

Correspondence.

BAPTIST BIBLE.

BY H. W. WARNER.

(Continued.)

I have spoken of changes of collocation—another evidence that, in getting up a new version, it has been thought best to get as far as possible from the old time-honored forms of sacred diction, so dear to most readers, and of which the standard text is the repository.

In John v. 44, the Saviour says to the Jews, "How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" The immersionists prefer to say, "How can ye believe, receiving honor one of another, and the honor that is from God alone ye seek not?" No change of sense, and no improvement in phrase; what possible object?—Greek conformity? Why not conform exactly then? As thus: "the honor that is from the alone God not seek ye?" which is word for word from the original, and shows the folly of conforming at all.

In viii. 39, the Jews said to the Redeemer, "Abraham is our father." Not so the pundits of the reform version. They invert the order. "Our father is Abraham." Nearer the original to be sure. Why not go nearer still? "The father of us Abraham is," would be the pink of accuracy.

Again, "I came forth from God," is old-version scripture. "From God I came forth," is new-version improvement. Do you see it, reader?

Again, "him hath God the Father sealed," is old version. "Him the Father, God, hath sealed," is new. Another difference for the worse.

It seems as if change was in many cases the only thing sought. Thus, in vi. 52, "The Jews therefore strove among themselves," is capriciously replaced with "The Jews therefore contended with one another." So, in verse 55, for "my flesh is meat indeed," we have the substitute, "my flesh is food indeed." Again, for "brethren" they give us "brothers." And so on in a long detail.

The word *οχλος* signifies strictly mob; less strictly multitude; with some freedom, people. The new version takes in general to the second meaning, especially when the old adopts the third, which it often very properly does.

The word *οδους* signifies indifferently no man, no one. The standard text renders it generally in the first of these forms; the new version as generally in the last.

The word *σημειον* stands commonly for sign; but when the sign is miraculous, it stands also for miracle. Accordingly the latter term is often used in the gospels as a due translation of it; while to the new-version critics the most stupendous miracle is but a "sign" and has the name of one.

So, *σπινα* and *σπιρις* have respectively, for them, one meaning only, which is judge, judgment. In our version those terms are frequently taken in the sense of condemn and condemnation, and with great classical propriety. Believers, it is said, "are not condemned." And again, "this is the condemnation, that men have loved darkness," &c. All which the champions of immersion have reformed. Even the "loving darkness rather than light," is to them "judgment" only.

When Jesus was about to feed the multitude (vi. 10), he said to his disciples, "Make the men sit down." The reformers have it, "make the men lie down." A change of which the learned reader will divine the reason, but not, I think, the justification. Our practice is to sit down at meals. The ancients reclined, using no chairs, but resting on one elbow—a very different thing from lying down, which in popular import is complete prostration. In the case of the loaves and fishes, the people were simply to take a posture for eating, and eating without tables or dishes. They were to receive their respective portions in their hands from the distributing agents; which they could well do sitting, but not at full length on the ground. It is not probable, therefore, that they lay reclined; much less, that they lay completely prostrate, or were bidden to do so. The original word (*κλισειν*) is vague, and only signifies to go down. So that the new translation of it is very clearly, as I think, not only erroneous, but ludicrously so.

Again, (vi. 57,) he who is the "bread of life," says of himself in that character, "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me shall live by me." A direct life-giving efficiency, on either hand, plainly asserted. Yet see how it vanishes under the hands of these gentlemen. "As the living Father sent me," (first improvement,) "and I live because of the Father," (second,) "so he that eateth me shall live because of me," (third.) The causal efficiency is thus exchanged for a merely logical relation of facts! And this by a misrendering of the preposition *δεν*. That the force our version gives to that preposition is legitimate, may be shown by many examples. I content myself with one, which is in Rev. xii. 11. It is there said concerning the saints' victory over the dragon, that they overcame him "by the blood (*δεν το αιμα*) of the Lamb, and by the word (*δεν τον λογον*) of their testimony," and this is language of the same apostle.

