

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE PILLOW OF REST.

The following lines were suggested by seeing a very aged man rolling his head from side to side on his pillow in great agony. The writer's object is to induce the reader to make the Redeemer's saving love a resting place for time and eternity.

R. CLAY.

What is that boon, the wide world o'er; Such never failing comfort yields; And soothes sad bosoms, aching sore, Brings balmy sleep, to meet their needs?

Go with me to that joyous room; See, where the babe finds sweetest rest; When fun and playthings, tire so soon The tiny one, seeks mother's breast.

What pillow, can be half so soft And soothing, as this tender place, Where sleeps in innocence so oft, That darling child's angelic face?

Here, freedom from life's racking cares; (Who does not envy such a calm?) Sleep on; thy mother's tear-washed prayers Encircle thee, from every harm.

Oh! could it be that mortals found No harder pillow, colder fate; Ne'er would be seen stretched on the ground A drunkard's child, in helpless state.

Oh pining, shivering, from the cold, In rags he lay, that helpless boy; Where are the arms that should unfold, This cheerless one, in parent's joy?

Oh! sad to tell, the drinker's den, He laws, and revels, day and night; Where fields—I cannot call them men— Destroy their health, their senses blight.

Leaving his dear ones all forlorn, In subject misery and woe; To tear with hearts, by anguish torn Dine poverty, that cruel foe.

Say father, can'st thou bear that scene, Thy boy no warmer bed than snow; No climes, no fire, in winter keen? He finds this pillow cold and low.

Warm was his pillow once and dear, When nestling near his mother's heart. Alas! she's gone, there's none to cheer, None to perform her gentle part.

At length, this drunkard's race is run; With frame creaked, sunk in crime, On bed of straw, now sets his sun Sad pillow this, the last in time.

All earthly comforts far removed, Remorse and pain, now rack his mind; Yes, to his bitter cost he's proved, None but the good true comfort find.

Where has that bride, her pillow found. When bright hopes tinge her youthful cheek? In rapture bled their hearts respond No other Eden do they seek.

Her lover's arm is her defence; Her safe support and dearest guide; Tell me—Can aught allure her thence, While nestling there, close by his side?

Pillows of rest, are precious things; That mortals prize, through all their days; When evening beautiful slumber brings As well as when affliction slays.

What finds a sufferer, when oppressed? To ease his tired and aching head? 'Tis only on this place of rest; He finds relief, when trouble's fled.

Another pillow, we may gain; Which heaven provides, for sweet repose, List, to the word! we may attain A rest by faith, from all our woes.

'Tis found in pardon, peace and love, Rest, for the soul on Christ alone; Then in His mansion house above He'll grant a seat, close by his throne.

Oh! was not that a hallowed spot; Where John reclined, with heart throbs Od Jesus' bosom, will he not [deep?] Give to His own beloved sleep?

Here may we rest in life's last hour, While earthly things all fade away, Thus, lean on Christ's sustaining power, And soar with him, to endless day.

R. C.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE REVISION OF THE ENGLISH SCRIPTURES

AN ESSAY READ AT THE BAPTIST MINISTERIAL INSTITUTE AT YARMOUTH, 1871.

[In the spring of the year 1851—above twenty years ago—I wrote and published A PROPOSAL FOR A REVISION OF THE AUTHORIZED ENGLISH VERSION OF THE SCRIPTURES. This was, in its leading features, strictly ORIGINAL. It was prepared while a broken leg kept me confined to my bed, and without access even to my own library.

Many regarded the proposed plan of combining the principal denominations of Protestant Christians in this work, as utterly impracticable. It affords me sincere

pleasure, however, to know, that even in my life-time, measures have been adopted approximating to the course suggested by me. This approximation may be noticed hereafter.

As my views remain substantially unchanged, the substance of my former Essay may be here introduced, with such omissions and additions as appear to me desirable.]

In many instances there are two pernicious extremes, between which the "golden mean" requires to be diligently sought. Such appears to me to be the case with reference to a Revision of the common English Version of the Bible. Many regard this Version in its present state as absolutely perfect, and deem every suggestion that any improvement in it is desirable, and even every deviation from it in making translations into other languages, as sacrilegious. There are others who deprecate it, as being in many respects very faulty, and unworthy of public confidence, and insist on having a new Translation prepared, at all hazards, without delay.

