

# The American Presbyterian.

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### THE IMMERSIONIST VERSION.\*

It is a singular and intense instance of bigotry, when it leads men to deny their own historic denominational title, as not sufficiently distinctive. And it is a strange piece of inconsistency and self-condemnation, for men to retain a term in their denominational name, which they have spent fifteen years, and it is said a million of dollars, in hunting down and effacing from every part of the Scriptures. We have not heard of any new sect of "Immersionists." We believe Dr. Conant and the other officers of the so-called, and falsely called, "American Bible Union," consider themselves correctly named Baptists. And yet they are banded together in a life effort to blot out of the Scriptures, every vestige of that word, and to put the Anglicized Latin term "immerse," in place of the Anglicized Greek word Baptized.

As our readers are doubtless aware, this Bible Union has translated and sent out a New Testament, of which many editions have been printed—the one before us, edition of 1866, claims to be of the thirty-fifth thousand—in which the original word for baptize and its derivatives, are, in every possible instance, replaced by "immerse" and its derivatives. John the Baptist is "John the Immerser." The people, Christ, came to the Jordan to be "immersed" by him. He promises to "immerse" them with water, but He that cometh after Him, will "immerse" them with fire. The Pharisees in Mark 7: 4, hold to the "immersion" of pots, cups, brazen vessels and couches. Coming from the market, except they "immerse" themselves, they do not eat. The Pharisee, Luke 11: 38, wondered that Jesus did not first "immerse" Himself before dinner. The fathers, 1 Cor. 10: 2, were all "immersed" unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. In one or two instances, the courage of the translators has not been equal to the task they had set before them. They cannot bring themselves to use the word immerse, where it would be so very awkward as even to offend their own ears, but sooner than use in such cases the word baptize, when every consideration in rhetoric, in exegesis, and in truth calls for it, they shirk the duty of translating, and give us a paraphrase instead. We refer to the passages, Luke 12: 50, and Mark 10: 38; the first of which, rendered in the English version forcibly and accurately: "I have a baptism to be baptized with," they belittle and mutilate into: "I have an immersion to undergo;" the second of which, "Can ye be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with," they, not venturing to make ridiculous by translating, Can ye be immersed with the immersion with which I am immersed, deliberately and disingenuously, not to say scandalously, misrepresent, by rendering: "Can ye undergo the immersion which I undergo?" simply for the sake of avoiding the odious and tabooed word, baptize. Else why should they not alter the language in the similar instance of verbal fullness, Rev. 14: 2, and say, Harpers, playing on their instruments, instead of following the received version, as they do, saying: "Harpers harping with their harps"? Change in one case is just as needful as in the other. No! the reason and spirit of the whole thing is made plain in those very passages. They are so bitterly averse to the use of a term which does not involve their exclusive notion and preach their shibboleth, that they will venture rather to tamper with the inspired form of statement, than to let it appear. Professing to be Scriptural par excellence, they deliberately suppress Scripture in their unnatural zeal.

The pamphlets to which we have directed the readers' attention, by no means ignore the claim of this "American Bible Union," to higher and broader motives, and greater achievements, than the promotion of denominational ends, or rather the ends of a clique or a faction. It is represented by the Union, that the substitution of "immerse" for baptize, is only one of numberless instances of improvement, and that the Union has given to Christendom the much needed and invaluable boon of a New and Improved English Version of the New Testament. It is true, that some very excellent Biblical scholars, as Hackett and Conant himself, have been employed upon the work, and that to some exceedingly limited extent, different denominations have also been engaged in it. It is true, that Dr. Schaf, in the

critical part of his version of Lange on Matthew refers quite frequently to Dr. Conant's opinions upon the Greek text; but it is equally true, that the Christian world of England and America are too wise to be caught by the chaff of such pretenses. The new version of the Bible Union may pass as a Baptist or Immersionist pamphlet, without derogating from any one's honesty; but as a new and improved English version, it is—not to put too fine a point on it—a humbug; and one of the greatest that Protestantism has ever produced.

Poor Catholics may be taken in by the imposture of the mass and the miracles of St. Januarius, but not a handful of Protestants will be deluded into accepting an openly sectarian version of the New Testament, as a substitute for that version which is one of the brightest jewels of English literature, and the venerable and precious associations of which they share with all the vast family of Christians who bear the English name. This petty clique of immersionists are but holding a candle to the sun and offering it to Christendom, instead of clapping it under its own denominational bushel, where it is just about fit to be.

