

Tennessee Baptist

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY GRAVES & SHANKLAND—J. R. GRAVES, Editor.

VOL. IX.

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE, SATURDAY, JUNE 18, 1853.

NO. 40.



REPORT OF THE AMERICAN BIBLE UNION TO THE Society Street Baptist Church.

(CONTINUED.)

Such, indeed, was the sacred and inviolable character of that strong aversion which existed among the Jews against the Greek language, especially after the Greek dominion in Syria had become obnoxious and intolerable, and which is known to have prevailed extensively in the apostolic age. The Jews were absolutely prohibited by the Elders from teaching their own Greek language. One of the laws of the Talmud says: "Commanded be the man that keeps silent, and commanded be also the man that teaches his son Greek."

It is certain that Greek was not the common language of Palestine at the time of Christ; so uncommon was it for an educated Jew to understand the Greek language that we hear Lycaon, in his conversation with Paul, exclaiming with astonishment: "Canst thou speak Greek?" implying that such a thing was not to be expected. Accordingly Josephus in his Antiquities says: "Few of my countrymen would have been able to converse in the Greek language, on a point of their deficiency in the grammatical knowledge of it."

Thus it appears that however the Greek may have been, in the time of Christ and his apostles, "the tongue of fashion, commerce and philosophy," it was not the language in which the Jews, to whom the gospel was first preached, were accustomed to read and hear the Old Testament Scriptures. The common language of Palestine, at that time, was what Luke calls "the Hebrew tongue," or more properly rendered, "the Hebrew dialect," which has been variously designated by Chaldaic, Palesino-Syrian, and Palesino-Aramaic. It was the Hebrew language as it existed in Palestine after the Babylonish captivity, and as we now have an earliest remnant in the hands of Daniel and Ezra.

With such ignorance of the Greek language, with such prejudice against it, and against the Septuagint, it is not strange that "the Jews," as we are told, "refused to read from the Greek version, and insisted upon reading the Hebrew Bible." "Whether a Greek version ever was read in the synagogues," says a late writer, "there cannot be a serious doubt; probably not." Certainly the Talmud nowhere speaks of the use of the Old Testament in the synagogues in the Greek language.

The Scriptures, then, which the apostles "everywhere read" in the synagogues of the Jews, (and but few copies could be found elsewhere,) as they were "everywhere, whilst from time to time they were writing the New Testament," was not the Greek version: as you tell us, and have given the public to understand, but the original Hebrew Bible. Hence we find their citations from the Old Testament more frequently made from the Hebrew text, and not from the Greek, as you suppose.—Hence, in collecting these citations, traces 183 in the Hebrew, and only 184 in the Greek of the Old Testament; and another able critic says: "We can prove that a greater part of these passages that are quoted in the New Testament are taken verbatim from the Hebrew text, and not from the Greek version."

It is probable that the New Testament writers were acquainted with both the Hebrew and the Greek of the Old Testament, and that when they were addressing the Jews, or writing books designed more immediately for their benefit, they preferred quotations from the Hebrew, but when speaking or writing to those more familiar with the Septuagint, they quoted from the Greek.

If we do not mistake the general scope, and the particular intent of your language, on this point, you seem to convey the idea, that Paul, in some of his quotations from the Septuagint, was disposed to content himself with the general sense, as expressed in a defective rendering, without giving the full and exact meaning of the original Hebrew; that regarding those who insist on the most faithful translation of the inspired original, such an idea of divine inspiration, and apostolic authority, seems to be an unwelcome addition to their views; and we cannot believe that there ever was such an "express design of inspiration" as you say. It is as if you were to say, "I have written as you have written, or that such a 'divine inspiration' as you attribute to Paul, was deposited in the mind of an inspired apostle. Would you have us believe that the apostles, in quoting from the Old Testament, were left to adopt the absolute errors of an unfaithful translation, and allowed to incorporate them into the New Testament, as the word of God? Such is the doctrine you hold in the quotation above. You say, 'the apostles' copies without comment or correction the rendering of that Septuagint, when it was not a close and exact version of the original Hebrew.'" But so far as that rendering deviated from the original Hebrew, it was not inspired; it was not the word of God. Hence you must conclude, that a portion of the New Testament consists of uninspired language and absolute errors of translation, or else adopt the equally absurd theory that the Holy Spirit directed the apostles to cite that as the word of God, which they knew came only from uninspired translators, and hence was not the word of God.

