

beauty that our *supreme nature* in doing anything must be the glory of God, the *Reviewers* with as great ingenuity as incorrectness affirms that he regards it as the only motive, excluding all subordinate ones;—an opinion not certainly held by Dr. C.

With all the pretensions of the writer, how feeble and puerile are his charges, and how forlorn and desperate must infidelity be, when it is obliged to resort to such weapons. Even if Dr. C. were to be all that is here stated, the truth of God would be in no way endangered. It stands always secure and invincible, and independent of any of its defenders. The gates of hell cannot prevail against it.

It is, however, to be regretted that the article in question will rejoice the heart of the Romanist, who will find ample matter for turning into ridicule the bold champion, who encountered and defeated the famous Cardinal Wiseman.

### THE NEW TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE.

*To the Editor of the Record.*

SIR.—You are doubtless aware of the great enterprise undertaken and now in progress by the American Bible Union, relative to a new English translation of the Sacred Scriptures. I have lately seen two or three numbers of the work purporting to have been issued with the view of soliciting criticism. I had not a sufficient opportunity of examining them, to be able to give a decided opinion as to their accuracy or correspondence with the original. I therefore thus publicly refer to this enterprise, that others better qualified and having greater facilities than I, may be led to a thorough investigation of the subject, before the country may be induced, by *calumnies and newspaper recommendations*, to receive and sanction a work which may not only be worthless but very pernicious.

It may be asserted as an undeniable principle, that sacred things should be touched only with clean hands; and that all rash or unnecessary interference with the commonly received translations of the Bible ought to be opposed and deprecated. The ordinary phraseology of the word of God should not be unsettled without very cogent reasons—which, in my opinion, cannot be adduced in this instance.

I know that no translation can claim infallibility, and that in some minor points ours is capable of improvement. This must necessarily be the case with every translation in the lapse of time; since language, being only conventional signs of ideas, must vary with the changing circumstances of man. It is, therefore, the best evidence of the talent, learning, and faithfulness of the English translators, that the result of their labours has stood the criticism of centuries, and been found, on all fundamental points, correct; and that the alterations necessary to express the sense of the original are very few indeed, and comparatively unimportant. Hence, men of inferior attainments, to guard against the charge of presumption and ignorance, should hesitate in attempting a change which is sure to prove an injury and failure rather than an improvement.—Whilst others of the highest qualifications will feel that such change is absolutely necessary to the truth of scripture, ere they should adopt a course which would undoubtedly unsettle the minds of a large portion of the Christian world as to the phraseology of Divine revelation.

That this necessity does not exist is evident from the fact that a few marginal notes have been found sufficient to explain all the words or sentences in our translation which are obscure or incorrect. Neither will the new translation supersede the necessity of such notes, if I may judge

from the specimens I have seen of the work. On the contrary, I am satisfied this necessity will be vastly increased. Well, therefore, may the advantage be come questionable, and the propriety of the undertaking become doubtful.

If, however, the new translation had been content to alter, according to their instructions as stated in the prospectus, only where alterations were needed to express the sentiments of the original, they would have been less censurable. But to these instructions, the most superficial reader will see, they have not adhered. They have varied the language without the slightest variation of ideas, or the slightest improvement in the mode of expression. I would then ask to what purpose are the Christian's trains of thought, which are always associated with words, to be thus rudely unhinged and deranged?

Another feature in the new translation, which I consider a serious error, is an attempt to retain the original *modes* of expression and *order* of words. The English translator's duty is to express the *ideas* of the original in the *mode* and *order* of words of an Englishman speaking correctly his own language, otherwise the language is rendered impure.

Again, in hastily glancing over a few passages in the new translation, I observed several inaccuracies and obscurities.—For example: Job, ii. and iii. the word "curse" is rendered "bless." In a note we are told that the word has both significations, but that it is more natural to suppose Job's wife addressing him in the language of irony. Well, what is the difference? and why the alteration? I always thought a word taken ironically, was to be understood in a sense the opposite of its usual signification. But the ordinary reader would infer from this translation and the reasons assigned for it, that Job's wife attributed all his calamities to his integrity; and that she hoped for returning prosperity if she could prevail on him to abandon his integrity. This view of the passage appears to me most irrational. I think it is plain that she in an irreligious spirit wished him to take a course which the ungodly are always ready to take, viz. by an act of rash and infelicitous rebellion against God to plunge into eternity to get rid of temporal distress.

