

For the Christian Messenger.

Bible Revision.

MR. EDITOR,—

I don't know whether you are a revisionist or not, but I perceive you sometimes speak about the "Bible Union," I think, rather favorably; and I can hardly understand how learned men, who know and acknowledge that there are numerous mis-translations in our good old Bible, can so strenuously oppose its revision by this Bible Union. I can't conceive how human wisdom and ingenuity could contrive a plan and process more admirably adapted to secure a thorough and judicious accomplishment of this great work. The general plan of revision is, to secure the services of eminent scholars from the different evangelical denominations, who should consecrate their time and learning to this grand object. Their first rule reads thus: "The exact meaning of the inspired text, as that text expressed it to those who understood the original scriptures, at the time they were first written, must be translated by corresponding words and phrases, so far as these can be found in the vernacular tongue of those for whom the revision is designed, with the least possible obscurity or indefiniteness." The other rules are equally plain. This is what is wanted—the bible so revised that we, the common people, can understand the meaning of the words and phrases, as the common people understood the original scriptures at the time they were first written. In order to attain this end, the Bible Union commenced revising the bible by portions, and sending these portions out in what is called the "Bible Union Reporter," all over christendom, inviting the severest criticism, and candid suggestions as to alterations, &c. After these suggestions and criticisms from friend and foe, the world over, had been received; the revisers revised with the aid of these suggestions and all the other lights that could be obtained, before sending it to the final revisers, so that in fact, the sacred science of the whole world, now brought near to perfection, in comparison with what it was in King James's time, (250 years ago) is made to contribute towards a pure version. Some seem to think that King James's revisers were inspired; and let their work so perfect that it is almost sacrilege to try to improve it. Do commentators think so? There is not a commentary of any repute, that has not a revision of our version attached to it, but these commentaries are not accessible to the common people. Do Ministers of the Gospel think so? Scarcely one of them now enters the pulpit without explaining to his congregation a meaning of the original not implied in our bible. Some say this great work should be undertaken by some great bible organization. Well, look at the American and Foreign Bible Society, which has been revising our bible for 12 or 15 years, I think, and has now given it up in opposition to all the revisers, and numerous others, and issue none but King James's Version. Some again think all denominations should unite in revising the bible. Well, they might, under a compromise not to touch any word that will affect the belief of either sect, on no other terms could they possibly unite. Some say the Bible Union will produce a sectarian bible, but does not the ordeal through which it has to pass prevent even the appearance of any thing like sectarianism about it? Any thing at all one-sided from the revisers would be exposed at once, it would be received with contempt, and would deserve it. What intelligent man in these times would venture upon such an experiment? The many specimens sent out for criticism—and this criticism will be tremendous—both "of envy and strife," and "of good will,"—will make assurance doubly sure, that the work when it is done, will be well done. The revisers of course all have sentiments of their own, but what then? would it be better to employ men of no religious principles at all, for fear of sectarianism? But sectarianism, if attempted, would avenge itself. And those revisers belong not to one denomination, as in the case of King James's revisers, but to nine different denominations, and they are not embarrassed by restrictions from King or Bishop, but act under principles and rules which bind them to give the meaning of the original with all possible clearness.

Some of our good baptist brethren object to revision because they translate the word *baptise* into immerse. They say that it is an acknowledgement, that Baptists could not prove from the bible, as it now stands, that immersion is the only true baptism, thus preferring an obscure bible on denominational grounds. What, afraid to let the bible tell the truth? to tell what the Holy Spirit meant, when he dictated that book? We all acknowledge that the heathen should have a pure version, that baptise and every

The following article is from the *Provincial Wesleyan* of Wednesday last. We gave but a brief notice of the opening of Dalhousie, being uncertain as to the real merits of the exercises, the morning and evening papers having given but "faint praise" to the project. One of our contemporaries has been so untruthfully representing us as taking up a singular position in this matter, and as the sentiments of this article so fully confirm our own, our readers will pardon our copying it for their perusal.

The Dalhousie Experiment.

