

ANGLO-AMERICAN

BIBLE REVISION.

BY

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✓ American committee of revision
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PREFATORY NOTE.

THESE essays on the various aspects of the Anglo-American Bible revision now going on, are issued by the American Revision Committee as an explanatory statement to the friends and patrons of the cause, with the distinct understanding that suggestions and statements in regard to any particular changes to be made, express only the individual opinions of the writer, but not the final conclusions of the two Committees, who have not yet finished their work.

PHILIP SCHAFF,

NEW YORK, *March, 1879.*

In behalf of the Committee.

THE PROPER NAMES OF THE BIBLE.

BY REV. CHARLES A. AIKEN, D.D.,
Professor in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, N. J.

Any complete revision of our English version of the Scriptures must bring under review its proper names. The conservative spirit which is pledged in connection with the Anglo-American Revision now in progress, must protect them from unnecessary change. The question, therefore, is not, What alterations can be justified to scholars? but rather, What are needed in carrying out the proper and declared aims of the undertaking?

Unlearned readers of our Scriptures, if at all observant, encounter inconsistencies and are perplexed by obscurities that ought to be removed. Nor can it be regarded as a forced construction put upon the demands of "faithfulness," if, within proper limits, the names of persons, peoples, places, etc., be made to conform somewhat more closely to their original cast. Bible names are often significant; and piety may be helped as well as knowledge, when the religious idea embodied in many of these names is more clearly conveyed through the improved form given to them. If this work were an essay in "spelling reform," the attempt would be made to carry out a rigorously consistent system of transliteration, even though the reader might need a new introduction to *Jizchak* and *Ribhkah*, and many a family or locality besides. A smile would be very likely to greet *Benjamin*.

CHANGES IN PROPER NAMES.—In many cases the familiar proper names of our old version, and our

Biblical and Christian literature, will remain undisturbed, although scholars may be aware that this consonant and that vowel are not represented by an exact equivalent.

It would be unwise who would disturb names like *Abel, Job, Solomon, Balaam, Euphrates, Eve*, even though some of them may conform to the Greek of the LXX rather than to the more original Hebrew, and others to neither.

The general guiding principle should evidently be, that the Hebrew original ought to determine the form of Old Testament names, and the Greek that of names peculiar to the New Testament. Names common to both should consistently follow the older type. Exceptional treatment will be readily allowed in the case of names which are quite conspicuous and familiar in their present form in the Biblical narratives, and also in the case of those which have a common modern use. These it would not be wise to unsettle.

INCONSISTENCIES IN NAMES.—What changes are desirable? Plainly (1) *changes that remove inconsistencies* within the same Testament. When one word in the original is rendered by several different forms in the translation, the common reader is led astray. What is asserted of one person or place he understands of a number. When the familiar place *Gaza* is called *Azzah* in Deut. ii, 23; 1 Kings iv, 24; Jer. xxv, 20, the greater correctness of the form is no compensation for the loss of the identification; and for a place so well known the more familiar form should be retained. (There is room for difference of opinion as to the desirableness of using the margin to instruct common readers in such matters.) If in the New Testament

the famous city of the Phœnicians might be called *Sidon*, after the Greek form of its name, there is no reason why in the Old Testament the otherwise uniform rendering *Zidon* should be abandoned in Gen. x, 15, 19. While double forms like *Abiah* and *Abijah*, *Uriah* and *Urijah*, may suggest that the Hebrew name has two different although closely related forms (from both of which the Greek form differs slightly), and while different forms of the name might be arbitrarily assigned to different persons, it only increases confusion when two forms are employed of the same person, *e. g.*, 1 Chron. iii, 10; 2 Chron. xii, 16, and 2 Kings xvi, 10; Isa. viii, 2. There is no apparent reason for describing the same person as *Enos* in Gen. v, and *Enosh* in 1 Chron. i, 1, the form of the Hebrew name being the same in both cases; so with *Seth* and *Sheth*. There is nothing gained by calling the same man *Phuwah* in Gen. xlvi, 13, *Pua* in Num. xxvi, 23, and *Puah* in 1 Chron. vii, 1, although there may be two slightly different forms to the Hebrew name. It may be a convenience to have three forms, *Enoch*, *Henoah*, and *Hanoah*, to represent one Hebrew name as borne by four persons, but it is not helpful to have two of these forms applied to the same person (Gen. xxv, 4, and 1 Chron. i, 33). Common readers should be saved all occasion to ask whether *Jared* and *Jered*, *Gazer* and *Gezer*, *Phallu* and *Pallu*, *Pharez* and *Perez*, *Zerah* and *Zarah*, *Shelah* and *Salah*, are two names or one. The friendship of *David* and *Jonathan* has become proverbial and typical; why introduce the latter occasionally as *Jehonathan*, in rigid recognition of the fact that the Hebrew name has two forms? The same principle applies to *Joram* and *Jehoram*, and several other pairs of names. The *Cainan* of Gen. v and *Kenan* of 1 Chron. i

are not understood by common readers to be the same name of the same person. *Ai* and *Hai*, *Uz* and *Huz*, are double forms, which if retained not only mislead, but chronicle an error.