It is true that some quotations from the Septuagint, as found in the New Testament, do not agree with the Hebrew text as we now have it; but these variations are all accounted for, without supposing that the inspired apostles incorporated the mistakes and corruptions of a faulty version into the infallible canon of the New Testament.—Take for example the passage in Acts 13: 35, "Then will we suffer thy Holy One to be corrupted," which agrees with the Septuagint, while the Hebrew reads, Psal. 16: 10, "Thou wilt not suffer thy saints to see corruption."

Now are we to regard the New Testament writer here, as misconceiving or tolerating an erroneous translation in the Septuagint, because he "took without comment or correction, the rendering of that Septuagint, when it was not a close and exact version of the original Hebrew?" By no means. In this place the Septuagint is right and the Hebrew if it be not the plural for the singular, has been slightly altered, probably by the copyist through accident.

Dr. Gerard says: "The Septuagint, having been translated from very ancient copies, shows in what manner they read the text, and therefore may serve for detecting corruptions, which have since crept into the Hebrew copies, and for pointing out the genuine reading; and accordingly, many of the readings which it points out are still found in the oldest and best MSS., and ought to be adopted."

Whatever you may think about the apostles quoting from a faulty version, "without comment or correction," we feel bound to believe that the New Testament writers, when professing to cite the words of the Old Testament Scriptures, were guided by the inspiration of the Almighty, and gave the very words originally spoken "by holy men of old as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" in a close and exact version of the original Hebrew; whether those words correspond with the Greek or with the Hebrew Old Testament, as we now have them; or whether they differ from them both.

There is another class of citations, where a verbal quotation was evidently not intended, but only a reference to something written in the Old Testament, while the New Testament writer is inspired to make known a hidden truth in language somewhat different, because designed for a different application. But these passages are not the kind which you represent as quoted from the Septuagint. All the actual quotations made by the New Testament writers, from the Old Testament, must be supposed to give the exact meaning of the inspired Hebrew.

We are happy to find ourselves sustained in these views by such men as Gilbert Combs and Thomas Hartwell Hoare. Dr. Gerard says: "The writers of the New Testament seem to have been as careful to give the true sense of the Old Testament, that they forbore the Septuagint version, wherever it gave not that sense, as far as they had occasion to quote it."

Dr. Hoare, speaking of the New Testament writers, says: "As their quotations were compared with the Hebrew, very frequently in express words, and generally in the same; so it is highly probable that they carefully copied at first, and that, where the Hebrew was properly expressed in the Greek version, they used the words of that version. But where it materially varied from the meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures, they either gave the sense of the passage, or their own words, or took as much of the Septuagint as suited their purpose, introducing the requisite alterations."

We see, then, how the example of Paul, in his quotations from the Old Testament Scriptures, can be fairly adduced in support of those who oppose the revision of our English version. We have dwelt thus at length on this topic, not only as a means of settling upon the sense of various passages, but also to vindicate the New Testament

writers from the charge of introducing into their text, as inspired truth, the defective renderings of an unimproved version.

A. CHASE ON FORMER FEELINGS AGAINST REVISION.

"When Paul determined to labor in Foreign rather than in Home Missions, notwithstanding the opposition of his friends, he was not averse to another man's foundation, nor preaching Christ where he was already named, did he really do homage in a low expedient? You allow with us that his choice was just. Now, was this, his preference of the most needy field, an acknowledgment of the inferiority of his own resolution, that the supply of the evangelized heathen with the Cherokee, Burman, Kites, and Chinese Bibles, is an object of higher and earlier obligation; while we postpone to the fitting time the bettering of an English Bible, already by your own acknowledgment 'good'?"

