

PRESENT SUFFERINGS AND FUTURE GLORY.

THE MESSAGE PREACHED BY THE N. C. BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION AT HELENBURG, SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 10, 1868, BY BROTHER J. C. HAYES, OF WILMINGTON, N. C.

I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.—Rom. VIII. 18.

The Bible describes heaven by comparison. There is a reason for this. The constitution of our minds is such, that we can have no apprehension of objects which we have never seen, unless they be compared with, or compared with objects which we are familiar.

Our language proceeds upon this principle. Men first gave names to material objects, and then, as thought expanded, and new ideas were born, they transferred these names to objects, and to actions of immaterial nature.

Judge Rowan of Kentucky used to say, that he would not care much for a heaven which a man could describe; but the heaven which he desired was one of which even a Paul must say, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

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I have seen a man with a leg and an arm shattered by bullets. He was lying upon a cot with his shattered leg bandaged, and supported by a rope which hung in a noose from the ceiling. He would lie in one position until he could endure it no longer; and then knowing, that any movement of his body might make the shattered bones crack and rattle within his torn flesh, he would try to move his poor sinking frame just an inch or two at a time, and, as the bones moved, it was terrible to witness his sufferings. His whole frame seemed to be racked with agony; the many bones would crumple, and he would utter a suppressed "ah!"

On the other hand, he was equally well prepared to calculate the glory to be revealed. One of our poets, after painting terrible sights till the reader has "supped full with horrors," says:

"We may now notice some of the sufferings of this present time, remembering that the worse we make them out to be, the more glorious by comparison will appear the rest that remaineth for the people of God. One of the sources of suffering in this world is

POVERTY. This is a dire evil. Men may philosophize as they will about the dangers and evils of wealth and luxury, and about a virtuous poverty and its attendant blessings; but with all our philosophy, poverty is still a terrible calamity. I have visited the widow with her six helpless children, and found them with only two sticks of wood, when the pitiless storms of snow and sleet were beating upon the ice-bound earth, and when there was not a morsel of food in the house, and not a cent with which to buy. Do you ever think of the poverty of many a struggling, toiling minister of Christ in these days of darkness and of trial? Have you not known such men, who had been reared amid luxury, men of culture and attainments, who were often compelled to hear mortifying remarks made by strangers, who would refer to the shabby and insufficient dress of the preacher's little children? His little ones are running upon the pavement with their feet bare, cold and blue, and some well-meaning stranger will say, "Poor little things! They are bare-footed, and so thinly clad!"

And then the tears well up from the depths of the father's stricken heart, and in an agony of soul he lifts his eyes to heaven, and says, "God bless the little darlings! God knows I would provide better for them if I could." But he stifles the rising sob, and turns his troubled mind and stricken heart to his work, looking into the recompense of the reward. Brethren this is hard—hard to bear. God help you my toiling brother!

I have sometimes pictured to myself the meeting between Elijah and the widow of Zarephath. The prophet has reached the outskirts of the city, and he sees a poor woman picking up the broken sticks and little bits of wood which are lying neglected in-out-of-the-way corners. He accosts her, and asks her at first for a drink of water only—She looks so poor, that he has not the heart to ask her for bread. But as she goes off to bring the water, stimulated by hunger, he asks her to bring him a morsel of bread too. This last request pierced to the core of her sad heart, and broke up the fountains of the great deep. The mother's grief burst forth: "As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse; and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son; that we may eat it and die." There was suffering here. How much of just such suffering now exists among the widows and orphans of this stricken land!

But another source of great suffering is

BODILY PAIN. I have seen a man with a leg and an arm shattered by bullets. He was lying upon a cot with his shattered leg bandaged, and supported by a rope which hung in a noose from the ceiling. He would lie in one position until he could endure it no longer; and then knowing, that any movement of his body might make the shattered bones crack and rattle within his torn flesh, he would try to move his poor sinking frame just an inch or two at a time, and, as the bones moved, it was terrible to witness his sufferings. His whole frame seemed to be racked with agony; the many bones would crumple, and he would utter a suppressed "ah!"

