

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWS

FOR WANT OF THOUGHT.

By the Rev. William Wye Smith.

The poet says, "Evil is wrought by want of thought, as well as want of heart." And often people get into a careless way of quoting or reading Scripture, and fall to understand it, for the simple reason of never trying to think what the words mean. I once heard from the pulpit, in the Scripture that was read on the occasion, "The God of Israel will be your reward" (Isa. 52: 13). The beautiful figure of an advance guard and a rear guard—God in front of us, and God behind us, for our protection and safety—was completely lost, just because rear was spelled in the old archaic form, *reer*. And as read, the clause was nonsense. Some years after, I happened to mention this circumstance to an experienced Christian, and he ingeniously confessed, "Well, that is the way I have always read it!"

At a convention I once attended, a man was teaching a large model Bible class, the lesson being on the healing of the paralytic (Mark 2). At the third verse it says he was "borne of four." It seems plain enough, and easy to understand, but our teacher had evidently got confused over the sound of the word "borne," and remarked, "I don't know whether it would be proper to call that man a twin, when there were four of them." I quietly said "B-o-r-n-e, borne, carried." "Oh, yes, yes," said the teacher, reflectively, and the incident was closed. But is it not strange that intelligent people should make such slips? The first resulting from the (now) absurd archaic spelling in all the British Bibles "printed by authority"; and the second from the mere "want of thought."

I remember, when a lad, for years I misunderstood (1 Cor. 15:37), "bare grain." I thought of "bare," not as referring to naked or simple grains of wheat, etc., but as the past participle of the verb "to bear." And a venerable Christian friend once asked me, "Why do we say, 'Lead us not into temptation,' when we are plainly told, concerning God (James 1: 13), "Neither tempteth he any man"? And I had to explain the obsolete meaning of "tempting"; now better conveyed by "testing"; "trying," "proving"; though we still say "tentative," meaning experimental.

And it is very difficult to make the ordinary Sunday-school boy or girl understand that in the common version of the Bible, "conversation" means behavior or manner of life; and "quick" means alive (though they sometimes cut a finger to the quick), or that "prevent" means anticipated, or "let" is to be understood as hindered. These and many other terms that have entirely changed their meaning—or others like "leasing," which was probably already obsolete in 1611; or "season," still used to signify Christ's sufferings, but in all other cases in an entirely different sense; "thought," several times in the Sermon on the Mount for "anxiety"; "seethe" for boil (though we talk of seething waters). These unnecessarily make the Word harder to be understood. The Revised Versions remedy nearly all such.

It is better perhaps to have a faulty understanding of the Word than not to think of it at all; as, for instance, the old lady thought the most wonderful part of the cure of the paralytic was the strength given him to carry his bed (Mark 2: 12), which she supposed was like her own, a big "four-poster,"—and admired the miracle all the more on account of her misunderstanding! Or, like another, who thought the

penny a day in the parable (the Roman silver penny, denarius; whence in Britain they get the "d" for penny or pence) was "no better than the sweat-shops," and wondered that the Lord "did not denounce the oppression of the poor, to give only a penny for a day's work"! The man had, at least, pity for the poor. It is a mark of an untrained moral nature to make a flip-pant or wrong use of Bible facts or statements. A man once, in a defiant way, said to me, when I urged him to take a stand against the evils of drink, "Am I my brother's keeper?" I told him he to a great extent was, and that it was not good to adopt the words of a murderer for his motto, even if he did find them in the Bible.

St. Catharines, Ont.

EASTER.

(By Ross Johnston.)

