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"Not slothful in business : fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

For the New Year.

Another year, another year
Has borne its record to the skies ;
Another year, another year,
Untried, unproved before us lies ;
We hail with smiles its dawning ray—
How shall we meet its final day ?

Another year, another year !
Its squandered hours will ne'er return ;
O ! many a heart must quail with fear,
O'er memory's blotted page to turn.
No record from that leaf will fade,
Not one erasure may be made.

Another year, another year !
How many a grief has marked its flight !
Some whom we love, no more are here—
Translated to the realms of light.
Ah ! none can bless the coming year,
Like those no more to greet us here.

Another year, another year !
O, many a blessing too was given,
Our lives to deck, our hearts to cheer,
And antedate the joys of heaven :
But they too slumber in the past,
Where joys and griefs must sink at last.

Another year, another year ;
Gaze we no longer on the past,
Nor let us shrink, with faithless fear,
From the dark shade the future casts.
The past, the future, what are they
To these whose lives may end to-day ?

Another year, another year !
Perchance the last of life below ;
Who, ere its close, death's call may hear,
None but the Lord of life can know,
O, to be found when'er that day
May come, prepared to pass away.

Another year, another year !
Help us earth's thorny path to tread ;
So may each moment bring us near
To Thee, ere yet our lives are fled.
Saviour ! we yield ourselves to Thee,
For time and for eternity.

Religious.

The Holy Scriptures in their original tongue.

In the November Number of the Bible Union Quarterly we have some matters of great interest given with the Seventeenth Annual Report of the Union. We extract the following :

Preservation of the Old Testament.—The Old Testament, written in their language, was intrusted to the Hebrews, who were thus distinguished above the rest of our race by the possession and guardianship of the oracles of God.

And well did they discharge the sacred trust. The scrupulous care which they exercised in copying the holy writings, has passed into a proverb. Philo and Josephus state, that their reverence for the sacred writings was so great that they would suffer any torments, and even death itself, rather than change a single point or iota of them. When Antiochus Epiphanes laid waste their temple and city, destroyed all the sacred books which he could find, and issued a decree punishing with immediate death all those who did not resign their copies, the sacred volume was safely preserved in spite of all the power and influence of that perfidious monarch. From one to two thousand manuscripts of these Hebrew Scriptures are now extant, affording all the requisite means, by careful and judicious collation, to ascertain precisely what God revealed to our race under the Old Covenant Dispensation.

Greek manuscripts corrupted.—The early Christians were equally solicitous to preserve without corruption the manuscripts of the New Testament, all of which were written in Greek. A time, however, occurred in the history of Christianity, when the great body of those who professed the name of Christ were not so careful about the Sacred Scriptures. Indeed, the corruptions of the Romish and the Greek Churches eventually deposed the Greek Scriptures from the position of reverence with which they have been regarded, and, with the exception of portions select-

ed for use in worship, consigned them to neglect and oblivion. And to these portions these churches added words and formulas of their own, by means of which various corruptions were introduced into later manuscripts of the New Testament. The reverence for God's word having yielded to regard for the dogmas of the church, it is not surprising that various other additions and alterations should have disfigured and depreciated the still later or more modern manuscripts.

Greek text printed by Erasmus.—At the commencement of the Protestant era it unhappily occurred, that the basis of what is called the Received Greek Text was prepared by a man whose high celebrity as a scholar threw into shade a moral defect of character, which led him occasionally to sacrifice integrity to expediency. Being anxious to anticipate the publication of the *Complutensian Polyglott*, then in the course of preparation by Cardinal Ximenez, and having access to very few manuscripts, and those all of late date, Erasmus made as good a text as he could from his materials, except that he added and interspersed translations of his own from the Latin vulgate into the Greek, to supply deficiencies of manuscript, and passed off these additions and interpolations as the veritable Greek words dictated by the Holy Spirit. For a long period of years, circumstances have directed the suspicions of scholars to this extraordinary corruption of the Greek text by Erasmus, but it is only lately that the absolute proofs in the case have been brought to light by the discovery of the manuscript which he prepared for the printer, betraying the changes and interpolations which he introduced. Some of these faults he corrected in his fourth edition, in 1527, after the publication of the *Complutensian Polyglott*; but others still remained and vitiated the text used by the translators employed by King James.

