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Religious.

THE REVISED SCRIPTURES.

There have been various opinions published of the version of the Holy Scriptures prepared by the American Bible Union. The *Christian Union* of which Henry Ward Beecher is the editor, in its issue of May 17th, has the following article respecting it:—

THE "BAPTIST BIBLE."

The *Congregationalist* says of the expulsion of Vance Smith from the Committee on the new translation of the Scriptures in England, that it "fairly indicates that the revision proposed will be as largely in the interests of denominational ideas as the Baptist Version in this country has proved to be. If the Bible is to be revised at all, it must be on the largest basis."

We feel impelled to protest against the injustice to our Baptist brethren, which (according to our view of the facts) is involved in this remark. The credit which is fairly due to them for the liberality and devotion with which, for twenty years, they have prosecuted the great design of giving the Scriptures to the world, irradiated with all the light which modern scholarship can pour upon the original page, has been too long withheld, or too grudgingly bestowed.

Ever since 1850, the Society which was then founded by certain intelligent and liberal members of this communion, for purposes of Bible translation and revision, has incurred the expenditure of many thousands of dollars in its appointed work. It has collected a magnificent library, and employed the most competent scholars of all lands, without the slightest reference to their ecclesiastical connection; and the translation has been directed by Dr. Thomas J. Conant, whose profound and various learning, fitly associated with the largest and most liberal views, has given assurance of the ability, as well as the catholicity, of the work. The inauguration of this mighty enterprise encountered the coldness and jealousy of other churches, because of the general apprehension that its sole object was to make a Bible "in the interest of denominational ideas." But although the movement was set on foot by members of the Baptist communion, they emphatically disclaimed for it any sectarian character. "It is," said they, "a voluntary association, with no religious test, open to all who are interested in its object, and who adopt its principles of revision and contribute to its funds." And, indeed, if the object had been merely to make a "Baptist Bible"—by substituting the word *immerse* for the word *baptize* this object could have been accomplished at a far less expense than a quarter of a century of time and many hundred thousand dollars of money.

But now, on what ground does our respected contemporary set aside all this magnificent labor as sectarian in purpose, and so fraudulent in pretense? We can conceive of no other than that the word *baptizein* has been rendered by the word *immerse*, instead of being left, as in the Common Version, in its indefinite English form (*baptize*), which would avoid all collision among those who hold differing views on the mode of baptism. But what has a translator of the Scriptures to do with differing views of the sects upon doctrine or ordinance? One of the fundamental principles of revision adopted by this Society was that "the exact meaning of the sacred writer shall be expressed, and with as little variation from the words of the Common Version as is consistent with fidelity to the original." Is there any "larger basis" than this, on which our contemporary would have the Bible revised?

But, it may be objected, the rendering "immerse" for *baptizein* does not "give the exact meaning of the sacred writer." Very well; that is a question of correctness, not of catholicity, nor of sound principles of revision. It is a question of scholarship, and we

refer the objector to Dr. Conant's wonderfully complete and exhaustive discussion of the subject, appended to the Society's Version of the Gospel of Matthew. The candid reader will there see that this rendering has the sanction of the great majority of scholars, of all communions, and of no communion; and he will remember that the liberty taken in changing the outward form of this ordinance by the various churches is rarely, if ever, based upon etymological considerations.

But, the objector might continue, if this version is not "made in the interest of denominational ideas," why was not the word *baptizein* transferred, in its English form, to the text, and so adapted to the use of churches of differing views as to the ordinance it defines? Because, says the translator, the Greek *baptizein* is a common, secular word, expressing a distinctly-marked corporal act; while the English *baptize* has come to be an ecclesiastical term, with a certain metaphysical, and sometimes mystical, force, which is foreign to the sense in which the Savior originally used it. Hence, it does not "give the exact meaning of the sacred writer," and must be replaced with something that does.

It is not necessary to the purpose of this article to pronounce upon the soundness of this position. It may be open to objection. Let it be controverted, if need be. But surely the dignity and ability with which the argument is presented entitle it to respectful consideration; while the tone of consecrated scholarship which pervades the version itself (now amounting to many volumes) forbids that it should, upon this single issue, be set aside as narrow in its spirit or unworthy in its aims.

"MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU."

BY REV. JOSEPH LEHMANN, BERLIN, PRUSSIA.

That peace of the soul which Jesus has secured by His conflict,—peace with God,—is a sure and lasting peace. It is also a precious peace, and one honorably purchased. It is immovable as the faithfulness of God and His eternal throne.