But Mr. Jewett in his two pamphlets, carries the war into Africa, and shows, by an accumulation of instances, which would be tedious if not done in the interest of truth, that the English of the new version is varied from the received version and modernized according to no settled principles, the old forms being retained or not, apparently only by caprice; that the new renderings are frequently unintelligible, as where penny is substituted by "denary," that "from hence" and similar pleonasm occur; that the English tenses, and moods, and particles of time are used with inelegance and inaccuracy; as: "Jesus said to those Jews who have believed on Him;" "In those days comes John the Immerser." "Not that I already attained." He shows that the translation is open to the gravest criticism, in fact being in his own unreserved language: "a disgrace to the scholarship of the day—a gross affront to the intelligence, liberality and Christian learning of the Church." The renderings are often needlessly ambiguous; as: Luke 3, 23, "And Jesus was, when he began, about thirty years of age;" 9, 39, "And it [a spirit] tears him with foaming;" 1 John 5, 19, "The whole world is lying in the evil one." The Greek is followed in a school-boy's servile fashion; as, Matt. 19, 20: All these I kept; what lack I yet? Mark 14, 30: And Jesus says to him, Verily I say to thee, that thou this day, in this night, before a cock crows twice, will thrice deny me. Rev. 8, 5: "And the angel has taken the censer and he filled it out of the fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth." John 6, 37: "Him that comes to me I will not [instead of "in no wise"] cast out." Here the translation of one of the most precious and effective passages in the whole Word of God is drained of its force by an actual failure in literalness, the original plainly demanding the translation given in our version. (See Robinson's Lex.) Infelicitous is also the rendering of Acts 4, 16: "A notorious miracle," instead of a notable miracle, as in the received version.

Nor can the plea avail, that fidelity to the original compels such a sacrifice of English idiom, for in many parallel cases, without perceptible reason, the translators have deviated *ad libitum* from the Greek. In Mark 12, 41-43, four different tenses of the verb for "cast," are rendered by the same tense in English, without variation. They deny themselves of, or they take, the liberties of translators; they are servilely literal, or unconscionably lax, with a marvellous inconsistency. And the accusation of downright incorrectness made by Mr. Jewett, is in many instances clearly sustained, although it must be admitted that in others, the decision cannot be dogmatically pronounced. But the great lack of consistency in their renderings, except where their darling tenet is involved, must go far to prove that their paramount aim, steadily adhered to, was not to produce a better English version, but under the cover of such a professed aim, and with sufficient scholarship to give it currency, to smuggle into the Christian Church a pitiful sectarian pamphlet; to venture even to degrade the word of God to the base service of partizanship; to make it a gospel, not of a doctrine, nor of a sacrament, nor of a ceremony, but of an interest so infinitesimal as the precise mode of performing a ceremony,—a mere strand upon the outermost husk of Christianity.

We can only say, in conclusion, that the Christian public is deeply indebted to Mr. Jewett—whose numerous citations we have scarcely more than alluded to,—for the industry and ability which he has shown in exposing the character of this enterprise, and which have compelled Dr. Conant, in spite of his declared contempt for the

pamphlet and its author, to come forward and attempt a reply. We do not think the laurels of the conflict have been carried off by the veteran.

### THE CHURCH AND PUBLIC EDUCATION.

"The hope of the republic is the education of the people." This sounds well in a stump speech or a fourth of July oration. But is it all sound? or do we, the American people, believe it is true? We have been used to talk about the general intelligence of our country. The education of what we are pleased to call the "masses," has been a theme of gratulation. But it is questionable whether we see clearly how radical and significant is this matter of public or popular education. We have been quite too willing to trust to systems and public authorities for the training of the children, without respect to the character or quality of it. The perpetuity and progress of a government, like ours, depend, in great measure, on a Protestant education. Rome has always been, and now more than ever is, the foe to liberty, and hence to popular education. Says Michelet, "Rome loves liberty so much, that in a holy zeal for it, they want to begin by stifling it in the highest places of instruction!" There can be no question, that in every country where Romanism is dominant, the millions are grossly ignorant, and liberty is but a name. And Protestant Christians ought, by this time, to understand, that if civilization and education of the higher type are to prevail in this or any other land, it must be under the influence of Protestant Christianity—the religion of the Christian Church. The early settlers of this country understood this; and they laid the foundations broad and deep for the religious, cultural and Christian education of the people. But in the rush and hurry, the strife for place, and the insatiate greed of gain in these later times, the Christian Church is in danger of forgetting the important part she is to act.

The American Protestant idea of the Church is, not that the State is to patronize and take care of it, but that the Church is to minister to the welfare of the State. Christian people are to study the highest interests of the nation, and with the most generous views of public justice, they are to secure the greatest good of the greatest number. There is nothing selfish, clannish nor covert in the religion of the gospel. "This thing was not done in a corner." Government that is worthy of the name, has no reason to fear it. The State can trust it. The Protestant Church has always been the friend of intelligence, law and free government.