I have seen the surgeon using his instruments in the terrible operation of "resection;" and as the blood spouted, and the muscles quivered, and the delicate nerves were severed, and the surgeon's

hand was thrust far in the mangled flesh, it has made me thank God that there was such a thing as chloroform. These sufferings, however, are comparatively slight in point of intensity; for as soon as they go beyond a certain point of agony, they wear out the organism. Exhausted nature soon reaches the limit of endurance, and then refuses to rebel against the injury of the frame, and then pain ceases. Bodily suffering of the most excruciating kind, is necessarily limited, too, in point of continuance. Death, at the worst soon comes, and sometimes he is a welcome messenger of release.

Let us now consider the glory of the better land. We may here give the fullest play to the imagination; for, however glorious the realms of bliss may appear to us "in visions of enraptured thought," we are notified beforehand that our highest conception of the glories of the upper world must fall infinitely short of the grand reality. I cannot conceive the utmost capacity of human suffering here; and yet this is nothing as compared with the glory there. We may therefore feel safe in picturing to ourselves the scenes which we may think will delight us most, and in accordance with our various tastes we may revel in the most exquisite dreams of bliss, feeling confident that the highest reach of the most poetic fancy will sink into nothing when heaven itself shall blaze out upon our astonished view.

Some of you are fond of music, and are delighted when you hear sweet voices discoursing the charming songs of our Sunday Schools. But what are these compared with the song of Moses and the Lamb, chanted by the pure voices of the general assembly and church of the first born, redeemed, regenerated and disenthralled from all the discords of sin! Some of us love to study; and as we work on some deep passage of God's word, as we strive to look into the mysteries of God's sovereignty and man's free agency, we may feel like saying with John Foster, "Never mind! I'll find you out in eternity." What floods of light shall there be thrown upon the questions which divide Christ's people here. My Methodist brother, you and I shall not quarrel there over God's sovereignty and man's free will. We shall see eye to eye in the pure, clear light of our glorified Saviour's face. We shall be amazed to see how small were some of the objects which arose between our eyes and heaven, and how these little things obstructed our view, and hid the glory of God from our sight. You have sometimes stood at a distance from some grand building, and you have seen how, by placing a single finger immediately in front of your eyes, you could shut out the whole massive pile from sight. But you approach the building, and the finger seems to become smaller, and the building grows larger, until you reach the beautiful structure, and then the finger seems to be a mere nothing, and your eyes are filled with the sight of the magnificent monument of architectural skill. So shall we find it in our progress to mansions in the skies—the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

Yes, I would say, abhor every species of evil, and even the appearance of it, and keep yourselves from contracting any evil habit which in the end, like the fabled monster, must destroy you both in body and in soul. There are some evils, some very great evils, which the world looks upon as respectable, and for this reason they are the more dangerous.

They decay the unsuspecting and unwary oftentimes from the path of rectitude, and lead them in the path of folly and crime.

One of these evils is the fashionable dance, made respectable by its introduction into fashionable circles, and by its having had the countenance of two many cases of professed Christians. It has thus become one of the most fruitful sources of evil in our land, because it is the leader, the great leader, to others more dangerous and destructive. It was characteristic of the dancers in Job's day to "say unto God, depart from us; for we desire not a knowledge of thy ways," and to ask the questions, "What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?" It is characteristic of dancers in our day to pursue the same course. The same cause produces the same effect now as it did then.

Hence, I hesitate not to say that these professing Christians who engage in the dance themselves, or "send forth their little ones" to do the same, are unworthy of the name of Christian, and ought to renounce it. Many a young man, and many a young woman, not wishing to seem singular, not having the moral courage to resist temptation, and without hearing some worldly-minded professor speaking favorably of the dance, have been led to engage in it, to enter upon the perilous path, which has led so many to an infamy worse than death. Oh! could all the fair forms, which once had within them unsuspecting, loving hearts, rise up and tell their experiences; tell how their hearts had been crushed, hopes blighted, and how the dance had been to them a dance of death; men would indeed abhor it; "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man," says Solomon; "but the end thereof are the ways of death."