Between these ultra views, an opinion is entertained by many prudent men, who are capable of forming a correct judgment on the subject, and who are free from exciting influences, to this effect:—That this Version is good; but that it is susceptible of material improvement. In this opinion I concur.

The sacred Originals, as they came forth from the hands of the inspired penmen, are incapable of improvement, but all translations made by fallible men, may be reasonably expected to exhibit some indications of human frailty, and require correction. My opportunities for acquiring information on this subject have been quite limited; but an ardent attachment to biblical studies has induced me to improve, in some measure, such as have been placed within my reach, I have perused the whole of the Old Testament in five different languages, and the whole of the New in nine: [now Old Testament in 7; New in 10] And I have now in my possession, besides other translations of several parts, eleven versions of the former, and twenty of the latter; all of which I have examined to a considerable extent. Some of these versions are, of course, far preferable to others; but each has its peculiar excellences, and none is free from defects. From any one of these, made by orthodox Protestants, a man acquainted with the language of the version, might—according to my judgment—under the influence of Divine teaching, easily learn the way to heaven, and the path of duty. It does not, however, thence follow, that the diminution of the defects in any one of these versions would not be highly serviceable.

It may be regarded as an axiom, that improvement, whenever it can be made, is desirable. Improvement, however, may be effected under circumstances in which more harm than good will result from it. I will give an example. The Psalmody of Dr. Watts was long used extensively, and by many exclusively, in public worship. Though the words employed by this excellent poet were generally well chosen, yet there was occasionally room for improvement. Had the publishers of this Psalmody, by mutual agreement, introduced more appropriate terms where it could be done, the change might have been beneficial; but where one publisher changed certain words, and another changed others, etc., the use of copies thus diverse from each other in the same congregation, introduced confusion. It would have been much better to retain the slight defects of the original Work, as some prudent publishers did, and so to furnish singers with copies perfectly accordant with each other.

It may be remarked, moreover, that when any form of human government, or any existing law, has actually needed reform, efforts hastily and injudiciously put forth to effect such reform, have frequently been attended with deleterious consequences. The prudent course of the town clerk of Ephesus, "Ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly," is of every extensive application.

While the revision of the common English Translation of the Bible is, in my opinion, highly desirable, it is evidently a work of such vast moment, that it requires to be undertaken and accomplished with much caution and prudence. If it be not judiciously done, it were better that it should not be attempted. Every man who is capable of suggesting an improvement in the translation of any passages of Scripture, has an undoubted right to do so. Nay, it is certainly allowable for individuals to publish, for private use, versions of the whole Bible, or of parts of it, as has been done by Messrs. Doddridge, Wesley, Penn, Macknight, etc.

Such versions if accompanied, as they are, with Notes assigning reasons for the changes made, will furnish material assistance toward the effecting of a public revision. To me, however, it appears undesirable that any individual, or any denomination, should attempt to supersede the public and general use of the authorized Version, by the introduction of one professedly improved. If one denomination may do so, certainly another may. In this way the time may soon come when pulpits will be furnished respectively with Baptist versions and Pedobaptist versions, Calvinistic versions and Arminian versions, Trinitarian versions and Unitarian versions, etc. As persons of several different denominations frequently live together in the same family, and occasionally attend each other's places of worship, would not the use of such different translations, both in public and private, produce scenes similar to that at Babel? Such a state of things would evidently present a stumbling-block in the way of sincere inquirers, and, at the same time, put a powerful weapon into the hands of the enemies of the Bible and of Protestantism. It would also tend to interrupt the free and friendly intercourse of different denominations; and would consequently present a barrier to the diffusion and prevalence of truth. I see not how any considerate person can doubt, that such would be the natural and inevitable result.

It must necessarily prove highly detrimental to the interests of any one denomination separately attempting to introduce such a revision for public use. I am free to acknowledge that the impression produced on my mind by the intelligence that the Unitarians had published what they call "An Improved Version of the New Testament," were substantially these:—This has been done to promote the extension of their own peculiar views; but this very act furnishes strong presumptive proof that their cause is bad; since it evinces their own conviction that their views cannot be sustained otherwise than by a Version made by themselves. An inspection of this professedly "Improved Version" confirmed these impressions. How dissimilar soever the cases may be in many respects, it can not be reasonably questioned, that similar impressions would be made on the minds of others by the appearance of a new English Version published by any one body of Christians. In every instance in which such Version would appear more favourable than the common Translation to the views of the body whence it should emanate, though the change were really an improvement, it would be naturally regarded as a sectarian change, and instead of producing conviction, would tend to strengthen prejudice against the views thus expressed.