Our own record as a denomination, in all these respects, has been very clear and worthy. We have always been among the foremost in every effort to popularize education. And never, in the history of our country, has there been so wide a field nor so loud a call for us to show our true spirit as now. Are our people fully awake to this fact? Millions have been brought to our doors in a day, and demand of us the means of popular instruction and Christian training. We are not so much in danger of neglecting the colleges and higher institutions of learning, as we are of forgetting the vast work of primary education. Here the thousands, yea millions, get their first—their only principles of instruction.

They pass from the public school to the workshop, the counting-house, and the various avocations of active life. Are our Christian people, our churches, watchful of the progress of this mighty power operative daily in our public schools? How few of our ministers and educated members of our churches have any practical interest in the free schools of our cities and populous towns! How rarely do we hear anything of this subject from the pulpit! How few of our people are ever interested enough to visit these numerous, stately buildings, dedicated to the work of educating the future generations! How, too frequently, is this whole business left by default to fall into the hands of ignorant and scheming politicians! There are, in this single city, over one hundred and fifty thousand children, between the ages of six and eighteen years, attending the public schools, while the whole number in private and denominational schools is less than twenty-five thousand! Is it difficult to see where the voting power of the city, and so of the nation, is being educated? And who, if not the Christian Church, holding the free and generous principles of a Protestant Christianity, should be interested in this vital matter of primary popular education? Is it not high time to awake out of our long sleep? While the jesuitical ingenuity of papacy is intent upon gaining possession of every element of power in popular instruction, is it not a fatal mistake that we neglect our Christian commission to educate the multitude in the direction of the gospel and free

republican government? It is not long since, by the wise forecast and prompt action of one of our own ministers in a neighboring city, the machinations of papist priests to get possession of the school funds, were defeated. Let every Christian minister show a like wisdom. And let the Church see to it, that the cause of public education have a full share of her interest. Visit the schools; stand fast by those who have the immediate management of them. Watch every movement that has to do with the system. Encourage the most liberal policy of popular instruction, and in this way will the Protestant Christian Church make itself felt for good throughout the nation.

G. F. W.

### THE LATE NATIONAL SABBATH SCHOOL CONVENTION.

It seems difficult for those not present at this great gathering in Newark, two weeks ago, to enter into the sacred enthusiasm of the participants. The universal report is that even in this age of Conventions it was pre-eminently delightful and successful. The picked men, the elite of a body of Christian workers, who are themselves the choice spirits of the Christian brotherhood, were there, exalted by a consciousness of the nobleness and usefulness of their calling, by the multiplied evidence of its advancement, and by the glow of Christian sympathy which pervaded the entire body. Many distinguished men were present, not however, including; as was hoped would be the case, Vice President Colfax, (whose absence was apologized for in an admirable letter) but such men as Senator Frelinghuysen of New Jersey, George H. Stuart of this city, who presided in his wonted business-like, satisfactory manner; and who was called away for a season by President Grant, to counsel with him and others on Indian affairs; Judge Culver, Ralph Wells, the two Tyngs, Rev. John Hall, D. D., Henry Ward Beecher, the blind H. Thane Miller and a host of others. Of Southern States, North Carolina, Florida, Texas, Kentucky, were represented, and there were delegates from Canada, England, Scotland, and even Egypt and South Africa.

There was much admirable speaking of a kind to warm, stimulate, cheer and instruct the delegates. This, of itself, would probably be worth all the trouble and expense of the gathering. But in the ten years that have elapsed since the Convention met in Jayne's Hall, in this city, great progress has been made both in the methods and spirit of the Sunday-school enterprise. Hence, closer attention was given to the details of the work; and the Convention divided itself into six sections, after the manner of Scientific associations, to each one of which some branch of the subject was allotted. The results of the whole were afterwards embodied in resolutions, reported to, and passed by the entire body. This excellent arrangement both showed and will secure great advance in the work of Sabbath-school instruction. It seems, indeed, a thing not unlikely, that a complete system of lay education in Bible knowledge will grow out of the present Sunday-school movement, a result which is to be devoutly wished. Never were teachers of secular branches so devoted to their work, so keen for improving their methods, so constrained and quickened by high spiritual motives as the Sabbath-school teachers of our day.

As the proceedings have been phonographically reported, and will soon be published by Messrs. J. C. GARRIGUES and Co., 608 Arch St., it is needless to attempt here anything further in this respect. Persons desirous of securing copies should make early application, addressing the office of the *Sunday School Times*. We will at present say nothing more, except to suggest an inquiry why the honored National Institution, the AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION, has had apparently no connection whatever with a Convention, whose objects are identical with its own high and Catholic aims and work?