Few manuscripts accessible.—At the time when Erasmus prepared the basis of the Received Greek Text, and when the Common English Version was translated from it, not twenty manuscripts of the New Testament were known to the scholars of Europe. Those to which they had access were all of modern origin, none older than the tenth century.

Valuable manuscripts preserved.—During those ages of moral darkness, in which his word was not valued, God, in his all-wise providence, had hidden copies of his revelation, where neglect would not destroy, nor corruption deface them.

The word of God, both in Hebrew and Greek, was generally written on parchments, —the skins of goats and sheep prepared for writing. Some of these parchments were very valuable, and, when they were not readily obtained, it was not uncommon to wash out a less esteemed manuscript and write another in its place. In this way a number of manuscripts of the New Testament were treated. Such a work is called a *Codex Rescriptus*, or *Palimpsest*.

One of the most ancient manuscripts known to be in existence, and in every respect one of the most reliable, was, at a very early period, washed out to make way for the works of Ephraem the Syrian. In the fifteenth century the family of the Medici, in Italy, devoted themselves to the collection of works of art and ancient literature, and Catherine de Medici, when she became Queen of France, brought with her this *Codex Rescriptus*, and deposited it in the Royal Library of Paris. Here it lay, as it had elsewhere, for centuries, without a suspicion of its almost priceless value. Within comparatively a few years the discovery was made, that metallic relics of the old writing remained under the surface of the parchment, and, by the application of chemical acids, the original manuscript was restored. The Bible Union has a fac-simile of this *Codex*, in which every other line belongs to the works of Ephraem, and the alternate lines present a manuscript, occasionally interrupted, of the whole Greek Bible. Dr. Horne and other critics declare it to be invaluable.

This history is given as characteristic of the mode in which a considerable class of manuscripts of the sacred Scriptures has been preserved, and is now restored for use, at a period when their value is most highly appreciated.

Another class, even more numerous, has

been discovered in old libraries, where, during long ages, their presence was not suspected. As a remarkable specimen of this class, may be cited the *Codex Sinaiticus*, found by Tischendorf in the Monastery of St. Catherine, on Mount Sinai, and published in 1862 at the expense of the Emperor of Russia. Tischendorf, who is one of the most eminent among the collators of manuscripts and critical scholars of the present day, discovers in it reasons for believing it to be the most ancient *Codex* now known, unless an exception be made in the case of the *Codex Vaticanus*. The history of the latter is unknown. The first partial collation of it was made in 1669, half a century after the issue of the Authorized English Bible. Until very lately it never was published, nor even thoroughly collated. Under Cardinal Mai it was edited, and published after his death, with corrections. These two manuscripts stand in the first class of authorities, and their use is invaluable in procuring an accurate Greek text of the New Testament.

Manuscripts accessible at the present day.—The number of manuscripts accessible when the basis of the Received Text was prepared by Erasmus was not only small, but all were comparatively modern, and, compared with those since discovered, not reliable. Now, including those that are fragmentary, nearly two thousand are known to scholars, many of them of various degrees of merit, and some of acknowledged and unquestionable authority. To their collation and publication, some of the most gifted minds of the age have devoted their labors. The learned works resulting, and copies of the most valuable manuscripts, including all the fac-similes that have been published, have been procured for the Bible Union, and furnished for the use of our revisers. With such helps it will be readily understood, that these enjoy advantages which it was impossible for the revisers of King James to possess.

The Baptism of Christ.

At "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, * * * John came baptizing in the wilderness, and preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;" and many of the people from Jerusalem and Judea, and the region about the Jordan, "were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins," and looking forward to the One mightier than John who should come after him, and baptize in the Holy Spirit. Those who were thus baptized by John, might look upon their baptism as a symbol of their *thorough repentance and remission*—of their turning from all their sins to God, and receiving from his hand a free full pardon, and cleansing from their sins through the expected Messiah.

But when Jesus came to John, and was immersed by him in the Jordan (Mark I. 9), his baptism could not have had such an import with reference to himself; for he had no sin to be either repented of or forgiven.

On coming to John and requesting baptism he tells him that he does it "to fulfil all righteousness." Matt. III. 15. Thus he will conform in every particular, to the Father's will. And he delights in being a faithful, experienced and sympathizing leader to his trusting people in this and all other duties. (See John XII. 26). And to all who would become his disciples, his language is, "Repent, believe, and follow me." Matt. xvi. 24.