Are we justified in forming the version for Russia and Hong-Kong, and in breaking down the organization that does most to supply these regions, in order to concentrate our strength on the one or more projects, at various times admitted to us, for a new version of the English Bible?"

In the beginning of your letter we were charged with unjustly disparaging our English version, without recognizing its merits; but here you declare that we have persecuted that version "as a worm." Is it possible that you see no inconsistency in such contrary charges?

You postpone, you say "to the fitting time the bettering of our English version." Is this you admit that the version is not good enough as it is; that it needs bettering. But how can you reconcile this admission with what you have said to prove that there is no need of revision? Do you postpone to some future time the performance of a work which there is no need of doing at all?

You prefer to supply the heathen with the Scriptures, rather than do any thing toward revision at home; and to justify this position you refer to Paul as choosing to be a foreign missionary rather than labor at home; and you ask: "Did he really do homage to a low expedient?" Is the first place, it is not true, that Paul regarded the foreign field as "demanding the first labors;" and in the next place, he had no labors in the matter, but is obeyed God.

When Christ first commissioned his disciples to preach, he restricted them to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And when he afterwards commanded them to go into all the world, they were to "preach in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem;" that is with the Jews. Accordingly, the apostle when preaching to the Jews at Antioch, says: "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but coming ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of receiving life, ye turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us."

Thus it is evident that Paul had no regard to mere expediency, in determining the place of his ministry; nor to what might seem to him the unassumptive claims of the Home and the Foreign field. He preached first to the Jews, because "it was necessary;" he then turned to the Gentiles, because "the Lord so commanded." Now, if you feel called, as a missionary as was Paul, to labor in the foreign field, where in this apostolic example do you find a precedent for opposing those who labor to revise the common version at home? Did the apostle to the Gentiles, while laboring in the foreign field, reproach his brethren in Jerusalem, and do all he could to hinder their work? Did he not rather take collections in Gentile churches and send to the poor saints in Jerusalem? In what respect does your conduct towards the Bible Union resemble that of Paul towards his brethren in Judaea? You would not be justified, you think, "in forsaking the versions for Bazaar and Hong Kong, and in breaking down" the Am. and For. Bible Society.

"We think it is not necessary to forsake our foreign versions, in order to carry on the work of revision at home. The money that has been spent in opposing the Bible Union would go far towards defraying the whole expense of a revised version. The cost of printing and circulating your letter alone, would have made a liberal contribution to our treasury. And so to our satisfaction 'breaking down the organization' referred to, we must regard the intemperate as coming with an ill-grace from the author of your letter. It must appear strange, indeed, to the Baptists of these United States, that W. B. WILLIAMS, D. D., who strenuously opposed the organization of the Am. and For. Bible Society, and for thirteen consecutive years declined all co-operation and connection with it, not sympathizing in its views, should be the author of a letter which sends his contributions for the Bible Union directly to the Managers of that Society in the work of benevolent foreign distribution he continued to co-operate with the American Bible Society, an institution avowedly hostile to Baptists in the fundamental principle of Biblical translation; that he should all at once, on the withdrawal of Dr. Chase and his associates, become the champion and advocate of that Society; upholding the Bible Union for breaking down that organization.

The alteration most sought by some misguided brethren among you, was in the word denoting the first entrance of the Christian church. "And by laying down, as your society is said by its friends and officers to have laid it down, that the rendering of the Greek word for baptism by another word is no longer held 'as open question,' but that it is affect 'immerse,' you take the place of 'baptize,' do not your enterprise insure the very contrary which your advocates cast upon King James for his instructions to translators? You limit the consciences and restrain the enlightened judgment of your revisers."

