

merely a spiritual Overseer, and that a plain but pious and devout husbandman or mechanic, endowed with the requisite graces of the spirit, was as properly to be recognized in this character, when chosen to officiate by his brethren, as the lordly dignitary, surrounded by all the paraphernalia of the episcopate, and presiding in a conclave of clerical deacons and doctors.

So also in regard to the term "church." Although its literal import is that of "congregation," yet congregation is a term of less pliant potency—it will not swell its dimensions so readily to the measure of priestly ambition, and become a symbol of an ecumenical body of which any separate Christian society is a constituent part, and therefore this title must be steadfastly cashiered and ignored, and the antiquated falsity retain its place, in that sacred volume, which should be in every respect the veritable exponent of the mind of its Author, imparted to men for their education in all saving truth.

Remarks of a like tenor apply, with equal force, to the usage which obtains in regard to the original word for "ordain." This word, in its genuine import, signifies to appoint, without at all conveying the idea of that mystic and super-sacred rite by which a man is elevated from the ranks of the laity to that of the clergy. It does not imply, in the original usage, the creation of a new official character in its subject, but simply the recognition of one already existing. Its peculiar use in ecclesiastical matters is the result of that policy, which has so long prevailed in the world, of clothing with a peculiar sanctity whatever tends to give one class of men a spiritual pre-eminence over others.

We do not here adduce instances of this technical usage of *Kathisemi*, but refer to the "Englishman's Concordance" of the Greek Testament, which will abundantly confirm the tenor of our remarks.

#### OBJECTIONS TO A REVISION OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES CONSIDERED.

The friends of a new version of the inspired volume come before the Religious Public under a full consciousness of the difficulties and objections which such an enterprise must necessarily encounter. They are perfectly aware of the prejudices with which it will come in conflict. So strong and deep are the ideas of sanctity connected with the revealed volume with which we have all become so familiar, that the suggestion of any change in its consecrated diction strikes us at the first view, like the "lifting up of axes against the carved work of the sanctuary." It seems as if the very inmost courts of the temple, the altar, and the ark of our religion, were about to undergo profanation.

Such is the prejudice, and one great difficulty of meeting it, that we are forced in the abstract to respect it. Persistence in old ways—abiding by ancient landmarks—adhering firmly to what has long been tried and tested—holding fast to venerable usages, and institutes, except where the most imperative reasons may be urged for departing from them, is always intrinsically entitled to respect.

We who urge this departure, are prepared to speak understandingly on this subject, for we have been over the whole ground, and have only to recur to our own experience to feel the force of the objections which rise spontaneously to withstand our plea.

We can understand the feelings of revolt with which many regard the proposition to give to the churches an amended version of the Holy Scriptures—the sacred oracles of our faith—the charter of our immortal hopes. They know not how to entertain the project for a moment—and can scarcely think charitably of those who propose it. To their minds all that is pure in reverence—all that is sincere in piety—all that is hallowed in memory—all that is precious in association—all that is indelible in experience, seem to unite in one swelling note of remonstrance against the least approach towards what they deem the desecration of a document, so sacred in their eyes as the good old book whose every phrase is engraven on the tablet of their hearts, and whose lessons would seem to have lost so much of their value, had they been clothed

in any other than the precise forms of speech to which their eyes and ears had been familiar from childhood.

Far then be it from us to hold a disparaging view of the prejudices and preconceptions which at the first announcement array themselves against the proposed measure. Were we to do this, we should be passing sentence on the honest convictions of our minds when the matter pressed itself on our attention.

But in our case, the force of evidence overcame the power of prejudice; upon further investigation we yielded to the weight of the arguments adduced, and we now look upon them as arguments to which we think we ought to have yielded, and to which any candid Christian mind will also yield, provided he give them the due consideration.

We refer to our experience in this matter simply for the purpose of intimating that we have ourselves felt the force of all the objections that are commonly urged against the enterprise, and yet counter reasons have availed to outweigh them in our minds and it is natural to presume that the reasons which have weighed with us would weigh more or less with others, could they be persuaded to entertain them.