But besides his being baptized as an example for us, there appears to be in his baptism a *symbolic prediction* or foreshadowing, of his own unparalleled sufferings and violent death. This symbolical, prophetic idea, can be legitimately deduced, I think, from Christ's own language on two different occasions.

When speaking of the fiery trial through which his followers would have to pass, he added: "But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" Luke xii. 50. The revised New Testament renders it, "I have an *immersion to undergo*." And Dr. Doddridge, an intelligent and candid Pedobaptist, thus paraphrases it: "I have a most dreadful baptism to be baptized with, and know that I shall shortly be dashed, as it were, in blood, and plunged in the most overwhelming distress."

Also when the two sons of Zebedee made request that they might sit, the one on his right

hand and the other on his left in his kingdom he replied: "Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" And on their answering, "We are able," he added: "Ye shall indeed drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with." Matt. xx. 22, 23; Mark x. 38, 39. The Revised Testament gives these passages "endure the immersion which I endure."—And Doddridge paraphrases them, "Are ye able to drink of the bitter cup of which I am about to drink so deeply, and to be baptized with the baptism, and plunged into that sea of sufferings, with which I am shortly to be baptized, and, as it were overwhelmed for a time?" "You shall indeed * * * be baptized with the baptism of extreme sufferings with which I am to be baptized."

For ages previous, the "cup" had been regarded as affording a lively and expressive image, either of benefits to be bestowed, or of calamities to be inflicted; according as its contents were sweet and refreshing, or bitter and deadly. See Ps. xvi. 5; and xxiii. 5; also xi. 6, and lxxv. 8; Ezek. xxiii. 32, 33. And now, in the passages quoted, Jesus, employing the well-understood figure of the cup, adds to it the much stronger symbol of immersion, to point out his own prospective sufferings and death. Under the circumstances, he must allude to the gospel baptism practiced by John and his own disciples (Mark i. 1-11; John iv. 2); and consequently he must include and refer to his own personal baptism, and indicate its significance. It is as if he would say: In accordance with the Father's will, I submitted with delight, as my duty, to one baptism, administered to me by John in the Jordan.—That was an immersion in water; this will be like an immersion in fire. Luke xii. 49, 50. That was an immersion easy to be endured; this is one at which human nature stops appalled, and shrinks back. It is an immersion into the dark, deep, painful waters of death! See Ps. lxxix. 2, and xxii. 15.

We thus see that Christ's immersion by John in the water of the forded Jordan, in a clear and striking manner symbolized his subsequent personal sufferings and death as our atoning Saviour; and also his speedy and triumphant resurrection from the dead. (See 1 Peter ii. 24; Rom. v. 10; and Rom. vi. 3, 4).

And as our baptism looks back to the death and burial and resurrection of Christ our Saviour, as having already taken place (Rom. vi. 3, 4), so we find his baptism looking forward to them, as about to take place; just as the appointment of sacrifice, in Old Testament times, looking forward to Christ's sacrifice.

We also perceive how utterly inadequate, and even perverse, *sprinkling* and *pouring* are, in respect to symbolizing these great and fundamental facts in the Divine plan of redemption. For there is in these no immersion and no setting forth either of the suffering and death and burial, or of the resurrection of Christ.

We may derive from this subject an invaluable practical lesson when we remember,

How dreadful that sea, no one can conceive,
Christ was plunged in, that we might be pardoned
and live!
His way so much rougher and darker than mine!
Shall He meekly suffer, and I shrink and repine?
—N. Y. Examiner.

The Doctor and the Poor.

Honey is not sweeter in your mouths, and light is not more pleasant to your eyes, and music to your ears, and a warm, cozy bed is not more welcome to your wearied legs and head, than is the honest, deep gratitude of the poor to the young doctor. It is his glory, his reward; he fills himself with it, and wraps himself all round with it as with a cloak, and goes on in his way, happy and hearty; and the gratitude of the poor is worth the having, and worth the keeping, and worth the remembering. Twenty years ago I attended old Sandie Campbell's wife in a fever, in Big Hamilton's Close in the Grassmarket,—two worthy kindly souls they were and are. (Sandie is dead now). By God's blessing, the means I used saved "poor Kirsty's" life, and I made friends of these two forever; Sandie would have fought for me if need be, and Kirsty would do as good. I can count on them as my friends, and when