

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Unsound Criticism.

Messrs. Editors,

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable." In order that it may profit those who do not understand the originals, it must be correctly translated into a language understood by them. Hence is manifest the desirableness of pure versions of the Bible, that is, translations in which the exact import of every sentence contained in the original Scriptures shall be clearly expressed. Many good translations have been made; but no man who is competent to form a judgement on the subject, imagines that he ever perused one that is perfect.

It is, then, evidently proper for those who can contribute toward the removal of obscurity, or inaccuracy, from the translation of any text of Scripture, to aid in this good work. Sound criticism, judiciously employed for this purpose, is adapted to increase the utility of the sacred writings; as it presents some portions of them in a plainer light.

Every attempt, however, of this kind, whether by an individual, or any body of men, either with reference to the whole Bible, or any part of it, ought to be made with great caution. Efforts to confirm the erroneous idea, that the Common English Version is in all respects insusceptible of improvement, are undoubtedly prejudicial to the cause of truth. But it would be better that several slight inaccuracies, not affecting either duty or doctrine, should remain uncorrected, than that one text correctly rendered should be perverted from its true import. Unguarded statements, resulting from unsound criticism, adapted to make the false impression, that this Version abounds with serious errors, and consequently that the Translators were either ignorant or unfaithful, are exceedingly injurious. The mischief done by them is immense.

These reflections have been particularly suggested by the perusal of a work, recently put into my hands, entitled, "An Essay for a New Translation of the Bible": by H. R. published in London, 1727.

The writer seems to have been a man of considerable learning and information. He would, however, have done well to give heed to the remark of Jerome, which he has quoted, (p. 135.) "That an interpretation must express the thought of his author, and not his own, nor what he would have him think." Intelligent readers of the improvements proposed by H. R. may easily perceive that, with his system distinctly in view, he has frequently determined what an inspired writer ought to have said, and then made him say it. For instance, according to the Common Version, Moses evidently speaking of "man" in his unrenewed state, says, "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." This is accordant with the Hebrew; and in it all the translations in my possession, both ancient and modern—14, in 9 languages, are agreed. But it appears our author did not believe the doctrine of total depravity; and therefore this text must be so changed as not to teach it. Without pretending to deny the accuracy of this rendering, he has alleged (p. 25.) that the language "must be understood to admit of a limitation," and so proposed to render it, "The imaginations of the hearts of those common sort of men were for the most part evil."

As he was violently opposed to every thing that might seem to savour of predestination, or Divine sovereignty, he deemed it requisite to new model Acts ii. 23. "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." In this rendering all my versions of the New Testament—20 in number, substantially agree. The propriety of translating the Greek word (ekdotos) delivered, or delivered up, is established by the Lexicographers. (See Stockius.) But H. R. would have this passage rendered, "That having taken him which had been given them by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," &c. He has endeavoured to evade the force of a parallel text, Acts iv. 27, 28, by an unnatural translation, making it read (p. 62.) "That Herod and Pontius Pilate gathered themselves together, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, against His holy child Jesus, whom he had anointed to do whatsoever his power and wisdom had before determined to be done; as if God had before determined what Christ should do, but not what he should suffer; or as if the ungodly must be blameless when their malicious deeds are made subservient to their accomplishment of the Divine purpose.

(See Matth. xxvi, 54. Luke xxii, 22. xxiv, 26, 46, and Gen. 1, 20. Isa. x, 5-7, 12.)

Our author has confounded the distinct provinces of the original text, translators, and commentators. Accordingly, he would have translators change the received reading, (p. 157—159,) without any warrant either from manuscripts or ancient versions, and substitute gold for "silver," and silver for "gold." (2 Saml. xxiv, 24. 1 Chron. xxi, 25.) He would have them translate that "Ahitophel—was stifled with grief," and that "Judas departed, and went and died of grief." The narrations do indeed imply vexation and despair; but the idea of grief is not contained either in the Hebrew or Greek word used. The plain import of each is, that the party strangled or hanged himself. The Greek—alike in both cases—is in the middle voice, which usually denotes what one does to himself, not what he suffers. The instance adduced by H. R. in support of his version, (Tobit iii, 10.) is obviously against it. Sara is represented as having been tempted, not to be stifled or die of grief, but to strangle herself." She abstained from it because it would have been "a reproach" to her father, and would have "brought his old age with sorrow unto the grave." Parkhurst (in Apancha) gives instances from Greek authors in which the word is plainly used to denote hanging oneself. This sense is confirmed by the circumstances related of Ahitophel and Judas. If a man were "stifled with grief," it is hardly to be supposed that he would make provision for it by "setting his household in order," or "departing and going."

Our critic would adventure to expunge from the Bible, (p. 14,) all mention of "God's hand, eyes, mouth," &c., and substitute "power, care and providence, order or commandments," &c. Instead of having a Table of Weights of Measure appended, he would translate "a half shekel" (Ex. xxx, 13.) "Thirteen pence half-penny and three fourths of a farthing." Where the plural is used respecting persons, (as Matth. xxvi, 8. xxvii, 44,) but it seems probable that one was the actor or speaker, he would have the singular substituted. (p. 243, 244.) Such liberties are utterly unwarrantable.

