

ment, as they are pure and elegant in composition. Their theology is thoroughly Scriptural.

To the Wesleyan societies and congregations, wherever situated, especially in Great Britain and America, these hymns are of inestimable value, and even an instance of Charles Wesley, which they are con- fessing which is only exceeded by that of the Holy Scriptures. No other hymns in which their memories are, therefore, richly the English language fully exhibit the views of apostolical Christianity which the author and his brother were the means of reviving. All that those men of God did at the pulpit, and thousands of their spiritual children have experienced, the hymns adequately express. They assume that it is the common privilege of believers to enjoy the direct and abiding witness of their personal adoption; to live and die in the conscious possession of that perfect love which casteth out fear; and they express a strong and irresistible desire for those blessings with the mighty faith by which they are obtained. Thus he teaches the mourner penitent to pray for pardon, and the peace of God which attends it:—

“O that I could the blessing prove,
My heart's extreme desire,
To live happy in my Father's love,
And in his arms expire.”

In reference to the higher blessings of entire sanctification, he thus sings:—

“Where the indubitable seal
That ascends the kingdom in air,
The powerful stamp I long to feel,
The signature of love divine,
O shed it in my heart abroad,
Paleness of face, of heaven, of God.”

No man ever excelled him in expressing the power of faith:—

“The thing surpasses all my thought,
But faithful of my Lord,
Through unbelief I stagger not,
For God hath spoke the word.

Faith, mighty faith, the promise seal,
And looks to that alone,
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, “It shall be done.”

My flesh, which cries, “It cannot be,
Shall silence be before the Lord,
And earth, and hell, and ev'ry shade
At Jesus' everliving word.”

Great praise is due to the excellent Dr. Watts for the hymns with which he favored the Churches. Many of them are wonderfully beautiful and devotional. He had the honour, too, of taking the lead in the most important service; being the first of our poets that successfully applied his talents to such lyrical compositions as are adapted to the use and edification of Christian assemblies. But in the vehement language of the heart, in power of expression, in the variety of his metres, and in the general structure of his verse, he is not equal to Charles Wesley, any more than in richness of evangelical sentiment, and in deep religious experience. The doctor teaches Christians to sing, with mixed emotions of desire, hope, and doubt,

“Could I see but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er,
Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood
Should I fight us from the shore.”

Whereas Charles Wesley has attained the dearest eminence, and thence triumphantly exclaims,

The promised land, from Pagan steep,
I now exult to see,
My hope is full (O glorious hope)
Of immortality.

It was no hyperbole, but sober truth which the poet Fletcher uttered when he said, “One of the greatest blessings that God has bestowed upon the Methodists, next to the Bible, is their collection of hymns.”

The special providence of God is strikingly seen in raising up John and Charles Wesley as the chief instruments of the revival of religion to which the name of Methodism has been given. They were one in mind and heart; both were highly gifted, and have been the means of conferring the most substantial benefits upon the grateful people who have entered into their labours; yet their endowments and services were vastly dissimilar; and their work would have been seriously defective had either of them been wanting. John was a means, under God, of giving the Methodists their theology and discipline; yet, with these mighty advantages, what could they do without the hymns of Charles? How could they give adequate expression to the feelings of their hearts in the various religious services, if this “sweet singer” had never lived, or had directed his genius for poetry to other objects? An eminent man is reported to have said, “Let who may legis-

late for my people; only let me compose the ballads which they sing, and I will form their character.” It is doubtful whether any human agency whatever has contri- buted more directly to form the character of the Methodist societies than the hymns of Charles Wesley, which they are con- fessing which is only exceeded by that of the Holy Scriptures. No other hymns in which their memories are, therefore, richly the English language fully exhibit the views of apostolical Christianity which the author and his brother were the means of reviving. All that those men of God did at the pulpit, and thousands of their spiritual children have experienced, the hymns adequately express. They assume that it is the common privilege of believers to enjoy the direct and abiding witness of their personal adoption; to live and die in the conscious possession of that perfect love which casteth out fear; and they express a strong and irresistible desire for those blessings with the mighty faith by which they are obtained. Thus he teaches the mourner penitent to pray for pardon, and the peace of God which attends it:—

My Jesus, Jesus,
And hail thy name,
Thy life avails me,
Thy Spirit is my life.

What is there here
That keeps me here,
When angels beckon me away,
And Jesus bids me come?

“I had found his hymns and spiritual songs; and they have only exchanged them for the song of Moses and of the Lambs.”