The words of Christ to Peter, "he that is washed needeth not save to wash

his feet," &c., carry an implication which the immersion champions naturally wish to avoid. It is as if he had said, that for symbolical cleansing a few drops are as good as a plunge. Whether to keep clear of this or not, they render the passage thus: "he that has bathed has no need," &c.; making the Saviour's statement refer apparently to two separate washings; one perfectly past, some antecedent bath-taking, the other present. Which seems to me something worse than a mistake.

Again, in xiv. 5, for "how can we know the way?" they choose to say, "how do we know the way?" the Greek verb *διδωμεθα* staring them in the face.

In xvi. 23, they blunder still worse, perverting the precious promise, "whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you," into "whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, he will give it you in my name." A difference of the greatest moment.

In xx. 16, we read of Mary Magdalen, that she "turned and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master." Instead of which these gentlemen give us the following: "She turning says to him in Hebrew, Rabboni; which is to say, Teacher." The change from "master" to "teacher" is simply gratuitous. The two words are both common in our language for any habitual instructor. But the phrase, "in Hebrew," is an interpolation that strikes me as a little audacious, as well as gratuitous. Admitting its truth, what then? It is not inspired truth, and therefore should not be were it is.

But I desist. It were a waste of time and patience to go farther. And yet the innovations that have been noticed are but a sprinkling from the waters of a deluge. It would take a month to do justice to all the novelties of this "Soldiers' edition" of John's Gospel. I have felt a good deal of pain, some indignation, not a little disgust, in animadverting on a few of them. It is small business. Trifles, however, are important when they touch the Book of Life. A man who loves the Bible with a true affection, loves also its idioms, its phrases, its words, its very particles. Amendments are doubtless possible in here and there a place of our translation; but they should be made, if made at all, with infinite caution. It is the best translation that was ever achieved, and we shall never see a better. No work of the kind was ever undertaken in circumstances so favorable to a successful execution. The time when it was done—with the human mind all but new-created by the reformation; the men that did it—in learning, numbers, piety, beyond comparison with any similar association that had ever been formed for a like purpose; the catholicity of composition by which these men were brought together out of various denominational parties, though undoubtedly with a strong predominance of Episcopalians; the very considerate manner of proceeding, calculated eminently to avoid errors and secure a wise result; in fine, the interest and responsibility imparted to the enterprise by the immediate presence and activity of a throne in superintending its progress, so as to render it a spectacle for the whole world to gaze at and admire; these were circumstances of advantage which no subsequent effort of the sort could be expected to combine. And when I add, that the version thus produced has been accepted and used for three centuries by all the various sectaries of Protestant Christendom as a common standard of religious truth, I say enough to put competitive versions, whenever and wherever they appear, to the bar of self-justification before a word of indictment is lifted against them.

Unhappily the version I have had occasion to find fault with is not a guarded one. And let me say to my brethren of the immersionist school, whom I regard with sincere kindness as true followers of that Saviour whom I try myself to follow, that they have launched their boat in a dangerous sea. It is a fearful thing to tamper with the language of inspiration. It is a fearful thing to break in rudely upon associations formed in the minds of men by long and cordial intercourse with that language. Security of religious principle may be thus shaken unawares. We are creatures of habit; and habits of mind are especially important. Rightly formed, they are monuments of principle. Rightly formed in matters of religious truth and duty, they are monuments of faith, and of Christian virtue. We cannot afford to have them preyed upon by merciless invaders.

The new Baptist Bible (judged from what I have seen) is a daring enterprise. No sect of Christians, and especially no partisan section of a sect, should embark in such an enterprise. The Book of God belongs to the Protestant world; and the remodeling its English text is not a thing to be attempted in a corner. Suppose all the various branches of the Church should follow this sectarian example; what a chaos it would renew upon earth. Society would go to pieces, as it did under the Babel curse. The example is a bad one.

As far as I have seen, the performance is also bad. The parties actively concerned in it have indulged themselves, to say the very least, in a wanton license of alteration and novelty. They have thrown aside the verse-arrangement which, venerable in years as it was, I think they might better have retained. It is a sort of costume, in which we have been so long accustomed to see sacred truth arrayed, that we feel its

absence unpleasantly. They have also discarded the dear old biblical forms of *hath, doth, saith, believeth*, and the like, preferring (unwisely, as I think,) the hissing substitutes, *has, does, says, believes*, and their congeners. Almost the only feature of the standard text that they have treated with respect is its deplorable confusion of verb-tenses; which appears to be "confusion worse confounded" in their version. "Joseph of Arimathea" they do not seem to know, but confess to a knowledge of one "Joseph from Arimathea," whose whereabouts we are left to guess at. The tender assurance, "it is expedient for you that I go away," receives no favor at their hands; being jostled aside by the more business-like announcement, "it is expedient for you that I depart."

