole proceeding is very new, but I am prepared to give an answer, if necessary.

Dr. Lushington having offered a few remarks, from which we gathered that he thought Dr. Phillimore was bound to make some replication, the gentleman observed that the case was one of a highly criminal character, because it had pleased the promoter not only to proceed by articles against the Archdeacon, but under the 13th Statute of Elizabeth, by which law no sentence could be passed, except acquittal or deprivation; therefore these proceedings were of a penal and criminal character. The learned gentleman having complained that Dr. Bayford had been totally silent on all the essential regularities that should precede this inquiry, and define the nature of his Grace's jurisdiction in this court, and its nature.

Dr. Lushington said he concurred to a great extent in saying that this court was like an ecclesiastical court, but still the practice of the ecclesiastical