It is an important fact, that this gifted man, apparently without design, has anticipated all the wants of the Wesleyan connection, with respect to devotional poetry. He has supplied it with hymns adapted to every religious service, even missionary meetings, which were unknown in his time, and (strange as it may seem!) even the ordination of ministers. He did indeed speak to the people in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, to their edification and comfort. In every place, and at all times, he “had a hymn, had a psalm,” suited to the occasion; for he was

“Adapted to immortal verse.”

at funerals, at weddings, in the domestic circle, in the public congregation, at the table of the Lord, he was prepared to lead the devotions of those around him. When attended by immense multitudes in the open air, and under the wide canopy of heaven, he called upon them to sing with heart and voice:—

Ye who sustain and value, in prayer abroad,
Ye who lift and adore, continue the sound,
Break forth into singing, ye trees of the wood,
For Jesus is bringing lost sinners to God.

On the return of his wife's birth-day, he invited her to join in the holy and joyous strain:—

Come away to the choir,
My beloved, arise,
And rejoice on the day thou wast born, &c.

It may truly be said of him, as of the heavenly minstrel, that his “harp” was “ever tuned;” and that whenever he

“Introduced
His sacred song, he wakened raptures high.”

In every object of nature, in every event of life, and especially in the gracious provisions of the Gospel, he saw the hand and heart of God;

“Then into hymns
Burst forth, and in celestial measures moved.”

His heart overflowed with sacred verse which he never ceased to beat, and his tanelful voice was never silent till it was silenced in death. He is gone; but the imperishable fruit of his sanctified genius remains, as one of the richest legacies ever bequeathed to the Church by her faithful sons.

Biblical Department.

A NATIONAL REVIVAL OF RELIGION ATTENDING UPON A PUBLIC TRANSLATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

(By the Rev. George Coats, LL. D.)

The volume which supremely contains the rules of life, and the promises of eternity, must be inestimable. But I think that we are entitled to look further than its importance to the individual. I think that we have palpable grounds for extending its influence to the fate of nations. It is my full impression, gathered from every source of history, and experience, within my power; that, in all lands, every general effort, every labour of many minds, on a scale to deserve the name of a public propagation of the Scriptures, has been followed by national blessings; in its highest

stage—that of a national revival of Religion; and this revival, not the obscure, tardy, and fluctuating progress which Religion ordinarily makes through the mind of the age; but a superadded blessing, an interposition, vivid, brilliant, and plain to all eyes,—a current of sacred waters, springing with sudden force and freshness through the moral soil,—a flash of divine fire, shooting through the general darkness, and turning every eye, as it may be constituted, in wonder, terror, or adoration, on the Heaven from which it came.

In this place we must not go into detail; but a glance at the history of Religion gives the most unequivocal proof of the principle. So early as the latest periods of the Jewish Commonwealth, the use, or disuse, of the Law of Moses, implying the honour, or neglect, of the only Scriptures of the time, was equivalent to the religious purity, or corruption, of the people. But the proof stands out more distinct as we descend. The neglect of the law wrought all the crimes which consigned the nation to the Babylonish chain. It is discoverable, that in every age the neglect of the Scriptures has equally issued in an influx of the most debasing superstition; and that this superstition has always invariably taken the form of IMAGE WORSHIP.

On the restoration of Judah, the first great act of Ezra (about B. C. 446), was to collect and translate the Scriptures into the Chaldee, then the language of the people. The result was one of the most extraordinary changes that ever occurred in national mood. From that time forth, no Israelite ever bowed before an idol. And this is the more striking, as idolatry had been the original vice of the people, daringly irrepressible by the strong prohibitions of their Law, surviving every divine penalty, and cherished to the last moment, even while the denunciations of their prophets pronounced this especial crime the cause of the national ruin. Yet, after their return, though the same temptation existed, though they were surrounded by the same luxurious, festive, and corrupt nations of idolatry, though image worship was the same sensual, glittering, idle, and licentious appeal to their passions, the Israelite was an idolater no more. The Scriptures were in the general hand, and they were his divine security.

It has been conceived that this sudden superiority to the besetting sin of their fathers arose from the bitter remembrances of the Babylonish chain. But the cause is altogether too narrow for an effect of such extent, completeness, and continuance.—Nothing is more rapidly forgotten than the pangs of national punishment; nothing makes a slighter impress on the living generation than the pangs of the past. The captivity had palpably been much lightened toward its close. The people, like their fathers in Egypt, as palpably loved the luxuries of Babylon more than they hated its scourge. The whole living generation were Chaldean. Of the multitudes who had survived the captivity, scarcely above fifty thousand could ever be induced to return. The permanent Jewish abhorrence of idolatry was the work of the national revival of Religion; and that revival the work of the direct energy of Heaven, in the national delivery of the Scriptures.

