

involved. The beginning was small. But the Tractarians of thirty years ago, craftily propounding doubts and difficulties, and hinting at non-natural interpretations, have now become a formidable party;—and they teach the bodily presence of Christ in the bread and wine—the duty of confession to the priest—the virtue of celibacy—veneration of the Virgin Mary—prayers for the dead—saint-worship—and other Romish dogmas and observances.

We shall have to fight the battle of the Reformation over again. I say we—for all Protestant denominations must take part in the conflict; and to a great extent they can be united in it—like different regiments with their appropriate colours and devices, fighting under one common flag. Our rallying-cry shall be Chillingworth's immortal saying—"The Bible, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants."

Nov. 27, 1866.

For the Christian Messenger.

Bible Revision.

Some persons affect to be greatly horrified at the thought of revising our English Version of the Scriptures. It seems to them like an attempt to improve the Bible itself. It is as if they supposed that Moses, Isaiah, and Paul wrote in English, and therefore that their words must not be altered.

They forget that our Version was prepared more than two hundred and fifty years ago, when biblical scholarship was by no means in so advanced a state as it is now, and that our language has undergone considerable alteration since that time. And probably they are not aware that the desirableness of revision is acknowledged by divines of all names and denominations, who at the same time cheerfully confess the general excellence of our authorized version. Almost every new Commentary that is published is accompanied by a new translation. Sometimes the author assigns his reason for this proceeding. This was done several years ago by Messrs. Conybeare and Howson, whose invaluable work entitled "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul," has deservedly obtained an immense circulation. In their "introduction" they write as follows:

"1st. The authorised version was meant to be a standard of authority and ultimate appeal in controversy; hence it could not venture to depart, as an ordinary translation would do, from the exact words of the original, even where some amplification was absolutely required to complete the sense. It was to be the version unanimously accepted by all parties, and therefore must simply represent the Greek text word for word. This it does most faithfully so far as the critical knowledge of the sixteenth century permitted. But the result of this method is sometimes to produce a translation unintelligible to the English reader. Also, if the text admit of two interpretations, our version endeavours, if possible, to preserve the same ambiguity, and effects this often with admirable skill; but such indecision, although a merit in an authoritative version, would be a fault in a translation which had a different object.

"2nd. The imperfect knowledge existing at the time when our Bible was translated, made it inevitable that the translators should occasionally render the original incorrectly; and the same cause has made their version of many of the argumentative portions of the Epistles perplexed and obscure.

"3rd. Such passages as are affected by the above-mentioned objections might, it is true, have been recast, and the authorized translation retained in all cases where it is correct and clear; but if this had been done a patchwork effect would have been produced like that of new cloth upon old garments; moreover, the devotional associations of the reader would have been offended, and it would have been a rash experiment to provoke such a contrast between the matchless style of the authorized version and that of the modern translator, thus placed side by side."

Messrs Conybeare and Howson determined, therefore, to produce a new translation, "to a certain degree paraphrastic."

Ten years ago, the Rev. C. J. Ellicott, M. A., (now Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol) published a Commentary on the "Pastoral Epistles," with a "revised translation." In his "Preface" he says:—"If we are truly and heartily persuaded that there are errors and inaccuracies in our Version, if we know that though by far the best and most faithful translation that the world has ever seen, it still shares the imperfections that belong to every human work, however noble and exalted,—if we feel and know that these imperfections are no less patent than remediable, then surely it is our duty to Him who gave that blessed Word for the guidance of man, through evil report and through good report

to labour by gentle counsels to supply what is lacking and correct what is amiss, to render what has been blessed with great measures of perfection yet more perfect, and to hand it down thus marked with our reverential love and solicitude as the best and most blessed heritage we have to leave to them who shall follow us.

"It is in vain to cheat our own souls with the thought that these errors are either insignificant or imaginary. There are errors, there are inaccuracies, there are misconceptions, there are obscurities, not indeed so many in number or so grave in character as the forward spirits of our day would persuade us of,—but there are misrepresentations of the language of the Holy Ghost; and that man, who, after being in any degree satisfied of this, permits himself to lean to the counsels of a timid or popular obstructiveness, or who, intellectually unable to test the truth of these allegations, nevertheless permits himself to denounce or deny them, will, if they be true, most surely at the dread day of final account, have to sustain the tremendous charge of having dealt deceitfully with the inviolable Word of God."

Bishop Ellicott has also published Commentaries and "revised translations" of the Epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians and Philemon.

In fact, revision is going on continually, and no one complains of it, because all educated persons see its necessity. But the reason why the revised version issued by the American Bible Union is so fiercely opposed is the substitution of the words "immerse" and "immersion," for "baptize" and "baptism." The explanation is at hand, and ought to be satisfactory. It is a fundamental rule of the Bible Union that "no words are to be transferred which are susceptible of being literally translated." Is not that fair and honest?