In reference to Mark iii, 21. "And when his friends, (Margin 'or kinsmen') heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said He is beside himself," our author says, (p. 304.) "We find in all versions a fault which borders on blasphemy." Why so? Does not Paul apply the same language to himself and his brethren in the ministry. (2 Cor. v, 13.) Some of our Lord's brethren did not believe on him during the early part of his ministerial course. (John vii, 5.) Might not any person have expressed their feelings strongly under peculiar excitement? If the language were irreverent, would it "border on blasphemy" to translate it, as the learned Dr. George Campbell has justly remarked our translators, (and others generally,) have done, so that no signification is assigned to the words which it is not universally allowed they frequently bear; no force is put upon the construction." This can not be truly said of the version proposed, namely, "Those who belonged to him seeing (?) this, went out to suppress them, (the multitude) for they said they are beside themselves."

To some superficial readers such criticisms may seem to evince the desirableness of "A New Translation of the Bible"; but the more considerate and discerning will probably acquiesce in the opinion expressed by one in a manuscript note, written in the margin of the copy before me, (p. 153,) namely, "Thou dost not mend, but mar, a right translation."

Our author has frequently expressed a strong desire to silence infidelity. But his severe and indiscriminate censures of translators, as also of transcribers, his objections against the usual methods of reconciling apparent contradictions, his temerity in departing from the received text of the originals, and his evident determination to make the Bible say what he wished it to say, are manifestly adapted to confirm infidels, and to multiply their numbers. Blind zeal does much harm.

The welfare of both believers and unbelievers requires that criticism with reference to the sacred Scriptures be used with accuracy, prudence, and caution. May the living Oracles be correctly understood, ardently loved, and faithfully obeyed!

Yours in gospel bonds,

C. TUPPER.

Aylesford, Oct. 5, 1857.

INTERESTING TO WINE BIBBERS.—The "port" wine lately seized at Lisbon was made of molasses, alcohol, and some coloring stuff. The wine lately confiscated in Paris was made of water, alum and elder berries.

For the Christian Messenger.

Letter from Hamilton, C. W.

Mr. Editor,

Toronto is pleasantly situated on an arm of Lake Ontario. Its site is level, its streets are long and broad, and the buildings approximate to something near uniformity—the trees interspersed among the dwellings add much to the beauty of the city. It has the appearance of a larger city than Montreal, but only numbers 60,000 inhabitants, while the latter has 80,000. Parliament has been held at Toronto and Quebec alternately, a system in keeping with the vacillating disposition of Canadian politicians, but being more expensive and attended with considerable inconvenience, there is now an anxiety for a permanent location. Montreal is unquestionably the most central and natural place for the capital, but from the destruction made there of provincial property, and the indignities manifested to the Queen's representative, it is not probable that the Home government will have any predilections in favor of that city. Kingston, or some town on the Ottawa river would be quite central, and perhaps answer nearly as well as Montreal for the capital, but the talk in certain quarters now is that the Home government with the question of the Union of all the North American Colonies agitated—and if a Union is probable, will select Quebec for the Canadian capital, with a view of making it the capital of the Federal Union. The construction of the Halifax and Quebec Railway is to be one of the conditions in establishing the Union. Upper Canadians are anxious for a union of all the colonies or a division of the Canadas, they would much prefer the latter.

Parliament buildings in Toronto do not present an imposing appearance, and Government House is not so grand as some private residences. The Lunatic Asylum is a splendid building, there are over three hundred and fifty of those unfortunate members of the human family who are cared for in this building, this public provision for their benefit is really laudable.

Thirty-eight miles from Toronto by the Western train, brings us to Hamilton—this city was laid out in 1813, and now numbers 25,000 inhabitants. It is built on an acclivity, at the head of Lake Ontario, and extending back to the base of the mountain, which rises to considerable eminence, and affords from its summit a beautiful and varied prospect. The streets cross each other at right angles, and many of them are quite pleasant. Its commerce is considerable—and necessarily so from its rapid growth; the reversion in trade—experienced over the continent—is also felt here, but the high price which produce has brought the past few years—notwithstanding the land speculations—has placed trade on a firm basis—and confidence has not been forfeited here, as it has across the lines.

Sir Allan McNab, M.P.P. for the city, having been obliged to retire from the Executive, now resigns his seat in the house and retires for ever from political life. He is in an infirm state of health and contemplates spending the winter in Italy.

There is considerable interest excited in the trial of one Townshend, alias McHenry, at Cayuga for murder—Townshend was noted as the leader of a gang of robbers and murderers—and the difficulty was to identify the prisoner—was he Townsend, or not? The case was conducted on the part of the crown by Sol. Genl. Smith, and on the defence by Mr. Freeman a leading lawyer of Hamilton, and M.P.P. for Wentworth—(Mr. F. is a native of Amherst, Nova Scotia)—and continued several days. The evidence was of course conflicting, upwards of thirty witnesses,—including one of his gang, now in the penitentiary—swearing he is Townsend, and as many more,—including Townsend's mother and sisters—swearing he is not. The jury were unable to agree and were discharged. The prisoner was immediately arrested on another writ, charged with shooting a constable. It is thought more important evidence will be elicited at his next trial. The Provincial Exhibition will be held at Brantford next week—I will say something about that in my next.