The earnest attempts of the late Administration, in connection with the united action of the Presbyterian Synods, and the Governors of Dalhousie College, to resuscitate once more that unfortunate Institution, have so far succeeded that on Tuesday the 10th inst., the inaugural address was delivered by the Rev. Principal Ross, in the presence of the Administrator of the Government and his staff, the Governors of the College and other citizens. His Honor the Administrator, who presided, opened the proceedings by a brief speech. The Chief Justice, as chairman of the Board of Governors, upon introducing the Rev. Principal, remarked upon the past history of Dalhousie, and expressed his gratification in the present experiment, and his confidence that the Professors appointed to occupy the several chairs of the College, then to be inaugurated, were quite equal in qualifications to the Professors of any other Institution in British America. This opinion will go for what it is worth. Whether the acquaintance of the Chief Justice with the several Colleges of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Canada is so full as to warrant him in making so broad and positive an assertion, will, perhaps, be questioned. What if some of the Dalhousie Professors have never attained College honors, or have never been regular College students? In that case, Chief Justice Young would have us to believe that a Collegiate course of study is not, after all, very essential, even to the highest position in literary, scientific, or professional life.

The gentlemen appointed to fill the chairs of Dalhousie may be, to the satisfaction of the Governors of that Institution, well qualified to perform the work they have undertaken; but that they occupy the very highest professional position in British America, or that the Dalhousie staff as a whole, with a name and a character yet to be made, can take rank with other Provincial Institutions of learning of well established reputation, will not be very widely credited.

The Chief Justice dwelt with emphasis upon the location of Dalhousie,—in the heart of the metropolis,—as being a consideration upon which it is entitled to claim public favour. But in general estimation this will prove a serious drawback to its success, not merely because of the larger expense to students, but also, and especially, because of the numerous evil influences of city life to which youth from the country, away from parental restraint, and boarding out of the institution, will be unavoidably exposed.

The inaugural address by the Principal presented a good exposition of the intended College curriculum, and of the advantages of the several branches of study to be included in the course. But as an Inaugural on such an occasion, and from the Principal of a staff so superior in every qualification, as had been indicated by the eulogy of the Chief Justice, it was not what might reasonably have been expected. However, the ship has been launched, and we have no doubt, is as well manned as could be under the circumstances; and as a Presbyterian craft, when she honestly hoists Presbyterian colours, and is kept afloat by no more than her due proportion of Provincial bounty, we shall most sincerely and heartily wish her God speed. The *Presbyterian Witness* announces that the number of students now on the ground is about forty, with a prospect of others. But a small proportion of these will probably be found prepared for matriculation, if the standard of admission is to be at all equal to that of other respectable Institutions; so that the Professors will have work to do beyond that which is purely collegiate. The salaries of the Professors are quite respectable, being \$1200 per an. to each, with the prospect of considerable augmentation, by the college fees, if the attendance of students is large. But then there is no library, nor is there the needful philosophical apparatus. How these costly essentials are to be provided does not appear.

We are strongly in favour of denominational Institutions of learning. The past history of such Institutions justifies the conclusion that every denomination should have its own College. We sympathise with the Presbyterian body in the discouragements endured by them in the past in their College enterprise, first at West River, and subsequently at Truro. We can easily understand that circumstances rendered a change desirable, as the sympathies of their body were not likely, with unanimity, to be gathered around the Truro Seminary; and if an equitable arrangement had been devised, by which the Presbyterian church could have bought out, even at a merely nominal value, the Provincial interest in Dalhousie, every friend of education, and all interested in Provincial prosperity ought to rejoice in the hope that something was at length likely to be made of that which has hitherto been only a public reproach. But our Presbyterian friends cannot suppose that a large amount of provincial property can be appropriated to their especial benefit, seeking to make them the chief educators of the Province—building up their denominational interests by government prestige and by Provincial funds, and that this wholesale injustice, committed by our legislators, will be allowed to pass in silence. We are satisfied that this matter has

only to be agitated, and the Presbyterians themselves, with their strong sense of justice, will not be content to occupy their present anomalous position in regard to Dalhousie College. We hesitate not to reiterate what we have said on previous occasions, that the professedly liberal basis on which the present arrangement rests is nothing but a sham. Neither College Governors nor Synods in conceiving and elaborating the scheme could ever have dreamed that its proposals would be entertained by any other than the Presbyterian body. The plan, though devised by some of the most adroit and wily heads our Province affords, cannot hide the injustice it involves; nor will the public sense of moral right long admit of the continuance of such a wrong.