The inconsistent treatment of forms like *Jidlaph* and *Jimnah* as compared with *Isciah* and *Ishbak*, or of *Jethro* and *Ithran*, is a matter of much less consequence; for here no confusion results. And yet whatever can be done quietly with inconspicuous names will justify itself to scholars with little disturbance to others. Linguistic or phonetic faithfulness is neither dishonor to the Word in its spirituality, nor excessive scrupulousness about its form. Yet such an endeavor should be cautious in its treatment of names conspicuous in the Biblical narratives; and all the more if from the Bible they have passed to any extent into our modern nomenclature.

There is, of course, no good reason why *Ishmeelite* should be conscientiously printed in Gen. xxxvii and xxxix, and in 1 Chron. ii, and the more correct *Ishmaelite* everywhere else; nor why *Zebulunite* should always be found in Num. xxvi, and *Zebulonite* in Judges xii.

In the New Testament there can be no advantage gained by perpetuating such double forms as *Noah* and *Noc*, *Sinai* and *Sina*, *Sodom* and *Sodoma*, *Canaan* and *Chanaan*, *Jeremias* and *Jeremy*, *Phenicia* and *Phenice* (with the additional reason in this case that *Phenice* is used in Acts xxvii, 12, to translate inaccurately another name). The common reader does not need to be told in the very text of his Bible how the Greek and Hebrew forms of such names may differ. Much less does he need to be drawn aside to think of the contrast between old English forms and the Hebrew and Greek.

HARMONIZING OF NAMES. — There may be room for more divided judgment in respect to (2) *changes that would harmonize the forms of proper names common to the two Testaments*. These discrepancies are usually due to differences between the Hebrew forms and those of the LXX and the New Testament Greek. Our version of the New Testament generally conforms its proper names in such cases to the Greek type. This is not, however, always done; *e. g.*, *David, Reuben, Issachar, Samson, Sarah*, and *Sodom* (except in Rom. ix, 29), are given in their familiar and not in their Greek form.

To the ends for which our version exists, what is contributed by disguising under a Grecian garb the names that have already become well known? Why introduce the patriarch *Judah* as *Judas* and *Juda*, or the prophet *Jonah* as *Jonas*? *Abijah, Ahaz, and Asher*, are well known; who are *Abia, Achaz, and Aser*? No help is given to “doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness,” by confusing to common readers the identity of those whose words are quoted, or whose deeds and experiences are recorded. To preserve a more modern and unfamiliar form because it agrees better with the Greek, divides and weakens the unity and continuity of the impression which should be made by the two Testaments. The letter is honored at the expense of the substance. We would read still of *Hagar* and *Boaz* and *Gideon*, rather than of *Agar* and *Booz* and *Gedeon*; of *Haran* and *Canaan* and *Midian*, rather than of *Charran* and *Chanaan* and *Madian*; of *Shem* and *Terah* and *Nahor*, and not of *Sem, Thara, and Nachor*. If I read in the New Testament of *Methusaleh, Jephthah, Kish, and Uziah*, instead of *Mathusala, Jephthae, Cis, and Ozias*, I should not be delayed in recalling what I know of them by the novelty of their

names. *Elijah* and *Elisha*, *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, and *Hosea*, I know; with *Elias* and *Eliseus*, *Esaias*, *Jeremias*, and *Osee*, I must become acquainted. The lessons to be learned from the story of *Joshua* and of *Korah*, are often put out of mind when hidden behind the names of *Jesus* (Acts vii, 45, and Heb. iv, 8) and *Core* (Jude 11). To lose from our Bibles the names, *Ezekias*, *Jechonias*, *Josias*, *Urias*, *Zara*, *Sala*, *Saruch*, *Phalec*, *Phares*, *Roboam*, *Manasses*, *Joatham*, *Zabulon*, *Rachab*, if these were replaced by the old forms that never detain us to look at them as mere forms, would bring no real loss. And when to this list we add *Shechem*, *Zidon*, and *Zion*, in place of *Sychem*, *Sidon*, and *Sion*, the names that are common to the two Testaments are (unless something has escaped notice) all brought into correspondence.

Of the far more extended list of names peculiar to one or the other Testament, this brief paper cannot assume to speak exhaustively. Our object is secured if attention has been called to some of the ends to be aimed at in a revision of the proper names of the Bible, and some of the principles that should guide the attempt.