But we still profess ourselves ready to bestow candid reflection upon the various objections urged by our brethren of whatever nature they may be, and even to anticipate objections that have never actually been urged. A good and truthful cause can have no inducement to blink any form of objection that may be arrayed against it.

The prejudice in favor of the established translation of the Bible rests in a great measure on a vague impression which the opponents of a new and corrected version have studiously inculcated, that the circumstances under which it was executed were so pre-eminently favorable to the undertaking that ages might elapse before such another juncture in providence would occur. It is confidently believed by many that such another corps of learned men—men so amply endowed by nature and culture for the work—could not now be convened from the ranks of English or American scholars, whatever the prospects of fame or reward that might be held out to them. But upon what solid basis does this opinion rest? We have no disposition to undervalue the linguistic attainments and general abilities of King James' Translators. We may safely give them credit for being, if you please, the most learned men in his kingdom, or of the times in which they lived; what then? They could not know what was not knowable in their day. The standard of any given age will always govern the measure of attainments in particular cases, and a man might as well attempt to leap over his own shadow in the light of the moon, as very materially transcend the degree prescribed by the genius of the age in which he lives. Conceding that the fifty-four (or forty-seven) translators appointed by King James to this work were, in every respect, as well qualified for it as any of their contemporaries, yet it is beyond all question that the science of criticism and the whole department of sacred philology, has made rapid advances since that epoch, and the material for a faithful translation been augmented an hundredfold.

Manuscripts then inaccessible have been diligently collated, and the true text of the original more definitely settled.

Hebrew and Greek Lexicography has reached a point of precision and accuracy then unknown, and sacred Antiquities, Geography and Natural History made to reflect concentrated light upon a multitude of topics which must have inevitably baffled all research in the day of the royally commissioned translators.

All this must be accorded to the superior lot of the present advanced age of the world, and by asserting that for ourselves we do not disparage those who have lived before us.

The incompetency of the men of the 16th or 17th century to accomplish as good a translation as could now be produced, is no more to be set down to their discredit than their ignorance of the steam car, or the electrical telegraph.

Why then should we not avail ourselves

of the superior advantages which a kind providence has put into our hands? The present version itself was in part undertaken, because prior ones were deemed defective.

The progressive development of the age had shown that they were not adequate to the exigencies of the church. Another version was felt to be called for, and it was made. For a similar reason a like demand is now being made. The same arguments which would avail to stave off the accomplishment of the work in our day would, if heeded, have prevented the execution of it in the age which gave it birth.

The air of venerable antiquity which marks our present version we fully appreciate, but is this a reason for retaining it with all its faults? It is certainly odd reasoning for a Protestant. If such a plea were urged by a Romanist in favor of the Vulgate, would it not be instantly replied, that no age nor prescription can authorize error; and that it is obstinacy to defend in any version, however ancient or venerable, what cannot be rationally defended. In fact the lapse of fourteen centuries has given no more real value to the Vulgate than it had when it first appeared; nor is our established version of a particle more worth now than it was 241 years ago. If time could enhance the value of a version, Tindal's would be preferable to James' and good old Wicliff's might claim precedence over either. The truth is that translation is best which best represents the true sense of the inspired original, and if the progress of things from age to age, enables its possessors to put it before the world in a more truthful dress in this century than it were the last, they are bound to do it.

Every error remaining in the translation of the Bible is human and not divine, and so far as they stand uncorrected, the book is the book of man and not the book of God. We can therefore be faithful to the precious deposit committed to us only so far as we see that it is made to utter the voice of truth and not of falsity.

Indeed, there is little hazard in saying that the mass of Christian people have a latent conviction of the expediency of a new translation or of a thorough revival of the old one. For not only are they reminded of the imperfections of the present by the corrections often made in the pulpit, but Family Expositors and Popular Commentaries are spread abroad all over the land, in which thousands of mistranslations are pointed out and improved renderings suggested;—all which tends to beget an undercurrent of distrust in the present version, and to predispose the mind to entertain the idea of a thorough going reform in this respect.