I am aware that, though the justness of my inference cannot be denied, the relevancy of these considerations may be questioned by some, on the ground of their alleged reference to the principle of "expediency." It is not marvellous, though it is, in my opinion, to be deeply regretted, that the excesses to which this principle has been carried by some persons, have driven others to the opposite extreme of glorifying in their recklessness of consequences, provided they can be satisfied that a thing is right in itself. All references to the efforts likely to result from any measure, are, through misapprehension, branded by such persons with the odious name of "expediency," and regarded as time-serving and iniquitous. If, however, I have not grossly misunderstood the plain language of inspiration, it is the duty of a Christian to inquire attentively respecting any measure proposed to him, not only whether it is "lawful," and consequently right in itself, but also whether it is "expedient," that is, adapted under existing circumstances to be beneficial. (See 1 Cor. x 23-29. Rom xiv 14 21. xv 12.) When our Lord was required by the collectors to pay tribute, though He might have pleaded exemption, as the Son of God, yet He declined to do so, lest He "should offend them," or cause them to stumble. (Matt xvii 24-27.) In accordance with this, "He spake the word" to the people "as they were able to hear it." (Mark iv 33. John xvi 12.) Paul followed this example; and took special care not to frustrate his efforts for the good of the people among whom he laboured by exciting their prejudices. (1 Cor. iii 2 ix. 12, 18 23.) Nay, this inspired writer expressly enjoins on Christians, "Give none offence—occasion of stumbling"—neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even "say ye as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." With reference to this course pursued by him, if he immediately

adds, "Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ" (1 Cor. x. 32, 33. vi 1) Though the inspired Apostles would not permit the introduction of circumcision among the converts emerging from heathenism, yet they evidently deemed it expedient to avoid shocking the prejudices of the Jews by prohibiting it among them, and judged it better to supersede the use of it by showing its inefficacy. (Acts xv 28-29. xxi. 20, 21. Rom. ii. 28, 29. iv. 9 11. Gal. v 6) In a word, no fact can be more evident, than that Paul circumcised Timothy merely as a matter of expediency, lest his usefulness among the Jews should be otherwise retarded (Acts xvi. 3.)

The principle thus clearly established by unequivocal Scripture proof, is obviously applicable to the case under consideration. As no individuals, nor any one denomination, can pretend that God has commanded them to make a public revision of an established Translation of the Scriptures, which is confessedly accurate enough to guide men to heaven, it must be morally wrong to attempt anything of the kind, if there are sufficient reasons for concluding that such an attempt is likely to prove detrimental—even through the influence of existing prejudices—to the interests of truth and godliness, and consequently to the best interests of mankind.

(Conclusion next week.)

For the Christian Messenger.

HOME MISSIONS AND HOME MISSIONARY OPERATIONS.

Mr. Editor,—

By way of introduction to what I propose to state in advocacy of our present organization for conducting Home Missionary operations, I invite the attention of the reader to the results as recorded in the records of the Nova Scotia Home Missionary Society for a few years past.

Arguments based upon statistics carefully and correctly compiled, usually command great respect from considerate and trained minds. It may be that Buckle estimated them too highly, but since the age of miracles, in the commonly received acceptation of the phrase, has passed away, statistics constitute the sound basis of almost, if not quite all the operations of this life. The men of the world group and argue from them, with almost as much accuracy, as from mathematical or arithmetical data.

I have not the reports of the earlier years of the Home Missionary operations under my hand as I write, but I can refer to them for the last five years, as extracted from page 30 of the Central Association's Minutes for 1872, and I apprehend they will be scanned with interest by many who may not have studied them in juxtaposition:

TABLE SHOWING PROGRESS DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

Table with 6 columns: Year, Missionaries employed, Week's labor, Sermons preached, Prayers and other religious duties, Family visits. Rows for years 1868, 1869, 1870, 1871, 1872.

Table with 4 columns: Baptisms, Tracts distributed, Miles travelled, Collected by Missionaries. Rows for years 1868, 1869, 1870, 1871, 1872.