Again, 2 John, xiii. the word "chairman" is translated "hail," a common word of salutation.—John directs that men of erroneous principles should not be countenanced in propagating error, and that Christians should not wish them the joy of success; but I do not think he prohibits the common courtesies of civilised society to be paid to such.—"Godspeed" may not be the best English word to be used, but I am sure it expresses the correct idea which "hail" does not.

Another objection I make to the new translation is, the retaining of the original word, because of difficulty in finding an English term to correspond therewith, to the utter mystification of the sense.—E. G.

Job, iii. and vi. "Who are skilled to rouse the *leviathan*."—I ask is this a translation which conveys any definite idea to the English reader? "*Leviathan*" signifies any *crooked* or *twisted* animal, (as the alligator,) and may naturally have been supposed by the old translators figuratively to refer to professional mourners, who were in the habit of throwing their bodies into wild contortions, expressive of their grief. In this view the idea conveyed in our translation is very appropriate to Job's case, but the new translation is quite unintelligible.

Again, in Rev. vi. and vii. "a *choenix* of wheat for a *denarius*." &c., is no improvement. Though we have no single terms to express the quantity or value of these words, yet I maintain that the common reading expresses the *sense* of the original better than the new—what does the English reader know of "*choenix*" or "*denarius*?" On the whole, I think this enterprise, notwithstanding the recommendations of the press and the *prestige* of a vast array of talent and learning, as well as unusual facilities, rather ostentatiously

exhibited, should be patronized with great caution. One very suspicious circumstance is, that the names of the parties engaged as translators are generally withheld, and those published are little known in the literary world. Besides, the machinery is utterly impracticable. If each translator has to consult from fifty to one hundred authorities on every difficult or doubtful word, how is it possible for *three* reviewers to go over the same ground in reference to the *whole* volume? Then these would need superior learning and talent, as well as sources of information to enable them to correct errors; otherwise, they are likely to sanction the views of the translators without much investigation, and thus each portion of the work would virtually rest on the authority of one. I, therefore, have no very sanguine hopes from this undertaking. Some of the American publishers may be expecting large pecuniary benefits; but I question if the Christian church will derive much advantage.

I am yours, &c.

T. M.

Stratford, Nov., 1855.

### MISSIONARY INTELLIGENCE—FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

BOMBAY.—In the *Home and Foreign Record* we find various tributes to the memory of the late Rev. Robert Nisbet. One writer says, "I do not think that I ever saw so uncommon an expression of deep regret over the death of any man in India, as we have just witnessed over the grave of our dear colleague. Even the native newspapers have spoken of him with profound regard—almost with reverence." Another says, "our loss is inexpressible: no words, whilst the cloud still hangs heavily over us, can fully utter it. Day after day some one or other casts up, who, in our departed brother, mourns the loss of a friend better than a brother, a father in Christ, a counsellor, a revered teacher; and, as yet, so various and extensive seems to have been his hidden influence on the heathen and Christian population, that we cannot measure how many more may appear to mingle their sorrow with ours." His funeral was attended by about 450 Europeans, and as for the natives, the crowd was excessive. In commemoration of Mr. Nesbit and as a tribute to his work, a scholarship is to be founded in the Institution at Bombay, to be denominated "The Nesbit Theological Scholarship."

FIRST FRUITS AMONG THE BOHORAS.—The following interesting particulars are given, regarding an interesting convert, the first fruits among the Bohoras of Western and Central India:—

Owing to the trying nature of the tidings which I communicated to you by last mail, I did not mention an interesting case of admission into our native church, which occurred on the 7th July, when I had the pleasure of baptizing Ismail Ibrahim, the first Bohora who, so far as we know, has yet embraced Christianity in India. This young man, who is about twenty-six years of age, made my acquaintance about a year ago, when he soon showed a disposition to embrace Christianity, which was not unnoticed by his acquaintances, who resorted even to violence to prevent him coming to the Mission House, cruelly beating him and wounding him on the skull, so severely that he had to be sent to the hospital. His own safety required that he should get accommodation in the Mission House; and thus he obtained, dwelling in the same room with Hazi, the Sudhian convert, who has been of great use to him, both by way of precept and example. I