In short, the Bible, as they have it, is a new-fangled book. Instead of limiting their views to reforming its baptismal diction, they have reformed almost everything after their fashion; like certain repairers of old pictures, who, finding it hard to match fresh paints with that of centuries past, extend their daubings right and left, till the genuine work of the master is all modernized. It is a pity to have to say, in conclusion, that their main design, of setting the scriptures to rights in the matter of the water sacrament, has not been well accomplished. The reader shall judge.

That sacrament is a very solemn transaction between the baptized person and his Maker; involving substantially an oath of religious fealty and service on his part. And the words, baptize, baptism, are replete with the whole spiritual import of the ordinance. Ages of Christian usage have imbued them with it to the apprehension of every Protestant community, inasmuch that even profane men have had the decency to cease using them in regard to worldly affairs. In our Saviour's time they were employed to express all manner of ablutions, such as the washing of pots, tables, human hands, &c. Since then, they have undergone a complete appropriation to religion, and are thoroughly sequestered now from secular use.

Yet for these incomparable words, it is the leading aim and drift of the new-version enterprise to substitute two common hacks of the street, *immerse, immersion*.

Noah Webster's definition of *immerse* is, "to put into a fluid." I suppose he means a fluid of the class liquid. To immerse in air, might be intelligible in the language of fishes, but scarcely in ours. *Putting into water*, then, is the idea. And this is all the meaning! Of course no sacred thought is suggested, no sacred feeling produced without a context. The smith puts his heated iron into water to cool it; the laundress puts her soiled linen into water for a cleansing purpose; the fisherman puts his net into water as a means of catching shad. A hundred other ends are sought in the same manner. The same ritual act secures them all. And this is what we popularly understand by immersion.

It matters not that "baptism" and "baptize" were once as bare of religious meaning as the vocables now put forward to supplant them. They are not the less precious for having got their value from the maturing hand of time. The ripest orange was once a tasteless bud. If everybody were content with the proposed substitutes, the hand of time might ultimately clothe them also with a garment of Christian associations. The misfortune is, they have it not at present. Nor is their prospect of improvement at all flattering; for the general public do not, and never will regard them as regularly significant of a Christian ceremonial; and it is the general public that controls the history of language. Time, therefore, can do nothing for the pet words of a sect. The meaning (save to Baptist ears) will always be, just *putting into water*.

So that the grand achievement of the new-version critics is a mere misnomer—the introduction of a name that does not answer its purpose, does not at all signify the thing intended. Baptism is truly a sacramental term; immersion is not. Baptism imports a sacred ordinance, and is full of spiritual meaning; immersion does not even hint at such an ordinance, but is purely secular in its general bearing. Baptism carries an impression of heavenly things—soul-washing, setting apart to Christ's service, opening the doors of his visible kingdom to believers, a life from the dead begun upon earth. Immersion starts no such ideas, casts not a ray in that direction, but exhausts its whole significance in the bald fact of—*putting into water!*

IMPORTANT MEDICAL PRESCRIPTION.

A hopeful, genial, unselfish Christian lady, ever the light of home in her own day, circle, and yet more or less an invalid, was advised to ask counsel of an eminent physician. After giving the case of the stranger careful attention, he sought very kindly to drive from her mind the harassing thoughts that had been awakened.

"Now, my good lady," said he, "shall I advise you just what to do? Well, take half a dozen homeless children and train them for the better world; go among the destitute and suffering, and relieve them, or seek any place where you can do or get most good; throw medicines to the winds, use morning bath, if you choose, take plenty of exercise in the open air, and you may maintain a comfortable state of health for many years."—*Guardian*.

LETTER FROM CHINA.

FUR-CHAU, Feb. 24, 1866. NEWSPAPERS.