If it be asked what else could have been done with Dalhousie? We answer,—the existence of a College building, fine in its exterior, but badly located, and not at all well arranged in its interior, or sufficiently commodious for College purposes, and which, if it could not have been rightly appropriated to educational work, might have been devoted to other Provincial objects, was no sufficient reason for the present scheme. The College funds, after the repayment of the debt due the Province, could have been well applied to the promotion of higher Education in some other less objectionable mode.

The appearance of liberality presented in the present scheme for the working of Dalhousie, it was supposed would be sustained by the appointment of three additional Governors, to represent severally the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the Baptist denominations. Had these denominations desired representation on the Dalhousie College Board, no better selection could have been made than the gentlemen who were so appointed. But the design in that addition to the Board of governors was quite obvious; nor is it difficult to understand that the new Governors were, in a measure, shut up to the acceptance of the appointment, not at all on denominational grounds, but by a political necessity, based upon reasons, which, under the circumstances justified their action.

That any one-denomination should monopolize an Institution which from its foundation was designed to be Provincial, and to have available for denominational ends all the Funds and property of such Institution, including £5000 due the Province, and a Provincial Endowment of £900 per annum, is not to be tolerated. It is childish to say that other denominations can take part in the Institution under the present arrangement. It is perfectly clear that they are precluded from so doing by the very efforts they have made in the cause of Education; and it is equally clear that the present plan, prepared especially for the Presbyterians, has been readily embraced by them to meet an emergency, and to enable them to occupy the vantage ground which the scheme presented. Every church is to be commended for earnest desire and effort to enlarge its influence and usefulness; but always in such a mode as shall not infringe upon public interests.

The *Presbyterian Witness* of last week, in an article upon the Dalhousie College opening, remarks:

"The spectacle presented at the opening on Tuesday should silence the calumny that this is a Presbyterian College. Would the clergy of the other Churches—influential lay alumni of King's College—the half dozen Doctors of Medicine—the Lawyers and Merchants present on that day attend the opening of a Presbyterian College? We think not. The charge of *Presbyterianism* is only urged as a means to raise a prejudice against the institution, or to create the impression that Presbyterians are a grasping and dishonest set of people."

To create such an impression is the farthest from our thoughts, believing that the Presbyterians upon a more thorough examination of the matter in all its bearings will cheerfully recede from the wrong position they now occupy, and readily acknowledge that, were some other denomination now taking hold of Dalhousie College instead of the Presbyterians, in the same manner they are now doing, they would be loud and earnest against the wrong committed, nor ever cease to agitate until it were redressed.—If to publish to the world that Dalhousie College is a Presbyterian Institution, is a calumny, then we must bear the imputation of being calumniators, though conscious of our integrity in the matter, and of being influenced by christian charity and the utmost goodwill toward our Presbyterian brethren whom we "love in the truth."

If Dalhousie be not a Presbyterian College, why were all the Governors, prior to the appointment a few months ago, all Presbyterians? What is the present constitution of the College Board? One Church of England, one Baptist, one Methodist, and only six Presbyterians. Why the large preponderance of Presbyterianism in the College Faculty? Why the lengthened deliberations with the Presbyterian Synod, and the consultations with Synod Committees in the framing of the College Act? Why is the heart of Presbyterianism stirred through Nova Scotia to set in motion, and to sustain this Institution? All right, we say, perfectly right, just what ought to be; but let the College be known to be, what in truth it is to all intents and purposes, a PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE.