WILL.

For the Christian Messenger.

Extract of letter from New Germany.

DEAR BROTHER,

"The church has been in a very low state for some time past, but the time to revive her had come. God is in our midst and has blessed us. Sinners have been converted; backsliders have been reclaimed; old and long standing difficulties have been made up and God is glorified.

Brother M. A. Bigelow has been amongst us for some time past, and has been the means of much good. May God bless him and the Angel of his presence go before him to direct him in the way in which he should go. I have baptized nineteen since the revival commenced.

The church at Lahave is not without its interest and we hope for better days in that place. Our meetings are well attended. I baptized one there lately."

Yours, BENNET TAYLOR.

New Germany Oct. 5th, 1857.

For the Christian Messenger.

Obituary Notices.

SARAH HAMILTON.

"For what is our life."

The wife of Mr. Wells Hamilton, of Tuskent Church was called to her rest on June the 14th, 1857, in the 62nd year of her age. Identified with the early progress of religion in this county, and beloved as a devoted Christian, a dutiful wife and tender parent, a tribute of regard is due to her memory.

In early life she entertained religious impressions. In a prayer-meeting held by Bro. James Lent, and a few of the elder church members, she placed her trust in the atonement of Christ when about 17 years of age; but from a sense of unfitness and diffidence she remained until April 1831, when at the age of 36 she was baptized by Elder Harris Harding, and united to the 1st Yarmouth Church, then the only Baptist church in the county. When the Tuskent church was organized she was one of those who composed that church, and continued to worship with them until she joined the assembly above.

Her piety was illustrative of frequent communion with God. Her prayers were heard in Heaven, for her children whom with one exception, she beheld members of the Baptist church.

In January last she suffered paralysis, followed with diminishing energy of mind and body, yet religion was her element. God's sanctifying grace prepared her for patient endurance of this visitation; her spiritual sun was in her horizon and while she meekly bowed to this warning of approaching dissolution her countenance brightened with the prospect of immortality.

I visited her repeatedly. Her speech gradually failed until her words became too few to sustain conversation, the same happy smile continued to beam on her face, indicative of acceptance with God. The last time I saw her, the language of the poet deeply impressed me:

"Weak cottage where our soul resides,
This flesh a tottering wall,
With frightful breaches gaping wide
The building bends to fall."

On the 16th of June last, I was called to her interment. The occasion was solemnized by the use of Rev. vii, 17. She has left in this sin-stricken earth the partner of her life, two sons and two daughters. Well! The term of life is short and trying, but that of glory is an eternity of repose. Sincerely yours,
JAMES V. TABOR.

MRS. RICHARD J. SMITH AND HER SON CHARLES SMITH.

Died, at Cornwallis, on the 16th ult., Lydia M., wife of Richard T. Smith, aged 59 years. The departure of our esteemed sister was preceded by a long and distressing illness, during which the gospel afforded its consolations and support. In early life, under the ministry of the late Father Manning, she obtained a saving knowledge of Christ, and by God's grace enjoyed the believer's hope to the end. Though the subject of much suffering, and many trials, she looked to her heavenly rest, and in the assurance of faith could welcome the closing scene of life,—a husband and six children mourn their painful bereavement.

On the morning of the day on which Mrs. Smith was buried, her youngest son Charles, hitherto a strong and healthy young man, in the 21st year of his age, was taken suddenly and dangerously ill, every effort was made to arrest the disease and save life but in vain, he continued in great distress until the morning of the 21st, when his spirit departed, we sincerely trust, to meet in a better world that of his sainted mother. During the three days of suffering his mind was most earnestly directed to eternal things, and surviving friends humbly hope that he was enabled to lay hold of the Hope set before him. His last hours were those of peaceful resignation to God's will. This additional death of one so young and hopeful of life is a most painful stroke to a sorrowing parent and family, but they sorrow not as those that have no hope.

By it a most solemn and impressive lesson is afforded, especially to the young, it warns us all to prepare to meet our God. May an event so impressive issue in much spiritual good.—*Com. by the Rev. A. S. Hunt, A.M.*

[The family would respectfully request an inter-sation of the above deaths in the *Provincial Wesleyan.*]

MR. ABEL CHUTE.

DEAR BROTHER,

You will confer a favor upon a large number of friends in recording in the *Christian Messenger* the death of Brother Abel Chute, who departed this life on the 13th June, in the 66th year of his age. He was known as a licentiate minister—always ready to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. While his health remained he was always at his post, in the house of God. His sufferings during his sickness were very great. He bore them with entire resignation to the Divine will, and often spoke with confidence of the victory which he felt over death. He often repeated the strong language of the poet—

"How can I sink with such a prop,
As my eternal God."

By his request the writer preached on the occasion of his funeral from 2 Tim. iv. 7-9. Our dear brother has left a widow and ten children to mourn their loss. May the Lord comfort and sustain them!

I remain yours truly,

AARON COGSWELL.
Clements, Oct. 6th, '57.