Journalism in China—I mean English, not native—is still in its infancy. It seems deficient in capital, enterprise, and substantial matter for its columns. The great wings of its progress are still unfeathered. Steamboats are few. There are no railroads nor telegraphs. There is no "Associated Press" to speak authoritatively, and give to news a genuine imprimatur. And there is no numerous, busy, inventive corps of correspondents to feast the public with things real and fictitious, inclusive of canards commercial and political, and variegated with finely-spun theories on the social problems of the day.

As to the character of these journals, truth demands the statement that their pages are sometimes disfigured and disgraced with semi-infidel ideas in morals and religion, and ignorant insinuations, or positive assertions about "the virtual failure of Christianity" to elevate and bless the Chinese. Still newspapers, the world over, "hold the laboring oar," and are bound by self-interest, if no higher motive, to reflect as fully as possible public opinion. Our China journals are no exception to this rule, and we fancy—after observations extending through the period of fifteen years or so—that we perceive in them a decided improvement. They sometimes quote missionaries as authority, and publish missionary tours in extenso, and with merited commendation.

THE FOREIGN RESIDENT

Brings with him his love for home sports. Hence one of the marked features of our newspapers after Christmas week is the account of the holidays. The organization of a new club, a Masonic ball, rifle competitions and picnics are considered good capital, and duly noticed. Throughout the year, foreign residents, too, keep their practice thorough in the science of chess, billiards, the five's court, amateur theatricals, and other amusements of a more or less questionable morality. With many, these things seem to be a necessity. They hate religion and its joys. Their vitiated tastes demand sinful aliment, and life to them is intolerable without wines, brandies, theatres, races, and means to gratify their unbridled lusts. The state of morals is low here, and in nine cases out of ten, young men who come here without strong religious principle to act as a balance-wheel of character, plunge into the deep pit of sin and ruin. Western civilization we hope will, in the end, prove a blessing rather than a curse to the Chinese. The good will predominate, and the evil gradually slough off. But in the meantime, the herculean task of Christianizing the people is magnified by these dire accessions of the vices and bad example of the "representatives" of civilization and orthodoxy.

STATE OF THE EMPIRE.

Disturbances on the surface of this vast stagnant pool are becoming more frequent and marked. It is difficult to discover the precise policy of the Chinese Government. Sometimes it seems resolved to revive its old obstructive plans as much as it can and dares to do. Prince Kung, the advocate of progress, was temporarily deposed through some Court intrigues. But his restoration gives promise of a more liberal policy. The Government has done some good things unsolicited, as opening new ports in Formosa, improving rivers and harbors, establishing buoys and light-ships on the coast, &c. The treaty provisions for a free commercial intercourse with other nations are partly carried out. And the English, at least, build large expectations of progress on the advent of the new minister at Peking, Sir Rutherford Alcock—you have the former one, Mr. Bruce, at Washington. Sir R. A.'s long apprenticeship in consular duties, with his known energy and ability, fit him for the position, and it is hoped that he will effectually urge Prince Kung and the Boards to keep step with Western enterprises and demands. Japan, I may remark in passing, presents a striking contrast to China in the item of progress. Her people seem resolved to imitate at once Western arts. They send men West, not to discover and introduce new Buddhas, but to study machinery and bring back material improvements. They seem less suspicious, and far more apt to learn than their Celestial neighbors.

ANARCHY.

The embers of the great Taiping rebellion still smoulder, and often burst into flames. Indeed the spirit of rebellion seems ubiquitous. Open to Colton's map of China, and observe the junction of the provinces of Shantung, Chili, Shansi, Honan, and Kiangsu. The whole region is infested with the bands of the Nienfei. So also parts of Hupeh, Kiangsi, Kivangtung, Kivangsi, and Szechuen are ravaged by troops of marauders. Our latest reports are that insurrectionists threaten Swatow and Hankow, at both of which places are concentrated important commercial and missionary interests. The coasts of the empire also are infested with piratical junks, which often make successful attacks on foreign merchant vessels, when unarmed and becalmed. Our papers occupy many of their columns with accounts of these piracies. And about all that is done to suppress them, I apprehend, is done by English gunboats. As for the rebels and banditti, they are usually scattered by the imperial forces, but soon spring up in other

places, thick as dragon's teeth. A Chinese gentleman, educated in the United States, remarked, with a grave and troubled look, the other day, "This dynasty is dying an imperceptible death." He said this in English, and he said it as a patriot, so far, at least, as one can be a patriot under such a despotism. Blessed be the Lord for our own beloved country with its glorious crown of free institutions.