#### THE PEACE OF THE CHURCHES DISTURBED.

You are well aware that the objection is sometimes urged, that the peace and unity of the Churches is very much broken up by the broaching of the Bible version question among them—that it comes in as a disturbing element, and awakens a party spirit, giving rise to various internal commotions, when before everything was concord and tranquillity.

This again we can understand, and can cordially subscribe to the value of the peerless jewel of peace in itself considered and when resting upon proper grounds. But peace has its conditions without which however much we may "cry peace," there is no more true peace to the Church than there was of true order reigning in Warsaw when Russian prowess had extinguished Polish patriotism, and the silence of desolation and death usurped the place of civic quiet. A peace which consists with the ignoring of great principles or great interests had better be broken than preserved. And in such cases there may be more of true harmony in agitation than in conserving the dead quiescence in which error finds immunity. The first preachers of the Lord's Gospel were great disturbers of the prevailing peace of the world and were charged in fact, with turning it upside down, and with being "exceeding troublers of cities," as they sojourned from one region to another on their mission of mercy. All useful reform in fact, is attended with more or less of a quieting effect, and it is impossible to pronounce a just judgment upon the conduct, we call peace-disturbing, unless we first determine the truth or falsity of the principles at stake. It may be that the objects

aimed at by the alleged stirrers up of discord are of such superlative importance that they are well attained even at the expense of some degree of disturbance, if there is no possibility of attaining them without.

For ourselves, we consider the object before us to be one of these. The end aimed at is no less than to secure a sound and unexceptionable version of the volume of Divine Truth—that priceless boon accorded by the riches of Heaven to the wants of humanity, and in which all real Christians have a vital interest, whether aware of it or not. In urging upon them the accomplishment of this undertaking, it is not indeed possible but that some conflict of views may be the result. We do not aim to produce this collision, or to disturb the unity of brethren, but if it occurs, as an incidental and collateral result, we can only console ourselves by the assurance that those disturbances which are the consequence of the pleadings of the genuine truth of God, will do no permanent harm to the cause of righteousness, nor are they justly imputable to those who urge, but to those who withstand, the cause under consideration.

I have said that I could appreciate the feeling which prompts the objection we have been considering. But the feeling is one thing; the mode of its expression another. To throw impediments in the way of calm discussion, and close our ears and pulpits against those who, under the responsibilities of their Christian profession, are pleading for the removal of the errors, perversions and obscurities, with which human hands have marred the record God has given us concerning his Son—is not legitimate pursuit of the things that make for peace, and is unworthy of the age and country in which we live. When, through the intervention of committees, or otherwise, I have been denied the privilege of pleading this cause before one or two Associations of the churches in the United States, I have been grieved but not discouraged. No good cause was ever seriously retarded, much less permanently overthrown, in this way. Such opposition to the one to which your attention has been called, is an unwilling tribute to its power, and springs from that instinctive apprehension with which Error dreads the result of an encounter with Truth. The people of the Provinces have manifested no such hostility—have afforded the freest scope for discussion—have weighed with candor the arguments to which they listened with calmness—have never lost sight of a principle because of diversity of views respecting the time or mode of its application—and, have in hundreds of instances, responded to the claims of the Bible Union, at their fire-sides and in their churches, in a manner which will bring down a blessing upon themselves and their posterity.

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and, searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so."