### SUNDAY IN POLITICS.

A correspondent of the *N. Y. Tribune*, who thinks the Republican party in danger, advises them, as a measure of policy, to give the Germans of the irreligious class free lager on Sunday. To which the *Tribune* answers, after contrasting the inherited traditions and customs of America and Germany about Sunday observance, as follows:

"Now it seems to us—and we mean to be very moderate and guarded in our statement—that our Teutonic friends ought not to hurry us. They ought to consider how they would be apt to deal with a like demand if they were living at home in Germany, and we had recently migrated thither, and were demanding that they should alter their immemorial laws into conformity with our convictions. Will they be so good as to

look at the matter in this light? Are we uttering the dictates of bigotry? of fanaticism? or those of philosophy and common sense? Do let us be reasonable all 'round!

"We protest against our correspondent's assumption that the Germans are precluded from drinking their lager on Sunday. We know better; and, if he does not, he may easily learn. We venture to assert that they have averaged six glasses each per Sunday ever since they landed on our shores. There is no law here that forbids their drinking themselves full up to the chin on Sunday or any other day. Our laws do forbid the sale, and exposure for sale, of lager on Sunday, as of almost everything else. Their general idea is that we should do our trading, like our work, on the other six days of the week, and only the most indispensable minimum of either on the day regarded by most of us as the Christian Sabbath. Perhaps this is all wrong, and Sunday ought to be a day of labor and traffic just like any other day. Convince us of this, if you can; we are open to reason; but don't undertake to bully us.

"In our judgment, a large majority of the people of this State are satisfied with our laws respecting Sunday, believing that there is quite as much drinking and dancing, fishing and hunting, fiddling and frolic, on that day as is good for us, or as a reasonable man could ask for. If those laws are now upset, it will be because the few bully the many out of adherence to their convictions of what is proper and beneficial, by threatening to vote the Democratic ticket. We don't truckle to this sort of dictation."

### THE VOTE ON REUNION—WHAT NEXT?

Revising our list of last week, we find that Minnesota Presbytery should be classed with those voting for the Committee's amendments; while Iowa City, by a recent vote, changed from the unamended to the amended Basis, expressing readiness for any plan the Assembly may adopt. On the same platform with Iowa City are Grand River, Ohio, and Otsego New York, Presbyteries. So also may be reckoned Knox, Ill., and Watertown, N. Y., although their preference is distinctly stated for the Basis of 1868. N. Missouri prefers the amended Basis, but gives some discretionary powers. Alton, Ill., took no new action, but was ready last fall for union on the Standards.

On the other hand, the Presbyteries of Athens, O.; Fort Wayne, Ind.; Saginaw and Washtenaw, Mich.; Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Kansas, Dacotah, and San Francisco voted for the amended Basis. Nevada (formed from Sierra Nevada and Washoe) voted for the Basis unamended last fall. Washtenaw calls for the repeal of the Excluding acts.

Thirty-two Presbyteries, so far as heard from, show more or less willingness for union without a specific understanding; and sixty-four have voted for express terms, all but four or five adopting the Basis as amended by the Committee. Zealous reunion men are now planning for a new Basis to be adopted by the coming Assemblies and to be sent down to the Presbyteries with a request that they call special meetings for immediate action upon it; it being part of the plan that the Assemblies adjourn to meet in the First church in this city, next October, there to consummate the work. If the principles embodied in the Reunion Basis of 1868 as amended by our Committee and assented to by the late Pittsburg Circular, can be secured, our Church is ready for union to-morrow. Let us have a sound reunion without delay, but no marrying in haste to repent at leisure.

### THE PACIFIC RAIL ROAD.

The union of the Eastern and Western portions of this road at a central point near Salt Lake City, was announced on Monday, May 10th. We believe that the day will be memorable in all the annals of time, as marking another stride towards a commanding position of our own among the civilized nations of the earth. Such will be its influence upon commerce and upon national life, that we may well pray for a peculiar blessing upon the wonderful triumph of enterprise, capital and skill. The wild enthusiasm with which the event has been celebrated in California is an intimation of one of the main utilities of the Pacific rail road, the strengthening of the bond of union between remote sections of our vast country. We have taken it more calmly on this side of the continent, but the result at such an early day—nearly two months earlier than was predicted by the most sanguine a year ago—years earlier than was expected long after the work had been fairly started—the result we say, fills us with admiration, amazement and joy. Let us do our part towards making it a highway for our God.

Newcastle, Pa.—Rev. Wm. T. Wylie in a business note to this office, mentions that he has "just closed with our communion a series of school-house meetings, by which twenty-six were added to our own church and nine to other branches."

\* BAPTISM VS. IMMERSION.—A Review of the New Testament of the Immersionists, by George B. Jewett. Published by request of the Essex South Association. 2d Edition. Pp. 38. Price 50 cents.  
A LETTER TO THE AMERICAN BIBLE UNION in answer to a recent pamphlet, entitled "Essex South Association and the Revised Testament;" covering also Rev. Dr. Conant's Letter to the *Examiner and Chronicle*, Dec. 3, 1868. By the same. 64 pages. Price 50 cents.