We cannot understand that "the spectacle presented at the opening" refutes at all the assertion that it is a Presbyterian College. The probability is that the attendance at the opening would have been considerably less, if it had been supposed that such attendance would be construed into an implied approval of the scheme. We must confess that it would have afforded us unspeakably more pleasure to have been present at that opening had that College been avowedly Presbyterian. We were profoundly impressed with the conviction that the religious body taking such position would find out there was involved therein a compromise of christian princi-

ple, a sacrifice of the means of religious usefulness, in the necessary submission to State shackles, which may entail consequences not easy of computation. For ourselves, we should be sorry to see the Methodist Church involved in association with any Institution that would shut out from an inauguration all recognition of the Giver of every good and perfect gift. We confess, we came from those opening exercises with but little confidence that the Divine blessing would attend Dalhousie College. We venture the opinion that by far the greater number of those present on that occasion, and those of other denominations as well as Presbyterians, would have been far better satisfied, than they were, had it been allowable to do so, if the Reverend Principal had read a portion of God's Book, then requested the audience to join in singing a psalm from the Presbyterian version, and further called upon one of the clergymen present to lead in the invocation of the Divine blessing upon the important work then to be commenced. Better to have been without the éclat of having His Honor the Administrator to preside, and the ceremony of an introduction by the learned Chief Justice, than to have dispensed with a recognition of dependence upon God. It cannot but be matter of regret when Presbyterians, for the sake of paltry pecuniary advantages, allow themselves to be placed in a position where they cannot consistently and appropriately express the great truth taught under a dispensation far less favoured than ours, and enforced strongly upon christians by gospel precept and example, a truth upon which Presbyterians are orthodox both in head and heart, and which none understand better than they—*Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.*

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Presbyterian Ministerial Education.

The Presbyterian Seminary has had an eventful history, and has been singularly unfortunate. The foundation of the Pictou Academy was laid about a half-a century ago, by the venerable fathers of our church. Their design was to afford a sound education for the ministry of their own denomination, and all others who chose to repair to it; but its lod had fallen in evil times, and it had from the beginning to contend with opposition and prejudice. It could not get a beam of favour from the Government, nor a blessing from the Church. Kirkmen and Churchmen were united against it, and the controversy between them and the Seceders, was so keen, that the whole county of Pictou at times resembled the background of a battle field. It became an apple of discord at county elections, and ultimately entered the House of Assembly, and made rough water on the floors of Legislature, and much time and money were lost in stormy debates. The whole body of seceders on the one side, and Kirkfolks and Churchmen on the other. William Young the present Chief Justice, was counsel on one occasion for the Kirkmen, and by his speech acquired a transient wreath of fame which tasked the abilities of the venerable Doctor MacCulloch to repel. After a long struggle which for years shook the House of Assembly, the founders and friends of the Seminary got tired of the warfare, removed to the tranquil vale of West River, and carried on their labours peacefully, and trained up some useful ministers and many good schoolmasters. But a fresh dream came over their mind and they moved to Truro, the ancient metropolis of Presbyterianism, there built a new College with a staff of learned Professors and were gathering golden opinions and rising into fame when we hear they are to remove to Halifax; to occupy an old building called Dalhousie College. This reminds us of the Jewish tabernacle and ark, that moved from place to place and found no resting place during the time of the Judges. We sincerely hope that it may find a resting place under the shadow of the merchant princes of Halifax. It has not yet equalled the expectations of its founders or attracted the attention of students. Kirkfolks were opposed to it, and sent their sons home to seek wisdom at Glasgow College, and such students of the Seceders, who could afford it went to Princeton in America, a bulwark of orthodoxy, a superior school of divinity and religious training, of essential importance to young ministers. Some of the Seceding students have gone home to seek wisdom, and such as wish to teach a superior grade may still be inclined to pay a visit and spend a winter at Princeton or Glasgow Colleges. Dalhousie Colleges may rise into fame by employing a brilliant staff of Professors, to suit the temper of the times. No religious tests are required, students must not expect much instruction to dispel the gloom of the grave, or to point out the path to immortality. It would be better for men always to retain that relation to their Creator and Redeemer. We are members of human society and our first and most lasting relation rests on this foundation.

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