Beloved brethren, to you, and through you to the churches of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, I make a last appeal! Shall we not adjoin ourselves to this benign enterprise? Shall we not combine our efforts to clear away the mist of human error that has long dimmed the brightness of the Lord's revelation of himself through the pages of his lively oracles? Shall we not exert ourselves to remove every thing of man's mistaken substitution from the pure gold of the Lord's munificent donation? In worldly matters, we know how grievous is the wrong when a mass of worthless spelter is palmed upon the unsuspecting, in lieu of the genuine ore extracted from the Californian or Australian placers. How much more intense is the injury done when human falsities are surreptitiously introduced into the Scriptures under the guise of divine verities, and thence enshrine themselves in the faith of the Church? Can there be then, a nobler work performed than uniting for the purification of the Word from all the adulterations which have befallen it? Shall we hesitate to contribute our quota of the healing salt of a careful revision to be cast into this embittered fountain? If we do not bring from our own stores of critical knowledge this contribution, we can at least afford that which will enable others to do it; and in the Lord's estimate, the resulting good will redound to our credit.

And I say, that even if the main enterprise should fail—if the actual accomplishment of a New Version should not be realized—yet the results that will have been attained will be such as to warrant the outlay of every dollar expended in the cause. For reflect for a moment upon the impulse which has been given to the cause of Biblical learning, in its bearing upon this great question! Think of the augmented amount of Christian scholarship which has been awakened to the investigation of the Sacred text? Think of the patient and accurate analysis which has been applied in tracing the true import of terms. Think of the sagacity called into requisition in unravelling the obscurities of Scripture phraseology! Think of the quickened research in the various related branches of oriental philology, travels, and antiquities! Think of the close inspection bestowed upon the forms of speech in our own language, and of their adaptation to express the various minute and delicate shades of thought which full justice to the original requires!

Who can doubt that the agitation of the subject in our churches thus far has had the effect now adverted to? Who can doubt that we have far more able and accomplished Biblical scholars now in the Baptist denomination than we should have had, if the discussion had never arisen? Nor is the effect confined by any means to our denominational ranks. It pervades more or less the mass of Christian sects, as they all take a degree of interest, either *pro* or *con*, in the translation project, and are consequently stimulated to new zeal in exploring the Biblical field. How then can the issue fail to be auspicious to the cause of Scriptural knowledge and ultimately of practical righteousness? How can it be but that concentrated light should be poured first upon, and then from the pages of this heaven-descended book? How can it be but that an immense gain of illustrative material shall be secured to revelation by the progress of the cause which we advocate, for which we live, and for which we would willingly die?

Yours in the truth, as it is in Jesus,

ARCHIBALD MACLAY.

#### To the Friends of Seamen.

REV. E. N. HARRIS, of St. John, N. B., is now in this City with the view of presenting to the consideration of the benevolent, the condition of the Seamen at that Port, and the importance of erecting a "Home" for them. Several attempts have been made to accomplish so desirable an object and have proved failures. The reason we do not know, nor is it necessary to inquire. It is enough for us that there is no port on the coast of North America where the Seamen constitute so large a part of the population as at St. John, or where a proper effort for their elevation is likely to be attended with more important results.

There are those now living, who heard the echo of the first axe ring through the uninhabited cedar thicket, which covered the hill where the flourishing city of St. John now stands. We recently visited it, and were astonished at the evidences of its growth and prosperity. It has now a population of 28,000 of which 16,000 are seamen.

Sometimes as many as one hundred square rigged vessels float in its fine harbor. Every year an increasing number of persons, attracted by business or pleasure, visit this interesting portion of the British North American possessions. And the beautiful scenery of the River St. John would well repay a journey much more distant and difficult. With the construction of the projected rail-road through Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, connecting with the main lines of New England, a new impulse will be given to the inter-communication between these Provinces and the United States. But the relations which we chiefly desire to subsist between them, and to see increased with every passing year, are the nobler ones which are formed from reciprocity in good will and benevolence. Mr. Harris may be deemed an envoy for the promotion of this object, while he makes his appeal in behalf of a class of men, too much neglected. He is worthy of all confidence and whatever is given for the cause he advocates, will be a benefaction well bestowed and faithfully and efficiently applied.—*New-York Chronicle*.

CANADIAN GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY.—Quebec, Wednesday, Nov. 3. The grand railway was finally carried, yesterday, in opposition of the Montreal Company has been withdrawn.