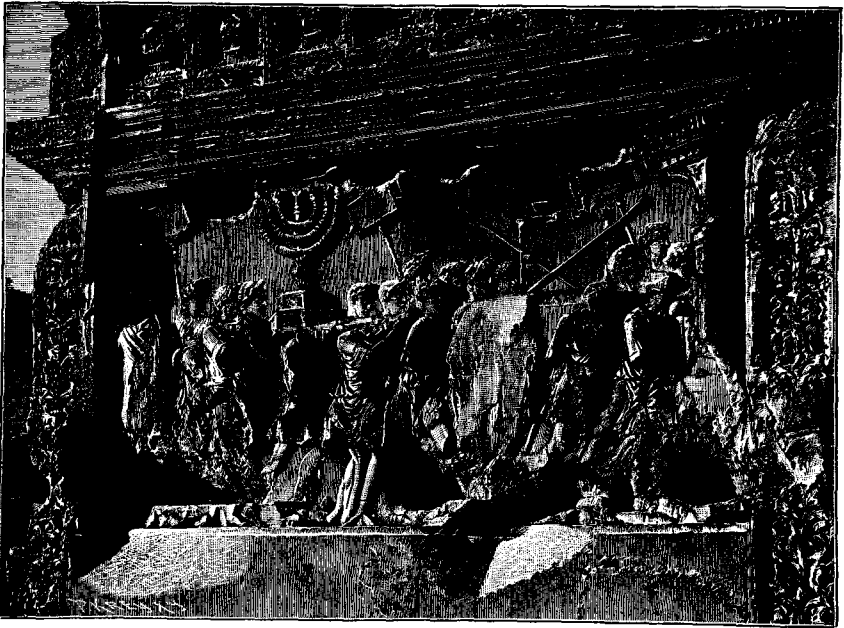


THE POLYCHROME BIBLE.

BY THE EDITOR.

THE NEED of a new Bible translation is felt most intensely by those Bible readers who are best informed on the progress of science in all kindred fields,—history, philosophy, text criticism,



RELIEF ON THE ARCH OF TITUS, ROME.

Showing the Seven-branched Candelabrum and the Golden Table of the Showbread, Together with Two Trumpets, All Taken from Herod's Temple.

(From the *Polychrome Bible*.)

and archæology. New problems have arisen since the authorised version was made, none of which have been dealt with in the revised

version. Conditions are so radically changed that entirely new methods have to be employed in the interpretation of doubtful passages, for the very conception of inspiration itself which three centuries ago was commonly accepted not only among laymen but also among theologians has given way to a more spiritual aspect of revelation in general, and we appreciate now more than ever the importance of the apostle's advice to search the Scriptures with diligence.

Considering the great importance which the Bible has in our religious life, the enterprise of producing a new translation based upon the maturest results of an exact scientific research cannot be overrated, and we must congratulate those who have speeded this great undertaking, not only for having focussed here within the small compass of a few notes all the scholarship of the great Biblical investigators, but also for the unprecedented method of presentation employed which shows the most important facts at a glance. Things that would have to be expressed in long-winded notes and historical explanations are exhibited to the eye directly by the employment of a few simple mechanical devices. Thus, the different periods in which passages of one and the same book have been written, the emendations of redactors, additions, reconciliations, etc., are shown by the different colors which cover the text. The reader may, by ignoring the colors, read the new translation as a version of the traditional text as it stands; yet he will, without perusing the notes, be at once informed by the change of the color of the background on which the print appears that he is now, when no color appears, reading the original report of an ancient Judaic history (briefly called J), and that when the background changes to dark blue he is reading another original source which is written by an Ephraimitic author (briefly called E) whose views naturally differ from those of the Judæan account. When the color changes to light blue he knows that the words are later additions of the same character (briefly called E 2). Dark purple indicates the hand of a redactor who has fused the Judaic and Ephraimitic accounts so as to defy analysis (briefly called JE). Occasionally the dark purple changes to light purple, which at once calls our attention to the fact that we are confronted with a later redaction of this same Judaico-Ephraimitic version (briefly called R, JE). Yellow is the color of post-Exilic comments and italics indicate the efforts of harmonisers and glossators, representing the latest strata of the text.

In addition to this simple scheme for indicating the origin of

the various passages, there are a number of similar devices which afford even the unschooled reader an insight into the nature of the text and permit him to judge of the value of the arguments on which the present translation has been based. Whenever the present translation is based upon ancient versions (for the Old Testament is perhaps richer in versions than any other book of antiquity) the passage appears in a parenthesis of V-shaped brackets (). Wherever the text is so corrupt that it can be reconstructed only by conjectures, the brackets are C-shaped (). Again, where the oldest text has been retained but with a change of vowels, the brackets are cornered () and resemble in appearance the form of a Hebrew ן (*nun*) signifying the word נִקְּוָה (*nigqûd*, i. e., punctuation). Wherever a marginal reading has been adopted the passage is enclosed between two little q's signifying קֶרֶב (*qêrê*, i. e., marginal reading) in opposition to the כְּתִיב (*kêthîb*, i. e., the written text). Brackets formed of parallel lines indicate changes introduced by reason of parallel passages; queries () signify doubtful readings; a combination of the V-shaped bracket with the parallels () indicate deviations from the traditional text suggested by both different versions and parallel passages. In the same way a combination of ן with V-shaped brackets () indicate readings supported by the ancient versions based on the consonantal text. Crosses () include those words which in the authorised version are utilised as words implied but not expressed in the Hebrew text. Passages which are corrupt and unintelligible are indicated by dots (. . .), while stars (* * *) show the lacunæ in the text.

