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All communications for the Editorial, News of Churches, and Correspondence Columns should be addressed to the Managing Editor, Box 2648, P. O. Toronto.

Pastors and church officers are particularly requested to forward items for "News of the Churches" column.

THE REVISED BIBLE.

TEN years ago a committee of seventy-nine of the best biblical scholars of the age, fifty-two from England and twenty-seven from America, was formed to revise the present "authorized version" of the Holy Scriptures. This committee was divided into two sections, one taking the Old Testament, the other the New. These learned divines have laboured faithfully during these ten years, having devoted forty days of each year to this important work. They receive no remuneration for their labours, except that their travelling expenses are paid. Those engaged on the New Testament have finished their work, and in a few months the University Presses will issue the Revised New Testament. The Old Testament is not expected until 1882.

The object is not to give a new version, but rather to revise the old version, freeing it from all errors of text and translation, so that with this revised Bible in his hand, the English reader may feel confident that, as nearly as possible, he has in his own language, the word of God as it was originally given to holy men by the Holy Ghost.

There are several considerations which lead us confidently to expect that the present revision will be more correct than any previous one. The present committee have far greater facilities for giving a true rendering of the original than had the forty-seven divines who were appointed to this work in King James' time. These men began their work in 1607 and finished in 1611. Since then important and trustworthy manuscripts have been discovered and great progress has been made in the study of the sacred languages. The present committee will take advantage of all the discoveries made during these 270 years. Erasmus had sixteen MSS. extending back about 300 years. We now have 1,600 MSS., three of which reach back to the fourth century. These three, the Alexandrian, Vatican, and Sinaitic, are in the keeping of the Protestant, Roman and Greek Churches respectively. The Alexandrian MS. now in the British Museum, was sent as a present in 1628 to Charles I., by the Patriarch of Constantinople. The second is in the Vatican at Rome. The Sinaitic MS., found in 1859 by Tischendorf in a convent at Mount Sinai, is at St. Petersburg. This is the most complete MS. in existence and contains the whole of the New Testament. It could not have been written later than the early part of the fourth century, about 200 years after the death of the Apostle John. In addition to these we have some 150 folio volumes of the writings of the Fathers. These men, who lived in the second century, were fond of quoting the exact words of the inspired writers. It is an interesting fact, and one that confirms our faith in the genuineness of the New Testament, that if it were wholly destroyed, it could be renewed, with the exception of about three verses, from the writings of the Fathers. These MSS., many of which have been brought to light since 1611, will be of great assistance to the present revisers.

Again, during the 270 years since our present version was completed, there have been important changes made in the English language. Many words then in use have become obsolete, and many others have entirely changed their meaning. There are some 250 words that have undergone that process of change. For example, the word "prevent" now means to hinder, but at the time of the translation it meant to go before, to get to a place beforehand. Paul's teaching concerning the resurrection in 1 Thes. v. 15, is obscured by the continued use of this word there. The word "conversation" then meant,

not talk, but good behaviour. The word "damnation" in 1 Cor. xi. 29, has troubled many a tender soul in coming to the Lord's table. This word was in common use three hundred years ago, meaning to pronounce sentence. As for example a writer about that time says: "When Judas saw that Jesus was damned he went out and hanged himself." The word "appearance" in 1 Thess. iv. 22, in the new translation will be rendered "form" and the verse will read "Abstain from every form of evil." Those in favour of clerical rule have been fond of quoting Heb. xii. 7; hereafter this prop will be taken from under them and they will read "remember them that are your guides, whose faith follow."

Now no man of common sense will argue that it is well to retain these obscuring and misleading words and phrases in the New Testament. The truth is of more consequence than the word as the light is more than the lantern. There will be many minor alterations, but no new doctrine will be taught, and no old doctrine laid aside. As Dr. Schaff says: "The revision will so nearly resemble the present version that the mass of readers and hearers will scarcely perceive the difference, while a careful comparison will shew slight improvements in every chapter and almost every verse." The Christian world will heartily welcome the revised Bible. The learning and piety of the members of the revision committee are such that the fullest confidence can be reposed in the results of their labour.

THOSE CHURCH MEETINGS.

THE eyes of not a few need enlightening regarding the duty of attending the church meeting. As a rule, this important gathering is not attended as it should be, considering its vital value to the interests of the church. In fact, many persons could not more persistently avoid it, if they thought they would catch the small-pox by going. They have a prejudice against it, which is frequently as baseless as it is unwise. Some speak of it with scorn. Others treat it with an indifference which they think is something sublime. And others drop it out from their list of church duties, as if it had no claim upon their consideration whatever. Hence in some quarters, what with forgetfulness, indifference, or dislike, the church meeting fares pretty badly. And in consequence, either the affairs of the church fall into a dilapidated condition, or else the business has to be done by the few, who have too often to hear unpleasant remarks made concerning them by the absentees.