(B. C. 277.)—A still more distinguished era was to follow; the revival of Religion beyond the narrow confines of Judah—the restoration of the primary religion of all mankind, the behoof in a Redeemer. The delivery of the Scriptures was again to be made the instrument. And as the service was to be universal, the delivery was effected in the most comprehensive tongue of man. The Scriptures were translated into Greek, a translation which opened them to the whole civilized world of antiquity. The apostolic miracle of the gift of tongues, stupendous as it was, was but an additional power of the same order; to pass over the bounds of civilization, and transfer the Gospel through the barbarian regions of the globe. The new delivery by the Septuagint was the divine preparative for a revival of Religion, and that revival was CHRISTIANITY.

(A. D. 600.)—Another era was to come. In the course of five centuries of various fortunes and political tumults, the Scriptures had fallen into neglect throughout Christendom. In the Great Eastern Church they had gradually been withdrawn from the laity, until the custody amounted to a prohibition; in the Great Western Church the growth of the papal supremacy, and

the determination of Rome to prohibit their translation into the popular tongue, amounted still more directly to a refusal of the Scriptures. The habitual result followed—an influx of human traditions, and unauthorized ceremonial, consummated, in both, by the worship of images. But, “Come out of her, my people,” was again to be called to the chosen servants of Heaven; and the call was again to be made by a new delivery of the Scriptures. In the middle of the seventh century, when the Bible was utterly lost to popular knowledge, and the East overflowed with abomination; a copy of the New Testament accidentally fell into the hands of a young Syrian. He read it with astonishment, and instantly proclaimed his discovery of truths, which had so long perished from the public mind, from the teaching of the priesthood, and from the forum of the imperial religion. Adopting St. Paul as his model, and filled with a sacred love of the labours of the great Apostle, he devoted his life to the propagation of the Scriptures. Giving himself and his followers the names of the principal disciples of the early Church, and pronouncing the new-found Scriptures the only way of Salvation, he began his career through Asia. A great revival of religion was the instant result. The deserts of the North, the fertile districts of Asia Minor, and the brilliant, corrupt, and half-paganized cities of the Greek Empire, were equally traversed by pilgrim preachers, bearing the Bible in their hands, and summing up all men to follow it as the only guide to the virtues and glories of Christianity. The revival was conspicuous and extraordinary. The ancient fabric of the Christian Church in Asia was, in a great degree, restored. The Apostolic dominion seemed to have been raised from the dead. The names consecrated to Christian memory by the Epistles of St. Paul, were renewed. Six churches in the Asiatic provinces were formed, bearing the titles of the congregations to which the Epistles were written. The vanished habits and intercourses of the Christian world were again in living action. The preachers were again Titus, Timothy, Tychicus, Sylvanus. The whole multitude called themselves Paulicians, in honour of St. Paul; and across Asia was finally transmitted the light which so many ages after awoke Protestantism in the dungeons of Rome.

(A. D. 1160.)—Another era of revival was to come, and the delivery of the Scriptures was again to be the instrument. In the Great Western Church, the Scriptures, given to the people only in Latin, had fallen into disuse by the general decay of that tongue, in the northern invasions. The papal supremacy in the sixth century had enforced this disuse by the weight of an authority rapidly growing irresistible, and virtually prohibited the translation of the Scriptures into the popular languages.—The effect had been tantamount to their extinction. When they are no longer in the hands of the laity, they soon cease to be in the hands of the priesthood. The result was true to experience, universal darkness, issuing in the worship of images.

It is far from my purpose here to give offence to any man who calls himself by the name of Christian. The adherents of the Church of Rome angrily disclaim the title of idolaters. I shall, therefore, not apply it to them. But history has no more notorious fact than that the original schism which separated the Eastern Church from the Romish, and which was urged into a war, and a final separation of Rome from the Eastern Empire; was openly grounded on the imperial decrees against the worship of images, and on the papal resolve to worship them. “I shall dispatch my orders to Rome, and extinguish idolatry, by breaking the image in pieces,” was the language of the Emperor Leo to Gregory the II. “The eyes of the nations revere as a God on earth! St. Peter, whose image you threaten to destroy,” was the papal defiance, followed by a general call of Italy to arms, and a war of hideous slaughter.

But, when it was again the divine will to restore the day, the delivery of the Scriptures was again to be the morning star. In the middle of the twelfth century, Waldo, a merchant of Lyons, was roused to search the Scriptures, by the new and startling demand, that all men should worship the Host. “Unable to bow his better to a paradox, which so utterly defied his understanding, he looked for its authority in the sacred records of the Christian Church, which rested upon him there, inspired him to give them