

shunned the obscurity of the Papists, in their *azymes, tunike, rational, holocausts, prepuce, pasche*, and a number of such like," wishing that the scripture "may be understood of the very vulgar." But the vulgar, that is, the common people, no more know the Greek meaning of *baptism, nor of ecclesia*, when rendered *church*, than they do of *holocausts*, or *pasche*; nor can the long list of foreign words returned in the Roman Catholic English version of Rheims and Doway, be all denied to be "old ecclesiastical terms." Cranmer's New Testament, as well as Tyndale's, and often the Geneva, had used *congregation* instead of *church*, for *ecclesia*; but King James's translators preferred to follow the Roman Catholic version in the use of the word *church*, even when they represented by this means the congregation of Israel in the wilderness as being precisely like God's churches now, (see Acts vii. 38.) Though at other times they rendered *ecclesia* by *assembly*, (Acts xviii. 23; xix. 32, 39, 41.) That they should translate *baptism* by *washing*, was scarcely to be expected, when *sprinkling* was beginning to be used, though *washing* is not a good translation. They retained in all cases but one the old ecclesiastical word *bishop*; but in Acts xv. 23, they did not do so; nor could they, without making it appear that there were several bishops in the church at Ephesus, which would not have agreed with diocesan episcopacy. Even in this verse, however, the Roman Catholic version has *bishops*, instead of *overseers*. "The great thing, after all, is," say an intelligent writer, "that all such words should be so rendered, as to give the most intelligible meaning in the language of the version."

There was another rule followed by the revisors of 1611, which is now pretty generally disapproved, namely, the use of different English words, as the translation of the same Greek word, even when used in one and the same sense; so that the reader has no clue to the identity of expression and meaning in the Greek.

Since the time of the revision in 1811, some English words in the New Testament have either ceased to be in general use, or ceased to convey unambiguously and forcibly the meaning in which they were used. To *wist*, for example, is no longer used for *to think or know*; *charity* is no longer synonymous with *love*; *to quicken*, is not commonly used for *to make alive*; nor is *freely* understood without a doubt, to mean *gratuitously*.

The number of minor improvements which, it is generally admitted, may now be made in the common version, have, since 1611, been introduced chiefly in commentaries, or confined to works intended rather for students, than the public at large.

The late Ingram Cobbin, in his "Family Bible," has added to the text of the common version, here and there, a word in brackets, which he thought a preferable translation. This often gives to the English reader a much better conception of the force of the passage, than he could otherwise possess; for no remarks in the commentary can so well explain an obscure passage in the English version, as a really better translation, if it can be given.

Probable as it is that the present English version will continue to be used very extensively by all classes, it would be of great importance to be able to circulate also one which we could recommend as expressing more clearly and fully, in many passages, the meaning of what God has spoken. If the two versions were interleaved, the English reader might recover that advantage of comparing different translations, which Coverdale thought was so much more useful, than the mere perusal of glosses or commentaries.

But if it be possible to obtain a version which any shall deem a more correct representation of the Word of God, they will many of them feel that duty to God and man binds them to prefer the use of that version, for purposes of donation and general circulation, to any other.

BEWARE OF BAD BOOKS.

Why, what harm will books do me? The same harm that personal intercourse would with the bad men who wrote them. That "a man is known by the company he keeps," is an old proverb; but it is no more true than a man's character may be determined by knowing what books he reads. If a good book can be read without making one better, a bad book cannot be read without making one worse.

Lord Bacon makes the pithy remark, that "In the body there are three degrees of that we receive into it, aliment, medicine, and poison; whereof aliment is that which the nature of man can perfectly alter and overcome; medicine is that which is partly converted by nature and partly converteth nature; and poison is that which worketh wholly upon nature, without nature being able to work at all upon it: so in the mind, whatsoever knowledge reason cannot at all work upon and convert, is a mere intoxication, and endangereth a dissolution of the mind and the understanding."

Bad books are like ardent spirits; they furnish neither "aliment" nor "medicine"—they are "poison." Both intoxicate—one the mind, the other the body; the thirst for each increases by being fed, and is never satisfied; both ruin—one the intellect, the other the health, and together, the soul. The makers and venders of each are equally guilty and equally corrupters of the community; and the safeguard against each is the same—total abstinence from all that intoxicates mind or body.

Here we have a definition of what we mean by "bad books;" whatever books neither feed the mind nor purify the heart, but intoxicate the mind and corrupt the heart—Works of science, art, history, theology, etc., furnish "aliment" or "medicine;" books of fiction, romance, infidelity, war, piracy, and murder, are "poison" more or less diluted, and are as much to be shunned as the drunkard's cup. They will "bite like a serpent and sting like an adder."