In the Congregational system the power to transact the business is not resident in a board of vestrymen, or a board of elders, or a company of stewards. The power belongs to the church, that is to the whole circle of the membership. Each member has the liberty of stating his views, and recording his vote. This being one of the leading principles of our form of Church government, it follows that when a man joins one of our churches, he is bound in honour to give some portion of his attention and time to help to the right conduct of church business. When he has sung his hymn, lifted his prayer, heard the sermon, and partaken of the emblems in the Supper, he has not done all his duty. There still remains to him the duty of bringing his intelligence to bear upon the business of the circle which he has seen fit to join. Until he has lifted this into the number of his duties, he cannot compliment himself upon being in all things true to the church's interests, except he has an easy conscience which can conveniently drop out any duty he does not feel inclined to perform, and yet be satisfied with himself all the same.

Of all the excuses we have ever heard advanced for non-attendance at the church meeting, and we have heard several, we never found one that would hold water. We have heard it said that it was like a "bear-garden," and that was enough to keep pacific spirits away. Is not that a very good reason why peace-loving men should go, to counteract by their gentleness the evil effects of the ruder minds? When a man stays away on any such plea, he virtually says, "The church meeting is a bear-garden; and so far as

I am concerned, it may remain one." If that is a high-minded Christian sentiment, we fail to see it. Again it is said that these meetings are "run" by two or three individuals, and there is no chance for any one else. Any Congregational church which allows two or three persons to "run" everything has simply itself to blame. In a church where every member has the right to think for himself, to speak freely, and to vote independently, it is absolutely impossible for two or three to "run things," except the rest agree to allow them. And if they are permitted to have their way without protest, then what consistency is there in those who have consented to it objecting afterwards? Have they not closed their own mouths against just criticism? And as it is with these excuses, so is it with all the rest, they are poor defences against the charge of neglecting duty.

One of the most contemptible courses any one can adopt is to absent himself from church meeting and then grumble at what has been done there. It is so small-minded, so utterly unworthy, that no person with a fair share of common sense will do it. Every man who is a church member should be aware that private fault-finding does not absolve him from his responsibility of being there and attempting to keep things right. If he was in a Presbyterian or Methodist Church, he would have a sound excuse for growling at the church session or official board, because he had no voice in what they were doing. But in a Congregational church, where his voice may be heard, and his vote is equal to the vote of any other person, he has not the faintest shadow of a ground for fault-finding with what is done. His staying away does not alter his responsibility one iota. He is as much to blame for what is done even though he is away, as if he had been there and consented to it. For it was his duty to have been there, and to have attempted to secure wise action. If these things were always kept in mind, many of the present objections to church meetings would disappear, and these gatherings would be much more representative and efficient than they are at present.

REV. J. T. BREESE.

IT is with extreme reluctance that we return to the case of the gentleman named above, but justice alike to him, to ourselves, and to the churches, requires that he shall not be dropped with his letter of last week and the few words that we were able to append before leaving for New York. First, let us frankly and freely say that we were misled with reference to Mr. Breeze's ordination—he was ordained and is a duly qualified minister, legally and humanly speaking, of the Gospel; he is entitled to the prefix "Reverend," and to call himself a Congregational minister. When we have said this we have said all we think that can possibly be said in his favour. In his letter, Mr. Breeze said: "I will send you the receipt in every place where I preached or lectured for the 'Waubuno' sufferers, if you guarantee me their publication; also Mr. Hodgetts' letter of authority." None of these were among the documents shewn to us by Mr. Breeze, although we had by letter and verbally, assured him that they should be published. Why were not these forthcoming? Mr. Breeze knows, and we know—because they do not exist. In his examination before the magistrate at Georgetown, Mr. Breeze stated that the money collected there had been expended in hiring a hall, and other things at Hamilton in the attempt to collect further moneys for the same fund. He, himself, told us that he was forty dollars out of pocket, over and above all that he collected. He made two remittances, he states, one to the Mayor of Collingwood, and one to Mr. Hodgetts. This latter gentleman, in acknowledging its receipt, referred to a collection made in Georgetown, and advised Mr. Breeze, if he wanted to save his character, to remit it. This letter, it was contended by Mr. Breeze's lawyer, was an authorization to collect, and was so held by the magistrate, and Mr. Breeze dismissed with a reprimand. This may be the true legal aspect of the case—although it appears utterly opposed to all the prin-