Here is to be found a correctly compiled summary of the operations of the Society sustained by and in connection with the Central and Eastern Associations of Nova Scotia.

In the 1st column, that of Missionaries employed, within five years the increase in round numbers has been fifty per cent.

In the 2nd column, the weeks of labor performed in 1872, compared with those of 1868, and increase is forty four per cent.

The 3rd column, that of sermons, shows the increase from 518 to 920, or say seventy seven per cent.

Column five, "Prayer and Conference meetings" exhibits an increase of over two hundred per cent.

Family visits increasing from 739 to 1996, are almost trebled.

Baptisms, I regret to say, have not preserved the ratio, and instead of increasing show a decrease—for in 1868 the Baptisms were 85, while in 1872 they were but 33. In 1868 however, the 2nd year of the tabular compilation, it will be observed, they had fallen off more than one hundred per cent while in the next year, 1870, they increased

about, or nearly one hundred per cent. over 1869.

Tract distribution increased very considerably as the table shows.

The number of miles travelled have more than doubled, and the amounts collected on the field have increased some seventy per cent. This is a cheering feature.

I find, with regard to the number of baptisms reported for these several years on a comparison with the statistics of the Central Association, the amount stands thus:

Table with 3 columns: Year, Central Association, Home Mission Society. Rows for years 1868, 1869, 1870, 1871, 1872.

A corresponding decrease in the number of Baptisms has not taken place in the Central Association as compared with the Home Missionary field, it is true. But there was a great falling off nevertheless in numbers in the former, nearly one-third.

But turning to the statistics of the Eastern Association for 1872, I regret to find that the baptisms for the year were but twenty-five, whilst in 1871 they were ninety six, or nearly four times as many.

One is here reminded that "Paul may plant, and Apollos water, &c." But while no mere human agency can convert a soul, or fit a candidate for the ordinance of baptism, it is not the less the duty of the servants of the Most High, to labor diligently in His vineyard.

The object of this letter is about accomplished. It was to show by a bird's eye view of the statistics of the Society for the last few years that their officers have not been slothful, or recreant to the trust reposed in them. That the friends of Home Missions have steadily aided and sustained them. That the number of Missionaries have increased, and their labors have been discharged so far as human agency can reach, with diligence and fidelity.

In other words, that so far as the organization of the Society is concerned, there has nothing transpired which ought to destroy the confidence of the denomination in its agency, or dampen the energies of its friends, as regards its future success.

But referring to the operations of the Home Missionary Society, and regarding them from the foregoing standpoint it must be borne in mind, that some of the present churches of Cape Breton, not long ago were the centres of Home Missionary labor, and that churches now organized, some of them I regret to add at present without pastors, are under the blessing of God largely the results of the society's operations. And so I trust the process may long continue to be repeated.

During this last summer a church was organized at Fall River, Halifax Co., in the centre of a Home Missionary field, under the auspices of and as the result of Home Missionary labor.

But upon this point I need not further enlarge. One of the duties of the Society is to break the virgin soil where the prospects are favourable, to enclose new fields, and plant and sow by all waters, hopefully trusting and believing that in the future as in the past, they shall reap if they faint not.

J. McCULLY.

Brunswick Place, 21st Feb 1873.

For the Christian Messenger.

ONTARIO CORRESPONDENCE.

THE WEATHER.—THE NEW UNIVERSITY ACT. THE PROVINCIAL UNIVERSITY LIBERALIZED. THE ADVANTAGES TO THE BAPTIST COLLEGE. DEREGULATION OF THE SABBATH BY RAILWAY TRAFFIC. EARNEST REMONSTRANCES, &c.

We are rapidly approaching the close of the severest winter which has been experienced in Western Ontario for many years. The snow has covered the ground continually since the first fall of the season, and the thermometer has once, if not oftener, fallen to -26°, a point which has not, I believe, been reached before since 1859. Nor have the intense cold and violent storms been rare events occurring twice or thrice in the winter. The cold has been unusually continuous and the storms unusually frequent. The hopeful and the wise are predicting an early Spring; reasoning I presume from some law of compensation or correlation, in the action of the natural forces concerned. We trust the event may prove them wise prophets, as well as wise philosophers.

Our local one-chamber Parliament has been for some weeks in session. Perhaps the most important legislation of the Session is that affecting our Provincial University. The new act regulating the management of this fine institution, has many excellent provisions. The change in the mode of