Books of mere fiction and fancy are generally bad in their character and influence. Their authors are commonly bad men, and wicked men do not often write good books. A stream does not rise higher than its fountain. Their principles are often corrupt, encouraging notions of chivalry, worldly honor, and pleasure, at war with the only true code of morals. They insult the understanding of the reader, by assuming that the great object of reading is amusement. The effects are such as might be expected. Familiarity with popular fiction gives a disrelish for simple truth; engenders a habit of reading merely for amusement, which destroys the love of sober investigation, and blasts the hope of mental improvement; renders scientific and historical reading tedious; gives false views of the perfectibility of human nature, thus leading to disappointments in the relations of life; and dwarfs the intellectual and moral powers, except the imagination, which is rendered morbid and unhealthy by constant excitement. The Bible becomes a wearisome book; spiritual classics, like those of Baxter, Bunyan, Flavel, and Doddridge, though glowing with celestial fire, become insipid and uninteresting; and the influence of the pulpit is undermined, by diverting the attention from serious things, and lessening the probability that truth will take effect upon the conscience; or if it does for a time, the bewitching novel furnishes a ready means of stifling conviction and grieving away the Spirit of God. A merchant in H. was under conviction of sin, during a revival of religion. A pious friend called, and, to his surprise, found him engaged in reading a worthless novel. To his remonstrance against such trifling, he replied, "I'm so interested in this book, I must finish it; and then I will attend to the affairs of my soul." He finished the book. He attended to the concerns of his soul—never! Thousands have perished by similar seductive influences.

Beware of the foul and exciting romance. All that is said above will apply with a ten-fold in-

tensity to the class of reading, for which it paves the way. The writer of modern romance chooses his scenes from the places of debauchery and crime, and familiarizes the reader with characters, sentiments, and events, that should be known only to the police. Licentious scenes and obscene imagery are unblushingly introduced, and the imagination polluted by suggestions and descriptions revolting to the pure in heart. "Public poisoners" was the title long since justly given to writers of this class.

It was lately testified in open court, by the father of one whose guilty course has brought ruin upon herself, disgrace upon her family, and death upon her lover, that all was occasioned by his daughter's "reading the impure works of Eugene Sue and Bulwer." To yield to such a hellish charm is like the voluntary sacrifice of one's body and soul on the drunkard's altar. Mental delirium tremens is as sure a consequence of habitual intoxication from such reading, as is that awful disease the certain end of the inebriate. Beware of it!

Beware of trifling books, and of all writings which ridicule the Bible. You will meet them, with a more or less guarded avowal of their object, in the newspaper, the tract, and the volume.

Do you still need to be persuaded to beware of the poison that would paralyze your conscience, enervate your intellect, pervert your judgment, deprave your life, and perhaps ruin your soul?

Beware of bad books, because if you, and others like you, will let them alone, they will soon cease to be published. Every such book you buy encourages the guilty publisher to make another. Thus you not only endanger your own morals, but pay a premium on the means of ruining others.

Beware, because your example is contagious. Your child, your servant, your neighbour, may be led to read what will be injurious for time and eternity; or not to "touch the unclean thing," as your example may prompt.

Beware, because good books are plenty and cheap, and it is folly to feed on chaff or poison, when substantial, healthful food may as well be obtained.

Beware of bad books, because they waste your time. "Time is money;" it is more—it is eternity! You live in a sober, redeemed world, and it is worse than folly to fritter away the period of probation in mere amusement. God did not bring us into being, and sustain that being—the Redeemer did not shed his blood a ransom for our sins—the Holy Spirit has not bestowed upon us the book divine, that we may sit from flower to flower like the butterfly, neglecting all the ends of rational and immortal being, and go to the judgment mere triflers.

Beware of bad books, because principles imbibed and images gathered from them will abide in the memory and imagination for ever. The mind once polluted is never freed from its corruption—never, unless by an act of boundless grace, through the power of the Spirit of God.

Beware of them, because they are one of the most fruitful sources of eternal destruction. They are read in solitude. Their ravages are internal. Foundations of morality are undermined. The fatal arrow is fixed in the soul, while the victim only sees the gilded feather that guides its certain aim. He is lost, and descends to a hell the more intolerable, from a contrast with the scenes of fancied bliss with which the heart was filled by the vile, though gifted destroyer. The precious book of life was given to show you how you might secure the enrolment of your name among the saints in light; but you chose the book of death, with present fascinations of a corrupt press, and the surest means of securing a dreadful doom. If your epitaph were truly written, the passer-by in — grave yard would read.

"M— acquired a taste for reading bad books, died without hope, and went to his own place."

Shall this be your epitaph, dear reader? If not, make this pledge before God: "Henceforth I will beware of bad books, and never read what can intoxicate, pollute, or deprave the mind and heart." —American Tract Society.