

THE
PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

No. 7.—July, 1881.

I.

THE PLAN OF THE NEW BIBLE REVISION.

WITHIN a few weeks past there has appeared a volume which has for some time been looked for with great and growing interest. This is the New Testament as revised by a number of British and American scholars, which is now given to the world without waiting for the Old Testament, the completion of which is not expected for two or three years to come. In the next number of this REVIEW there will be a careful critical estimate of the characteristic features of this interesting and important volume. What is now proposed is to give some account of the origin and progress of the whole movement for revision, and to consider the plan upon which it has been and is to be conducted.

In regard to the authorized version there has been for a long time a substantial agreement among all the learned upon two points: first, that in point of fidelity and elegance, the English Bible, as a whole, is equal if not superior to any other version, ancient or modern; but, secondly, that in particular places it is defective, owing to the progress made in grammar, lexicography, exegesis, criticism, and archæology since the days of King James, and also to the inevitable changes in the meaning and use of many English words and phrases. Attempts, therefore, at a new version in whole or in

therefore, does "not explain them at all." The Apostle Paul he thinks he understands better. But the favorite expressions of Paul have to be drained of their Pauline meaning to bring them down to that level.

JAMES C. MOFFAT.

GREGORIUS THAUMATURGUS. Sein Leben und seine Schriften. Nebst Uebersetzung zweier bisher unbekannter Schriften Gregors aus dem Syrischen. Von Lic. Dr. VICTOR RYssel, Docent an der Universität Leipzig. Leipzig: Verlag von L. Fernan. 1880. New York: B. W. & Co.

Gregory Thaumaturgus (the Wonder-worker) is one of the mighty men in the ancient Greek Church, who is better known in legendary than in real history. He was a pupil of Origen, on whom he pronounced an eloquent eulogy, became Bishop of Neo-Cæsarea in Pontus about A.D. 260, and converted the majority of the people of his diocese to the Christian faith. Tradition ascribed to him extraordinary miracles, and represents him as "a second Moses." Gregory of Nyssa was heretofore almost the only authority for the few facts concerning him, and his eulogy is full of incredible marvels which he heard from his grandmother. "Distance lends enchantment to the view." Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzen—the three pillars of Nicene orthodoxy in Asia Minor—looked back with great reverence upon Gregory, who a century before had labored in that country no doubt with great success, and they naturally made him, too, an authority for their creed.

Mr. Ryssel devotes the principal part of his learned monograph to the discussion of Gregory's writings and the translation of two hitherto unknown tracts in Syrian, which P. de Lagarde, Ewald's successor in Göttingen, published in his *Analecta Syriaca*, Leipzig, 1858, pp. 43-64. One is a treatise on the co-equality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the other a treatise on the impassibility and passibility of God. They do not add materially to the doctrinal history of the Ante-Nicene age.

P. SCHAFF.

WALDO AND THE WALDENSIANS BEFORE THE REFORMATION. By EMILIO COMBA, Professor in the Waldensian Theological College, Florence, Italy. Translated by T. E. COMBA. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. 1880.

Prof. Comba rejects the theory which carries the antiquity of the Waldensian Church back to the fourth century, and contends that the Waldensians arose with Peter Waldo in the twelfth century. Peter was born near Lyons in Dauphiné, and about the middle of the twelfth century went to Lyons, engaged in business, and became rich. The sudden death of a friend, with whom he was conversing, turned his thoughts to spiritual things. He began to study the Gospel; he distributed his goods to the poor; he translated portions of the Scriptures, and thus the truth which had so blessed his own soul he communicated to others. Soon he had followers who went about preaching the Gospel. Then came persecution, which scattered these evangelists from Lyons, some fleeing across the Cottian Alps, into the Waldensian valleys, others making their way as best they could to Lombardy. At this point emerges the question as to the character of the population in the midst of which these persecuted Waldensians sought shelter. The traditional view has been that the Waldensians here found a people of like faith and practice with themselves, which faith and practice had been transmitted through an unbroken line of witnesses of the truth from Apostolic times through Augustine, Vigilantius, and Claudius of Turin. This view Prof. Comba sets aside quite summarily, and with apparent impatience. All that he admits on this point is, "that the surroundings of the place towards which they were about to wend their way were favorable, inasmuch as they were fanned by the breath of liberty which reached them, now from the East, now from the West, as from two seas of reactions. They then formed here the hive, from which soon came a few bees, and later new swarms." "The idea, that already before, and even for centuries, there was a hive, though no sound came from it, and no honey was to be seen," he pronounces a chimerical one. Such is the