To say that we "limit the consciences and restrain the unfettered judgment of our revisers," by requiring them to supplant "baptize" by "immerse," as King James commanded it to be kept, is to assert what you cannot prove, and to testify to what you have no reason to believe. In the first Address of the Bible Union, put forth contemporaneously with its organization, and published in the same pamphlet from which you quote, (pp. 10, 11,) is the following plain declaration on this point: "In the consideration of this subject, some have endeavored to 'vote the whole question of revision upon the retention or rejection of the word 'baptize.' But this does great injustice to our views and aims. For although we insist upon the observance of a uniform principle in the full and faithful translation of God's word, so as to express in plain English, without ambiguity or vagueness, the exact meaning of Baptism, as well as of all other words relating to the Christian ordinances; yet this is not one of our main objects, which, in our estimation, 'imagined' perpetration. And each of our views, and principles in the presentation of this work, that, if there were no such word as 'baptize' or Baptism in the Scriptures, the necessity of revising our English version would appear to us no less real and imperative."

Here, in this official document, lying open before your eyes at the time you were writing, it is distinctly stated that the change of "baptize" for "immerse" was not "the alteration most sought" by the Bible Union; that all changes, required by the exact meaning of the inspired originals, are placed on the same ground, subject to one uniform principle. And in the Second Annual Report, p. 29, that principle was embodied and published, as passed by the Board and the Union, in the following language: "The exact meaning of the inspired text is to be preserved, in the translation, as far as possible, by the use of the most appropriate words, and phrases, so far as they can be found, in the vernacular language of those for whom the version is designed, with the least possible obscurity or indistinctness."

This principle was not to be applied by the Union, or by its Board directly; it was to guide and govern the translators and revisers employed by the Union; it was to be applied by them to every sentence, and every phrase, and every word, in all the versions made for, or patronized by the Union. The only additional rules prescribed for our revisers are founded on that great principle, and here they are: "Wherever there is a word in common use, it shall be made the basis of our version, and all passages of the Bible, which are first written, must be translated by corresponding words, and phrases, so far as they can be found, in the vernacular language of those for whom the version is designed, with the least possible obscurity or indistinctness."

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either sometime before the vote of our Society, to which your letter replies, was written; though we are not sure that they had come under your notice.

CHARACTER OF THE REVISION SOCIETY BY THE UNION.

"Nominal amendments may be really, and have often been, violent wrappings of God's truth. You would avoid the admission of such ungodly year changes. But must we not be earnest in demanding some greater safeguard than the allowed honesty of your position? More pious without learning, or more learning without piety, would equally endanger us, and to both these need to be added, judgment, taste, and sincerity of our own tongues. Do we recognize the promise of them in some of the rival versions to which you appeal as if with admiration? We find in the very passages published in connection with the proceedings of your organization in 1850, favorable mention made (p. 87) of 'the most godly and learned men,' who, it is said, have been disimproved with the received version, and then, amongst others, are mentioned the names of 'Scarlett, Wakefield, and Dickinson.' ... Now if these be among the names which shall honor, in what inferring are we not that honor, as it respects the soundness of judgment and purity of doctrine, and perfection of language to be expected from a project heralded by such ostentatious and servile flattery?"

That the injustice of this paragraph may be fairly exposed, we will quote the passage referred to. It is found in the address of Rev. Thos. Armitage, delivered before the Bible Union, in the Baptist Tabernacle, June 10, 1850, and published in the official report of that meeting. He says: "Let us labor and let us give, to procure, if possible, such a translation of the Word of God as will give one sense, and but one, and that so clearly, as to enable the uneducated to understand the word of God, without the aid of notes, or comment, or gloss, or of the living teacher, where the Spirit has designed no inexplicable mystery, to honor, as it respects the soundness of judgment and purity of doctrine, and perfection of language to be expected from a project heralded by such ostentatious and servile flattery."

WAS DR. CHASE'S OFFER TO REVISION?