SENEX.

Nov. 30, 1866.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, DECEMBER 5, 1866.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER FOR 1867.

We have been reminded by some of our friends, in a very

PLEASANT

manner, that another year will shortly be here. They have begun the

WORK

of gathering up New Subscribers. We take the present opportunity of inviting others to join in similar labors of love.

By way of inducement, and

FOR THE

purpose of preventing the difficulties of adding them all, just at the

COMMENCEMENT OF THE YEAR,

we shall place on our list all new names, as they come in, from the present date, charging them only from the 1st of January,

1867.

We hope therefore that no time will be lost, but that our friends will proceed without delay, to search out amongst their neighbours and acquaintance some who are not at present receiving the paper, and give it a word of commendation.

Although our circulation is in fair proportion to that of our contemporaries, and equal to the best, yet there are still hundreds and probably thousands of families in our land, who entirely accord with us in sentiment, but who have not yet joined the band of intelligent christian men and women, we are proud to call our subscribers.

We earnestly desire to give, week by week, such information as will instruct and satisfy subscribers, and benefit their families; so that we may have a succession of permanent patrons who shall retain their interest in the paper as long as life shall last, and their children then follow in the footsteps of their forefathers, growing in confidence and esteem year by year.

We might mention the names of some who will furnish our pages with literary matter during the year, and might include amongst them, ministers and merchants, professors and poets, teachers and travellers, farmers and fishermen, but in doing so might seem to disparage others not named. Our corps of educated men and good writers in each of these professions was never so great as at present, and we shall endeavor to enlist the services of the ablest amongst them. Our highest desire is to present our readers with the best supplies that can be procured from at home and abroad, and provide for them a weekly

reprint unsurpassed in British America. We hope, during the coming year, with the aid of our worthy Agents and other friends, to approach nearer to our highest aspirations in these respects than we have ever done before.

WANTED AT OUR OFFICE.—All amounts due.

Rev. Dr. Crawley's Lecture before the Y. M., Christian Association in the Temperance Hall on Tuesday last, was a highly finished production. His subject "a high tone of moral principle" was finely illustrated. The necessity of its prevalence for securing the happiness of mankind in this world and in a future state, was shewn in a variety of ways. At the commencement Dr. C. laid a foundation in a little abstruse metaphysical argument, shewing that notwithstanding all the moral corruption prevailing, yet, that human nature has a spark of appreciation of what is right and good, so that wherever efforts are made to cultivate it, the spark will kindle up and effect an astonishing change in the whole person, making him an entirely different being. He referred, in proof of this, to the remarkable changes wrought amongst the degraded outcasts of society by means of ragged schools, &c., where the minds have come into contact with christian truth. The lecturer drew several fine pictures from domestic and commercial life to shew the sad consequences of a low tone of morals. A number of historical events were brought forward with good effect for the purpose of exhibiting what evils might have been avoided and benefits conferred by a full recognition of the unselfish principles of justice, goodness and truth.

Dr. C. depicted the possible state of things in the United States, if previous to the late war there had been mutual concession and a high regard for moral principle existing in the councils, North and South, instead of bitter recrimination. He then noticed the contiguity of these provinces to the U. States, and the absolute necessity of some change being effected in our relation to each other and to the great Republic. One of two alternatives must soon take place. Either we must become part and parcel of the Union, or be prepared to maintain our independence. Every consideration we can offer rises up as a reason for our choosing the latter—our origin, our instincts, our institutions, and the graves of our forefathers, all lead us to glory in and maintain our British connection. The relation between a high tone of morality and religion was insisted on with great power and earnestness. No permanence can be expected in moral improvement except it is founded on religious principle.

The chairman, P. Lynch, Esq., referred to the present position of the Association as highly encouraging. The library, the Bible Class on Saturday evenings, and the Prayer meeting on Thursdays, were all noticed as inducements for young men to unite with and sustain the Association.

The Rev. W. Sommerville has favored the *Presbyterian Witness* with a long letter addressed; "To the Editor of the Messenger" respecting our notice, some time ago, of his book on Baptism. Strange that he takes no cognizance of the remark of the *Witness* respecting the said book—"we do not feel disposed to endorse all the views maintained in this work." Our contemporary probably thought it prudent to put his objection in that general form, rather than subject himself to the consequences of more definite criticism. He acted wisely. We shall not complain however of Mr. Sommerville's passing by our neighbour, and bestowing his favors on us, even though it be through the medium of that paper. Why he should inflict his lucubrations, for our edification, on our neighbour's readers seems a little inexplicable. Our readers probably would not care to have our columns encumbered with it, as a whole, yet we may trouble them with an extract or two, for which we ought perhaps to offer an apology. Mr. S. says:—

"I expect with all confidence the following corrections, although scarcely expecting you would make them in my words.