O joyous morning! born of blackest night;
As when at first "God said, 'let there be light
And there was light," so now, from darkness great
Of Sadducean gloom, as to man's state
When he has reached on life's tempestuous tide
The western margin of the great Divide,
And makes with Job the quest beyond his ken,
"If a man die," say, "Shall he live again?"
And lo, an answer comes to end the strife,
"I am the resurrection and the life."
The glorious sun-light gilds an empty tomb;
The risen Lord dispels the grave's dark gloom.
And Nature joins with gladsome tongue to sing
In jubilant hosannahs of the spring
The same grand truth of victory over death.
The ice-bound fields have felt the spirit's breath.
And lo, the tombs are open, and fair flowers,
Whose seed, long hid in dust akin to ours,
Come forth from mystery, and gloom, and night,
With perfumed lips rejoicing in the light,
And offering incense from their hearts of gold
Rich as the gifts of the wise men of old,
To the same King and Lord, who lived and died,
Who, to redeem the world, was crucified,
And now, "Alive forever more" He stands
And beckons us—with nail-prints in His hands—
To rise with Him, above the death of sin,
And thus, o'er death, the victory to win.
Whitby, Ont.

RESURRECTION.

(By Chas. G. D. Roberts.)

Daffodil, lily and crocus,
They stir, they break from the sod,
They are glad of the sun, and they open
Their golden hearts to God.
They and the wilding families—
Wind-flower, violet, May—
They rise from the long, long dark
To the ecstasy of day.
We, scattering troops and kindreds,
From out of the stars wind-blown
To this wayside corner of space,
This world that we call our own—
We, of the hedge-rows of Time,
We, too, shall divide the sod,
Emerge to the light, and blossom
With our hearts held up to God.

UNION IN AUSTRALIA.

A contemporary states—The scheme of union proposed for the Presbyterian and Anglican churches in Australia is the most elaborate programme of reconciliation between Episcopacy and Presbytery since the days of the Savoy conference. The compact in Australia has been drawn by a joint committee comprising on the Episcopalian side the Archbishop of Melbourne, three other bishops, six priests, and two laymen; and on the Presbyterian side two ex-Moderators of General Assembly, nine other ministers, and two laymen. They began work by the model of the so-called Lambeth quadrilateral, and speedily agreed on the first three points—that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments should be accepted as an infallible rule of faith and practice; that the standard of doctrine should be the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, and that the sacraments observed in the united Church should be the Lord's Supper and baptism. On the fourth point, "the historic episcopate locally adapted," there came a hitch, and it took long negotiation to find a way out satisfactory to both parties. After a year of conferences, the joint committee announced the adoption of the following principles—The united Church shall be without any connection with the State. It shall recognize that the same succession of ministerial orders was common to all Christians up until the Reformation, and since then the succession has been maintained with equal validity in the Anglican Church through ordination by bishops, and in the Presbyterian Church through Presbytery presided over by Moderators. In forming the united Church there shall be held to be no difference whatever in the standing, rights, and privileges of Presbyterian ministers and of Anglican priests. After the two Churches are united, all ministers shall be called Presbyters. Some form of superintendence will then be necessary and the Church shall therefore have power to elect any Presbyter to be a bishop. Candidates for the ministry shall be first ordained to preach without right to administer the sacraments, and shall then be called deacons or licentiate. When they are ordained as Presbyters, with power of administering sacraments, the act shall be performed with the laying on of hands of one bishop and at least three Presbyters. The Book of Common Prayer is to be sanctioned and an additional form of worship with it, but local congregations, if they prefer, may adhere to non-liturgical services. Church wardens and ruling elders shall be superseded by an order of local lay officials, for whom no name is yet designated, who shall have oversight of the local congregation, but shall not have right to participate in the dispensation of the Communion. In the actual consummation of the union it is proposed that the primate of the Anglican Church shall take every Presbyterian minister by the hand and confer upon him "all the rights, powers, and authorities pertaining to the office of a priest in the Church as set forth in the ordinal of the Church of England." Then the Moderator of the Presbyterian Assembly shall in turn confer by name on every Anglican priest "all the rights, powers, and authorities pertaining to the office of a Presbyter in the Church as set forth in the ordinal of the Presbyterian Church." All this elaborate plan must now go before the Presbyterian General Assembly and the Anglican General Synod.

The higher things in life are not reached if we are not willing to forsake things that are low.

Never fear to bring the sublimest motive to the smallest duty, and the most infinite comfort to the smallest trouble.—Phillips Brooks.