The glory of the Gospel of Christ, that which distinguishes it above all religions of human invention, is that it makes the forgiveness of sin not a mere matter of conjecture or of hope, but an unconquerable and an unassailable fact, to which we can witness with the utmost certainty. He who thinks he can justify himself before God may be always disturbed and tormented by doubts. But to him who has a Saviour in heaven there is no more anxiety. He has reached the harbor of rest, the port of peace. He can say, with the apostle, "He has given Himself a ransom for us;" or, "Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," as he writes in the epistle to the Romans; or, as he says elsewhere in the same epistle, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

He stands as it were upon a Rock against which the waves of temptation dash in vain. He occupies an elevation from which he may challenge without fear the enemies of his salvation, knowing that they have no power to harm him. He can ask, "What shall we say, then? If God be for us who can be against us?" He can add with joy, "Who is he that shall condemn us? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, who is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God for us." He can rejoice and sing "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

O yes, not a half-peace, not a disturbed peace, but an eternal, unshaken peace, guaranteed in the most solemn manner against all terror from a troubled conscience, has been concluded, since Christ "gave Himself a ransom." Hence we may now sing with the poet, "How great Thy triumph, Prince of life! How firm Thy power! How wide Thy sway! Scattered by one almighty word, Thy foes, subdued, shall flee away."—Translated from the German.

THE LAST SUNDAY IN DEVONSHIRE-SQUARE CHAPEL.

But few Baptist Chapels in London have had a more eventful history than the one in Devonshire-Square. It having been built in the times of persecution, the object was not to seek a prominent position; but a place of seclusion. It was consequently approached by passing through a neighbourhood, but little likely to lead to a place of public worship.

Devonshire-Square Chapel is now numbered with the things of the past. We have an account in the *Freeman* of the last public services. They are said to have been of a mournfully interesting character:

"The fact of its being the last time that the church and congregation would assemble in their city home drew together many old friends, who by their presence, manifested the warm interest they take in the present trials and future welfare of a religious foundation dating its planting from the days of the first Charles and the Long Parliament. The pastor, the Rev. W. T. Henderson, selected for his text the words of Acts xxviii. 15, 'He thanked God and took courage,' and, in the course of a forcible and appropriate address, showed that the annals of the society down to the present time afforded abundant reason for thankfulness to God. When the fathers first gathered there the long Parliament was also meeting, and numbers of their ancestors in the faith at Devonshire-square, either as soldiers in the Parliamentary army, or as social and political reformers, had taken no mean share in preserving intact the liberties of England. Though sorely tried in the persecuting era of the Stuarts, the church had never swerved from the faith. What was more, although the testimony of its pastors to truth had ever been strong and clear, they had never favoured any of the unhealthy symptoms too often attaching themselves to so-called revivalism. Moreover while a scrutiny of their list of pastors might detect one or two names not remarkable for learning, yet the church from the first had been served by men of standing, and men whose sober lives and respectable gifts commanded the respect of their citizen constituents. They were able to point to the opulent and generous Kiffen, whose friendship the second Charles and his brother learned to prize. They had also been served by the industrious and faithful Adams, by the simple-hearted and eloquent Mark Key, by the scholarly and successful physician, Sayer Rubb, the devoted and unselfish Braithwaite, the quaint and eccentric Macgowan, the plodding, methodical Thomas, and the meek and amiable Price, all of whom, after making a good confession, passed as he believed, with honour into the heavenly temple. Mr. Henderson acknowledged the hand of Providence in leading them into a more congenial sphere of labour. We may mention, in addition to the above, that the new chapel at Stoke Newington-road is a handsome structure, now fast approaching completion, the opening having been fixed for the latter end of June, when the Revs. C.H. Spurgeon and Donald Fraser are appointed to preach the opening sermons."

WISHING.

BY REV. A. L. STONE, D. D.

We cannot, of course, dispense with wishing. There must be aspiration to call out energy. Desire leads to effort. But desire alone is most unprofitable. Even as it is written, "the soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat." To avail anything wishing must be wedded to purpose, and inspired to action.

When a young man says, "I wish I could get an education—and I will," something will come of it; "I wish I could excel in my calling, and I will," there will be fruit there. When Bayard Taylor, only a poor printer boy, said, "I wish I could travel through the kingdoms of Europe, and I will, if I go on foot," that meant something and effected something.

We have a great many good wishes in the religious life that are wholly unproductive, and that put us into a false habit of mind. You endeavor to persuade a friend to consider the matter of his personal salvation, and to take action. "Yes," he says, "I've often wished I were a Christian; I should like to be one; I certainly wish I were at peace with God and an heir in heaven." Now, he might wish in

that way till he should be as old as Methuselah, and nothing would come of it. Not till he says, "I will act, I will seek now to enter into covenant with Christ," will his wishing help him.

I am afraid, brethren, we content ourselves too much with empty wishes. "I wish I were a better man," "I wish I were more weaned from the world," "I wish I knew the secret of prevailing prayer," "I wish my impenitent friends were converted, and the church quickened and enlarged." This is all very good as far as it goes. These wishes are sincere for results of great value, for objects attainable, and very earnestly cherished; but if they go no farther, are empty and delusive. They must be joined to purpose, and stimulate action, if they are to bear fruit.—*The Pacific*.

THE MOSS-ROSE.