"And as to other changes, going beyond this one term, can we overlook the warning testimony of Caron; as too much over which modern editors venture as being casual? 'Many real improvements (he has said) of our translation in particular passages have undoubtedly been made, but they are a CHARGE UPON THE PRESENTED REVISION, in its small matters, they amount to matters of the utmost importance, which are not to be trifled with.' So wrote Caron to the author of a celebrated article in the Edinburgh Review. We have been rather content to acquiesce in the opinion of Caron, an learned and competent critic, that 'no rule can be more general,' or, in other words, admit of fewer exceptions, than does the maxim that he who is perpetually amending the common version is but a novice in criticism."

This is not the first time that Dr. Caron has been referred to as an authority against revision; and after what has been proved before the public in refutation of such pretensions, it is really surprising that you should again bring forward such a brief sentence from the writings of that justly celebrated scholar and critic, to prove that revision is not needed; or that any improvement of our common version is impracticable. We have the most direct and best authority to show that Caron was in favor of revision. But we shall rest the case at this time on his written words; reserving our questions to his work on Baptism as published by the Am. Soc. Pub. Soc. Soc., ed. 1848.

Speaking of the term rendered "and" in Dan. 4: 33, (Greek & 30,) he says, p. 56, "It is by no means a translation of the word in the original, nor of that employed by the Septuagint. It ought to have been rendered according to the usual model meaning, which, instead of being harsh, would have afforded corresponding expressions in all languages. By employing a general word, in this instance, our translators have lost the peculiar beauty of the original, without in the least adding to the perspicuity. The words of the Septuagint are, 'His body was immersed in the dew.'" Speaking of Luke 11: 38, he says, p. 67, "The passage, then, ought to have been translated, 'And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he was not washed before dinner.'" Speaking of Mark 7: 4, where our version has, "except they wash themselves, they eat not." And what our version renders "washings," &c., in the margin, Caron says, p. 71, "As if it had been translated 'washing.'" In Heb. 11: 10, he says, "The translation ought to be 'different generations.'" "Every Greek word or phrase, in the translation of which the perspicuity of the common version is changed, must be carefully examined in every edition, in which it occurs in the New Testament, and the views of the reviser be given to its proper translation in each place."

"As soon as the revision of any book of the New Testament, in Greek or in English, is sent to the Secretary of the Bible Union, or each other person as shall be designated by the Executive Committee, in order that copies may be taken and furnished to the revisers or other persons, to be returned with their suggestions to the reviser or revisers of that book. Also being received with the aid of these suggestions, a carefully prepared copy shall be forwarded to the Secretary."

These rules, as passed by the Board, were printed and sent out in its official edition sometime before the vote of our Society, to which your letter replies, was written; though we are not sure that they had come under your notice.

to represent him as approving that version "as it is" or as commending all its faults, or all its beauties.

AMENDMENTS BY REV. THOMAS ARMITAGE.

"Nominal amendments may be really, and have often been, violent wrappings of God's truth. You would avoid the admission of such ungodly year changes. But must we not be earnest in demanding some greater safeguard than the allowed honesty of your position? More pious without learning, or more learning without piety, would equally endanger us, and to both these need to be added, judgment, taste, and sincerity of our own tongues. Do we recognize the promise of them in some of the rival versions to which you appeal as if with admiration? We find in the very passages published in connection with the proceedings of your organization in 1850, favorable mention made (p. 87) of 'the most godly and learned men,' who, it is said, have been disimproved with the received version, and then, amongst others, are mentioned the names of 'Scarlett, Wakefield, and Dickinson.' ... Now if these be among the names which shall honor, in what inferring are we not that honor, as it respects the soundness of judgment and purity of doctrine, and perfection of language to be expected from a project heralded by such ostentatious and servile flattery?"

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countable. There is certain evidence here of an extremely candid, fault-finding spirit, which we are pleased to see in a Christian church.

But, pray tell us, why is it, that you speak of "demanding some greater safeguard than the allowed honesty of [our] intentions?" as though, if the paper "improved" be furnished, and the right men are employed, we might depend on your co-operation. Under what safeguard would you be willing to undertake with us a work, which you say is not needed? Although we have an objection to take against those who are opposed to revision, which it is proved, respecting the best method of accomplishing the work; yet it will not be expected of us, that we shall address ourselves to those who have refused to cooperate with us. We spare no necessary expense to obtain information respecting the work to be done, and to secure the services of men well qualified with piety, learning, judgment, taste, "mastery of our own rich tongue," orthodox views, &c., &c., and though we may not be so happy as to enjoy your favor in the enterprise, we hope to reap harvest, and the work of our revisors, so plainly on the platform of truth, as to secure no injury from your opposition.