These words apply to the fashion-able dance of our day as much as anything I know of. We hear it said by hundreds, and church members too, among the number, "Oh! there is no real harm in it; it is only an innocent amusement." It must seem right of course, to such persons; but a history of the dance, in all ages, shows it to have been a way of death, and still a way of death to hundreds and thousands. It is an evil then, a very great evil, and should be abhorred by every one claiming to be a Christian.

The editor of the Episcopal Church organ at Chicago, says: "Under no circumstances are these columns open to discuss any official act of any Bishop in the Church, or any expression of opinion which a Bishop makes, or any advice which he gives. As Bishop, he is strictly above any judgment of ours, or any other man's."

Abhor that which is evil. When a man abhors a thing, he has such a repulsive feeling towards it that he shuns it, and has nothing to do with it. Now, just so would the apostle have men to feel and act in reference to everything that is evil—abhor it, shun it, get away from it. And not only would he have them to shun what they know to be evil; but that also which has the appearance of it. Solomon said, long before Paul's day, "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men—avoid it, pass not by it; turn from it and pass away." This "advice of the wise man" is in keeping with that of the apostle, and any one who will seriously consider the state of things in our country to-day, must see that this advice is greatly needed at this time. There is no man who is not blind, but what can we see that there are great, monstrous, soul-killing, soul-damning evils in our very midst, which, like cancerous tumors are eating away in the very heart of society, and destroying that high toned sense of honor—say nothing of religion—that has heretofore been characteristic of the section of country to which we belong. There should be an earnest effort, therefore on the part of each individual to shun all manner of evil, first, for his own good, then for the good of others, and also for the good of the country at large. For it is evident that the example and influence of the present generation will be transmitted to the next, so that it may be said of them, as it was said of certain ones in the past; "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge."

But few, however, seem to take this view of the case. The majority of them seem to have caught the infection of the age, a reckless, don't care, dare-devil sort of a spirit, going ahead regardless of the deplorable result, which must inevitably follow. Now this a terrible state of things, and so long as this state of things continues, there must be a downward tendency, both in the scale of morals and religion.

A demoralized country cannot possibly be a happy, prosperous country; for "happy" only "is that people whose God is the Lord." Oh! that I had the power to reach the ear of every young man in our country to-day, I would say, abhor evil, abhor evil; for though "Vice is of so frightful a mien, That to be hated needs but to be seen; Yet, seen too often, face to face, We first parody, then pity, then embrace."

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The need of the work is so frequently taken for granted. It is assumed by many, that it is a very easy undertaking for scholars to correct all the errors and supply the defects of the Common Version, and that it stands upon the same footing as other works which require only learning and skill to translate accurately. And the same arguments are sometimes used for a faithful English version of the Sacred Scriptures, as would be employed on behalf of a faithful publication of Homer's Iliad or Virgil's Aeneid. But the cases are widely different.

If the Bible were merely a textbook of religion or morality, reasons abound for preserving it as it is. Suppose that it does differ in numerous instances from the Hebrew and Greek originals, in the main it agrees with them. If a doctrine is in some places obscured by an imperfect translation, in other places it shines out clearly. If errors of fact exist, truths superabound. If faults are apparent, beauties are multiplied.

And the version is now established. Millions read it. The churches of the saints are edified, and sinners are converted, by its teachings. To disturb it, excites prejudice and opposition, and may, in some instances, unsettle the faith of weak minds. Why not let well enough alone, and do all the good you can with the book as it is?