KIDNAPPING COOLIES.

This is done at Macao under cover of the legitimate business of engaging Chinese laborers for a term of years. The Portuguese Government thus far have been lukewarm in the matter, or impotent to suppress it. The press informs us that it is "dangerous for Chinamen to walk the streets of Macao after dark," and that "the large number of ships engaged in the Coolie trade, and the enormous amount of money offered for Coolies, turn every honest Chinaman's heart," so that "we daily hear of kidnapping and other outrages committed on the unprotected and unwary." Coolies in the barracoons are fed pretty well to "soften them into compliance and prepare them to bring a high price in market," not to "remove the stigma of slavery." So you perceive the evil genius of slavery has forsaken America, and is brooding malignly over these Eastern climes.

RAILROADS AND TELEGRAPHS.

These important improvements for China and its adjacent regions begin to be more seriously considered. Various localities for experimental lines of railways are talked of; as, the circuit of the Island of Hong Kong, the road from Fatsan to Canton, and that from Tientsin to Peking.

For telegraphic lines, Rangoon is assumed as the present terminus of Eastern Asia, whence different routes are proposed to reach China. One is a marine line to Singapore—with branches to Java and Australia—thence to Saigon (French settlement) and Hong Kong by deep sea cable. Objected that the French occupying Saigon may impose unpleasant restrictions. Another route is from Rangoon along the Irrawady through the Shan and Loos region into Yunnan province. Objected that the builders would encounter very serious obstacles in dense jungles and rugged mountains, in the lawlessness of mountain tribes, and in the perversity or fickleness of Oriental Governments. A third route proposed is from British India through Nepal, Tibet, Szechuen, to reach eventually the great central emporium of Hankow on the Yangtze. We Americans can comfort ourselves with the solid fact that a line is in actual progress from San Francisco via Russian Possessions and Bering's Straits which will be within hailing distance of Peking, as telegraphists will look at it. So the world moves even in and about stereotyped China.

A CANDID SUGGESTION.

I make it in view of the fact that most of my letter has assumed a sombre hue. It is this:—let all who scan these lines think, plan, pray, and act more for this great people, and let them begin now, and persevere till they see results. People talk much about the coming millennium, and say it must be just at hand. But it seems a great way off here in the East. Yours, in the blessed service of Christ. C. C. B.

A HOME MISSIONARY'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

Copy of a Letter received in Acknowledgment of One of the Boxes sent by the Ladies' Missionary Society of the First Presbyterian Church.

MARCH 23, 1866.

MY DEAR FRIEND:—The result of your labors and generous donations came to hand on the 20th. We were surprised at the early arrival of the box, but nothing in comparison to our surprise at its contents. It came just about tea time; some of the members of my family partook as usual, but others lost all relish on account of this new visitor. Suffice it to say, that our repast was soon over; then with a sharp iron and a stick of wood, I commenced to open the box; and, by the way, with such instruments, I found it no easy matter. But I finally succeeded, and the little eyes and hands that had been watching and waiting so long, now sparkled and were clapped with joy.

It fell to my lot to hand out the articles, one by one. The first I found, was the paper containing the list. I began to read, but a voice said, "Pa, read that after the box is unpacked," so, of course, I complied with the request, although it came from a junior. So I took out the comforts, sheets, and one thing after another, amid expressions of joy, till I came to the mysterious package directed to Mrs. L.—What can this be? My oldest son, who was now highly excited, with his new white hat on his head, says, Pa, it will take you some time to break all these seals and find out the contents; and my work was resumed. I soon came to the toy department, and as the toys and dolls were brought forth, I cannot describe the sensation it made among the little members of our family. I know if the donors had only been permitted to look on, but five minutes, it would have gratified them. Then we came to the grocer and confectionary department, the largest and best supply we have ever had. Soon we got to the boot and shoe store; how nice they were, just what we needed and a perfect fit. After the box was unpacked, we wondered that it could contain so many garments, books and papers. I then

opened the sealed package. I found five \$1, then five \$2, then five \$5 bills, then so many stamps, and a receipt for the AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN, and such a supply of fractional currency!