It is in our view, that the strongest and most effective arguments of infidelity and scepticism among the common people, are founded upon "misstatements of the words of inspiration." Now, we cannot dissent from an opinion, which has been long held by the plain people of God, and the conscientious leaders of them who have read and related it. Some few renderings might perhaps be more felicitous, to excite love and a more abundant life. But we believe that, beyond all peradventure, the chief quarrel of scepticism is against facts and facts, that no man's translation can give out of the canon, and that an ungodly, or a Christian translation would wish just as much. And we must also add the objection of our solemn and moral conscience, that any such translation, which has been conceived to supplement by such ostentatious and unreliable renderings, that served only to corrupt the purity of the Holy Scriptures, and to bring reproach upon the name of God.

You already intimate here that the work of revision will rather promote infidelity and scepticism than destroy them; but we must say to you, that we believe that, beyond all peradventure, the chief quarrel of scepticism is against facts and facts, that no man's translation can give out of the canon, and that an ungodly, or a Christian translation would wish just as much. And we must also add the objection of our solemn and moral conscience, that any such translation, which has been conceived to supplement by such ostentatious and unreliable renderings, that served only to corrupt the purity of the Holy Scriptures, and to bring reproach upon the name of God.

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XODANKA

Agents, Secretaries, &c. but it is right out, and we can dare but the writer is...

Revival Hymns—The Convert's Farewell. THE LAMP FOR ME. Farewell, farewell to all below...

and fashioned, and then like Adam by his maker, is endowed with conscience and moral intellect. How? H. W. Johnson, in his speech...

has known points of high genius which he has bound in a language worse than the galley, and abjectly entreat their days. I have known statesmen, lawyers, and judges...

Special Notice. JUDSON FEMALE INSTITUTE, MISS. The Fourth Annual Session of the Judson Female Institute, will commence on Saturday...

LETTERS RECEIVED. A—J F Arledge and remittance. J J Andrews and remittance. B—T J Bridges and remittance. A Bevels...

UNIVERSITY OF LEXINGTON. THE Third Annual Convocation of the University of Lexington will commence on TUESDAY, the 1st of the ensuing March...

New and Popular Publications. Southern Baptist Publication Society. DUTY OF OBEDIENCE TO THEIR PATRIOTISM. By Rev. Franklin Wilson...

TO THE PUBLIC. THE undersigned tender his services to his friends and the public, as a physician...

Fickleness of Popular Sentiment. We have a striking illustration of the fickleness of public sentiment in the recent action of the Massachusetts House of Representatives...

TEMPERANCE. David Paul Brown, Esq., Philadelphia, a lawyer of distinction, supports the Maine Law, and thinks that intoxicating drinks should be prohibited...

BY TELEGRAPH. MONTREAL, JUNE 10. At Gavazzi's second lecture a mob collected. A large number after the lecture fired pistols. The military was called out...

NOTICE. At a regular meeting of the Baptist Church at Astoria, Col., on Saturday, 18th of May, 1853, a resolution was passed to call a convention of such churches as are interested...

NOTICE. There will be a protracted meeting held with the church at Eldon, Gibson county, Tenn., commencing Friday before the third Sabbath in July...

UNION HALL. Market Street, Nashville, Tenn. DAVID Y. WINSTON, Proprietor. SINCE the 20th of May has been thoroughly repaired, and is now ready for public accommodation...

TO THE PUBLIC. OFFER for sale my Mills on Mill Creek, on the Lebanon Turnpike, four miles from Nashville, with or without land attached to them...

Subscription Report. For the week ending Wednesday, June 18, 1853.