These and many other arguments could, with a strong show of reason, be urged in the case supposed. But the real case is of another character. The Author of the Book, and our relations to Him, must be regarded. The nature and character of the communications, and their value to men, must be taken into account. The effects of the errors and imperfections existing can not be overlooked.

The influence of the principles involved in the work of revision, upon the minds of God's people and of the world.

The results of revision already realized, and the prospective results, among all nations.

All these and many other subjects of investigation are naturally suggested. To pursue the examination of such matters at length would indefinitely extend these articles. Let us glance over them cursorily.

The Author of the Book is the same Being who made all things and by whom all things subsist, through whom alone we know anything, and on whom we depend for all things. In it He reveals himself. Suppose there was only one mistake in the book, and that mistake concealed or obscured His Godhead. Take for instance 2 Peter 1, 1, where occurs in the Common Version the phrase: "God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ." If any scholar of the Redeemer knows, as all scholars know, that the original Greek says: "OUR GOD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST;" would he be willing to conceal this fact from all who read the Bible by retaining the old erroneous translation? Would any arguments of expediency satisfy him thus to dishonor Him who had come from his throne of glory, assumed our nature, suffered and died for us?

Our relations to Him are of the most influential character. We are his creatures, his subjects, his redeemed. He has pardoned us as rebels, restored us to favor, called us his friends, adopted us into his family. We owe everything to Him. Shall we hide his greatness and his glory from the world? Shall we not rather make every sacrifice to reveal them more clearly?

What directions does He give in such cases? At the close of the Revelation, He says: "I testify to every one that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, if any one shall add to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any one shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book."

The communications conveyed to our race in the Sacred Scriptures, are of infinite value. The wisdom of Jehovah could not add anything to render it more important, that men should study and believe the words of revelation. Their immortal interests depend upon them.

Mistakes in such matters are of the highest consequence. Error here may be eternal. It is not a gain, and should, that in some part of

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Is it sufficient that some commentary may explain the fault and furnish the proper rendering? He may never see a commentary on the passage, and still remain in error. Hundreds have lived in ignorance and died in despair, on account of the word "damnation" in 1 Cor. xi, 29.

Thousands have become infidels in consequence of false translations in the Old Testament and in the New.

Before examining the influence of the principles involved in revision, we shall here introduce some of the comparisons between translations in the Common Version and in the Revised Testament, and Genesis and Job, as published by the Bible Union.

Wm. H. WICKOFF, Corresponding Secretary.

REVISION OF THE ENGLISH SCRIPTURES.

AMERICAN BIBLE UNION, 7, N. 7th Street, Phila., Pa.

The hopelessness of the project of uniting all denominations in the work of revising the English Scriptures, forces us to the inquiry whether the work is really needed, and if so, how it can be successfully accomplished.

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BROTHER MINNA, I have been a regular reader of the Recorder for about sixteen years; it is a welcome visitor to me. I have received much valuable information from it, and been greatly encouraged by it, in fact I do not know how I could do without it. I would love to see its circulation increased; it ought to be in every Baptist family in the State, and many others not Baptists.

I feel deeply mortified when reading the proceedings of the Association, which have recently been published in the Recorder, that so little interest is manifested by some of them in regard to the circulation of the Recorder, in fact no mention is made at all; may be they have not so much as heard whether there be a Recorder. In some Associations, resolutions recommending the Recorder were passed, but they really seem, as if they were a mere compliment to the talented Editor. Such resolutions are not worth the paper and ink it took to write them, as past experience has taught us.

Other Associations, the Editor being present, an opportunity was given him at the very last moments of the session to present the claims of the Recorder. Butah did very well, Pee Dee very well, the Editor being present had a pretty fair showing, we trust it will tell well in future. But Chowan Association has excelled them all. This Association recommends that an active effort be made to extend its circulation; "This is what we want, action, not mere resolutions" appended to our minutes read only by few, remembered by fewer, and put into practice by how many? I was about to say none, but I will not, I will leave it for the reader to guess the number.