Dear friends, your kindness will never be forgotten. You have from each of our hearts, our most sincere thanks.

I will give you a little sketch of one of my journeys and labors with my upper church, called Centre Point. It is fifteen miles from my residence, and is the only Calvinistic organization within sixteen miles in any direction. The first Sabbath in March was the day for our communion, and the preparatory services consist in preaching on Friday evening and on Saturday afternoon and evening. On Wednesday and Thursday it became very warm, and the accumulated snow of winter began to turn to water rapidly; by Friday, the day I must go to meet my appointments, the creeks were at the highest, and one bad one I must cross.

I came to it on Friday afternoon; the current ran very rapidly, and while I stood wondering whether I had better venture or not, a lumber wagon approached, loaded with store goods, and three men. I told them, if they thought it best to cross, I would let them do so first. They thought they must go, so they started; as they got apparently one-fourth of the way across, the horses went down almost entirely out of sight, and the wagon after them, the men climbing on the top of the boxes and barrels to keep dry. But these soon commenced to float, and the horses took them safely over.

This sight did not make me any more anxious to venture, I assure you. While trying to decide, I thought of a good Methodist brother, who could not swim and who came very near losing his life there, and would have done so, if two passers-by had not come to his rescue. Then I thought of the man who, seven years before, swam the same creek, and when in the middle of the rivulet, his wagon box filled with water, and his empty kegs and barrels floated down the stream. He ventured across to get these filled with ardent spirits in a neighboring town, to take back and sell to his fellow-men. If he could do this, thought I, shall not I venture to fill my appointments, and obey my commission, given by my Lord and Master? So I gathered up my buffalo robe and valise and put them all on my buggy seat, perched myself at the top, and drove forward. I kept at the upper edge of the ford, hoping that the ice was not yet gone out; but knew, if it were, must deeper and more difficult would be my passage. I found it as I had hoped, the ice still strong; so having crossed it safely, I filled my appointments.

We had excellent meetings, baptized some of the children of the believing parents, received nine to the communion of the church, eight heads of families and five on examination. Sabbath was a day that will not soon be forgotten by this dear people or myself. The Lord was very near as we met around his table. The whole congregation remained during the communion service. There were but few, if any, dry eyes. I felt amply repaid for the sacrifices made to meet my engagements. The people are all poor, consequently we have to struggle on with no house of worship; and if the "Good Shepherd" did not come very near sometimes, both pastor and people would be discouraged.

I might write you, dear friends, page after page of our trials and sacrifices, of comforts and blessings that many of your home missionaries have endured. But we have confidence in our good Master, who says, "Whoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water, only in the name of a disciple, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." Yours,

MR. BEECHER ON FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

Those who have heard Henry Ward Beecher claimed by the Universalists as one whom they should hear his own words:—

If a man says to me, "Do you believe in future punishment?" I have to say, "I do." And if he says, "How do you reconcile it with the goodness and justice of God?" I say, "The Lord Jesus Christ himself was the very one that introduced and taught it." As to those word arguments by which this teaching of the Saviour is explained away, I have only to say that any latitude of construction which explains this away explains away every other teaching of his. If by any process of dissection and disjoining you can take out that doctrine of Christ, I do not know what you cannot take out by the same process. When I find myself revolting from this doctrine on account of the intense materialism of the Church from medieval representations, and see the calm frequent, unequivocal utterances of Christ, and think what he was, how he felt, and what he taught, the simple circumstance that it is a doctrine of which Christ is the author and teacher, is to me the most convincing of all things.

BACKBITING.—The longer I live, the more I feel the importance of adhering to the following rules, which I have laid down for myself in relation to such matters:—

- 1st. To hear as little as possible what is to the prejudice of others.
- 2d. To believe nothing of the kind unless I am absolutely forced to.
- 3d. Never to drink into the spirit of one who circulates an ill report.
- 4th. Always to moderate, as far as I can, the unkindness which is expressed toward others.
- 5th. Always to believe that if the other side were heard, very different accounts would be given of the matter.—*Rev. Charles Simeon*.