1. You are not at liberty to express what opinion you please of the 'spirit' in which I wrote. God, who knoweth the hearts of all men is sole Judge in this case, Amen. My hostility to Baptist Churches is precisely the hostility of A. P. Baptists to P. Baptist Churches. A. P. Baptist and P. Baptist Churches cannot both be Christian Churches. If you think otherwise, say so plainly, and then all parties will be better able to understand us. It gave great pleasure to recognize the existence of real, earnest, and blessed Christians in your Churches."

How curious that he (Mr. S.) should be so fond of the term "Baptist" as a designation of Churches. We presume he means by "A. P. Baptists," Antipedobaptists, and "P. Baptists," Pedobaptists. We might question the correctness of his orthography but as it is a weakness he chooses to

cherish we allow that to pass. If Mr. S. would but give a definition of what he believes constitutes a christian church he might answer his own question. His statement that "A. P. Baptist churches and P. Baptist churches cannot both be christian churches" is a very bold assertion, and as shallow as it is bold, for such a man as Mr. S. to make. Perhaps it is intended as a snare for the purpose of entrapping us into an admission, on which he might afterwards belabor us. Mr. S. well knows that there are members of what he designates P. Baptist churches who are not christians—persons who have never made a profession of being believers in Christ. It is possible, we repeat, that a majority of the members may be of such non-professors, yes, even the whole church might become composed of such persons. In that case we should certainly say, and we fancy Mr. Sommerville would agree with us, that such a P. Baptist church would not be a christian church. If an A. P. Baptist church were distinguished for nothing but "A. P., Baptist" it could not be a christian church. The statement too is logically very defective. It would be equally logical to say: The Reformed Presbyterian church and U. Presbyterian church cannot both be christian churches. And we might say to Mr. S. "If you think otherwise say so plainly." Again Mr. S. says:—

"4. You say also, 'He is singularly reticent on the history (uninspired you mean of course), of Baptism. This is an insinuation and not a very generous or warrantable one. But we are familiar with such. The singularity is, that I very deliberately passed by the history. (1) I wrote for those who have bibles, few of whom have access to historical authorities; and I never ask a man to depend on my word in matters affecting his relation to God.' (2) History may prove what men believed, or said, or did, in any particular age, but history does not determine whether what they said or believed was true, or whether what they did was right; and this is the main question. (3) If you could furnish historical proof that immersion was the universal practice from the death of the Apostle John till the days of Dr. Cramp, I shall plead for the revival of Baptismal sprinkling on the authority of the Word."

That is certainly putting on a bold front. If no one had ever used sprinkling for baptism since Apostolic days till now. Even then, Mr. Sommerville would sprinkle and call it baptizing; for he has discovered it somewhere in "the word." He does not say where! This is almost equal to the late decision on the doctrine of the immaculate conception. On this principle all the dogmas of the Roman Catholic church might be sustained.

On our quoting from a writer in the *Lutheran Observer* that he mentions "a family of baptized children who are an abomination to the village in which he resides," and remarking thereon, "Probably Mr. Sommerville has had similar experience if not with those of his own congregation, in some belonging to others;" Mr. S. goes off into the following tirade:

"What think you of yourself, that you should stop to the degrading practices of retailing the vile gossip, to which so many lend a willing ear and over which so many gloat, and which can be made to play its part on all sides? Shame! shame! that the Editor of a religious paper should furnish such meat for his readers. Mr. Editor, I desire to cherish a good opinion of you and of your brethren; and I confess to have read the above statements with sorrow. But I think I see you blush when the matter is exhibited in its true colours, and for the sake of that blush I shall think of you as if the word had never been published."

We cannot understand what our venerable friend alludes to. We had no reference to any individual case or cases whatever. We merely drew a bow at a venture, knowing that it is no uncommon thing to find children who have had the right of infant baptism administered to them, giving plain indications that they are "by nature the children of wrath, even as others."

Mr. S. says further:

"9. I certainly considered it necessary for my own locality to write on the subject. But it is needed in many other localities;—in Picton for instance, where they have helped to introduce Romanism, and God will give them plenty of delusion for their reward."

It does not appear very clear who "they" refers to. We presume he intends the Presbyterians at Picton, who assisted the Roman Catholics by contributions towards building their new church in that town. We know no reason for his making allusion to this fact in a letter to us, we therefore leave him to settle that matter with his brethren.

The *Witness* will scarcely allow us to mention Picton without an explosion of horror, at the idea of there being any need of gospel preaching there. Mr. Sommerville gives his opinion, and says: "It is needed there." We suppose, however, he means, by "it," his book. We should have thought that after