These marks are made small enough to be quite unobtrusive. They do not interfere with the reading and can be neglected by any one who does not care at the moment to enter into these questions of detail. But they are at the same time plain enough and on account of their mnemotechnic suggestions so easily remembered, that they will be of great service.

This method of employing practical and simple contrivances for showing at a glance all that pertains to the critical apparatus, is carried out with great ability in every respect. The marginal figures on the outer margin of the translation refer to chapters and verses; the figures on the inner margin simply count the lines of the translation, both of them being employed for references in the notes. Heavy-faced numerals indicate the chapters, and those in the usual type the verses. Reference to Biblical passages follow the authorised version and not the Hebrew text, for (as scholars know) the division of chapters and verses are not the same in the

Hebrew text as in the authorised version. References to the original Hebrew text would be useful only to a few scholars, who, however, will be able quickly to find any passage in the original from a reference to the translation of the authorised version.

Prof. Paul Haupt, the editor in chief, is the well-known Assyriologist of the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Md. The publishers are Dodd, Mead & Co. of New York.

As to the translation, great care has been employed, first to have it exact, and then to express the literal translation in as good and appropriate English as faithfulness to the original will allow. For this purpose, one of the greatest authorities of English philology, Professor Horace Howard Furness of Philadelphia, has been secured to revise the translation simply for the English. Professor Furness has entered upon his labors with great devotion, and we do not doubt that he contributes greatly to the success of this great undertaking.

A few characteristic Hebrew expressions have for obvious reasons been left untranslated. It would, for instance, be wrong to translate the term *sheol* by the English word "hell," for it does not denote a place of torment, but the abode of departed spirits or the habitation of the dead, analogous to the Greek *hades*. Further, the word *Asheráh* denotes in a few passages a divinity called Astaroth or Astarte, who is worshipped in combination with the Baals, but mostly it is used as a name for the sacred poles which were erected at the place of worship, not only by the Gentiles but also by the Israelites. They were not the symbols of any particular divinity, be it Baal or Astarte, but had an undefinable general significance, and played as great a part in the Jahveh worship as in the idolatry of pagans. The Assyrian inscriptions show illustrations of the *Asheráhs*, and the Polychrome Bible gives in Judges, p. 57, the illustration of an Assyrian seal with a sacred tree and an *Asheráh*.

In order to preserve the popular tone of the translation the Biblical names have been written in the form given them by the authorised version, but the transliteration of other Hebrew words or modern Oriental names has been made according to the principles now commonly accepted by scholars, which, however, are easily understood and need scarcely any further comments.

Thus this new translation is excellent in every respect. Its appearance will be puzzling to the uninitiated only for a short time, for as soon as a student has accustomed himself to the methods employed, he will utilise with ease and a great saving of labor the rich resources which have been here made accessible.

Some of the illustrations are purely ornamental, but most of them subserve the explanations of the text.

We must not forget to call attention to the cheap price of this edition, which appears in small *quarto*. Three books so far have been published. The Book of Judges costs \$1.25; the Psalms and Isaiah, which are considerably thicker, each cost \$2.50. The paper is according to the needs of the print, heavy and strongly calendered.

There can be no doubt that the new Bible will soon be an indispensable part of every library in the country, and no Bible class, no church library, no Sunday-school, no public library, will be complete without it.

As to the objections which in some narrow circles may be made to the whole enterprise, we would fain prophecy that they will rapidly pass away when people become acquainted with the character of the work. The editors have done well to call attention in the introductory remarks to the analogous conditions which prevailed three centuries ago when the now commonly so-called authorised version of the Bible was published. The editors of the authorised version had to encounter prejudices, which perhaps were stronger than those which now obtain, for the narrowness of former centuries and the opposition to innovations was greater than it is at present. The editors of the authorised version of 1611 said in their preface:

“ Things of this quality have ever been subject to the censures of ill-meaning and discontented persons. For was there ever anything projected, that savored any way of newness or renewing, but the same endured many a storm of gainsaying or opposition? In some commonweals it was made a capital crime once to motion the making of a new law for the abrogation of an old, though the same were most pernicious. As oft as we do anything of note or consequence, we subject ourselves to every one's censure. So hard a thing it is to please all, even when we please God best, and do seek to approve ourselves to every one's conscience.