Krummacher illustrates simplicity by the following beautiful fable:

The angel who takes care of the flowers, and sprinkles upon them dew in the still night, stumbled on a spring day in the shade of a rose-bush. When he awoke, he said, "Most beautiful of my children, I thank thee for thy refreshing odor and cooling shade. Could you now ask any favor, how willingly would I grant it!"

"Adorn me then with a new charm," said the spirit of the rose-bush in a beseeching tone.

So the angel adorned the loveliest of flowers with simple moss. Sweetly it stood there, in its modest attire, the moss-rose, the most beautiful of its kind.

So the costliest ornaments are often the simplest. There is no gold, nor jewel, nor sparkling pearl equal to the "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price."

A CHARACTER SOMETIMES MET WITH.

A pleasant English writer has a lively paper on the advantages of being a "cantankerous fool," in which he goes to show that men or women of inferior moral parts, little self-control, and great selfishness, often acquire an absolute dominion over the circle in which they move, merely by the exercise of these traits. Every one being anxious to please and to pacify them, and keep the peace with them, there is a constant succession of anxious compliances and compromises going on around them; by all of which they are benefited in getting their own will and way. The one person who will not give up, and cannot be expected to be considerate or accommodating, comes at last to rule the whole circle. He is counted on like the fixed facts of nature; everybody else must turn out for him.—*Mrs. Stowe*.

UNIVERSALISM IN A NUTSHELL.

I have often seen Universalism reduced to an absurdity. But seldom, if ever, has it been better done than in the following, which I beg to recite for the benefit of any who may need it: "I am a Universalist," said G. K., boastingly, "and you orthodox are not fair in saying that our system is inconsistent with reason." This he addressed to one who held an opposite system. "But I will prove the irrationality of your system," said his friend. "You believe that Christ died to save all men?" "Yes, I do." "And you don't believe there is a hell?" "No, I do not." "You don't believe there is any punishment hereafter?" "No, I do not; men are punished for their sins in this life." "Well, now let us put your 'rational' system together if you can. It amounts to just this: that Christ the Saviour died to save all men from nothing at all! Not from hell, because according to you, there is none. Not from punishment in a future state of being, for he receives his whole punishment in

this life." Yours is the absurd spectacle of ropes and life preservers thrown at an immense expense to a man who is on dry land, and in no danger of being drowned. Let me tell you that your religion is stark infidelity. If you heartily believe the Bible you could not believe Universalism.—*Central Presbyterian*.

"EXCEEDING ABUNDANTLY."

The Rev. Dr. Merle D'Aubigne tells how the riches of divine grace reached his heart: "We were studying the Epistle to the Ephesians, and had got to the end of the third chapter. When we read the last two verses, 'Now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory, etc.' this expression fell upon my soul as a revelation from God. 'He can do by his power,' I said to myself, 'above all we ask, above all even that we think, nay, exceeding abundantly above all!' A full trust in Christ for the work to be done within my poor heart now filled my soul. We all three knelt down; and although I had never fully confided my inward struggles to my friends, the prayer of Rieu was filled with such admirable faith as he would have uttered had he known all my wants. When I arose in the inn-room at Kiel, I felt as if my wings were renewed as the wings of eagles." From that time forward I comprehended that all my own efforts were of no avail; that Christ is able to do all by his 'power that worketh in us'; and the habitual attitude of my soul was to lie at the foot of the cross, crying to him, 'Here am I, bound hand and foot, unable to move, unable to do the least thing to get away from the enemy who oppresses me. Do all thyself. I know that thou wilt do it. Thou wilt even do exceeding abundantly above all that I ask.'

"I was not disappointed; all my doubts were removed, my anguish quelled, and the Lord extended to me 'peace as a river.' Then I could comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Then was I able to say, 'Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.'"

VOWS ON A SICK BED.

A lady, a professing Christian, was prostrated by sickness. Neither physician nor friends were apprehensive of danger; but the idea of death took possession of her mind, and she talked of the event to all about her. In her anxiety, she desired to read nothing but the word of God. As her disease progressed, and she apparently drew near the eternal world, she begged her friends to pray with and for her, that her sins might be forgiven; exclaimed frequently, "I have lived so far from Christ, so little as a Christian should live! but if God should raise me up, I will devote myself to his service." Her life was spared; but not the faintest recollection of her anxiety for the future, her remorse for past unfaithfulness, or the earnest prayers of friends was she ever able to recall afterwards. God may convert a soul even as it enters the dark valley of the shadow of death; but how little of hope or comfort can the friends of such a one derive from the thought! Give yourself to Christ now, while health and strength are granted to you, and seal the covenant by a life of earnest devotion to his service, and in the hour of death, when all earthly supports fail, his rod and his staff shall give you comfort and aid.—*Banner*.

THE LOWER CHRISTIAN LIFE.

The "higher Christian life" is a favorite theme with some people—its atmosphere one in which they like to soar in moments of prayer and hours