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The country on the east of the Jordan is still comparatively unvisited by travelers, and its inhabitants are therefore all the more primitive in their manners. The Rev. William Ewing, a Scotch missionary at Tiberias, has been much in that region; and his article on Arabian Hospitality, as given in these pages, contains fresh illustrations of the customs of the people there.

"The secret of Christian living," says one, "is to sit still without being idle." It is the blending of the service of Mary with that of Martha. Mere activity and restlessness, in the best of causes, has slight worth, unless it is the outflow of a spiritual life nourished by close fellowship with Christ. There have been ages in which the secret fellowship was thought enough, and there was no marked expression of it in action. Let us see to it that we do not make the opposite mistake of useless activity.

A word may mislead, or a word may direct aright. One word mistranslated in our English Bible may be the cause of endless harm, and the correction of that translation may need repeated calls to its notice as

a means of making clear an all-important truth of inspiration. A Greek word that means "turn" is translated, in our English New Testament, "be converted;" and, in consequence of this error, thousands and thousands have sat waiting in their sins to be converted, when they ought to have been on their feet turning square about in accordance with the specific command of God. In the Revised New Testament the term "be converted" is not to be found, the correct word, "turn," being always in its stead. Every preacher and every teacher has a duty to proclaim the truth that the gospel message to every evildoer, in or out of the church, is "Turn;" but it never is "Be converted."

The need of wisdom and sympathy in dealing with the difficulties of the young is brought out in what we learn of the history of Charles Bradlaugh, the English secularist, who died recently. When a boy, preparing for confirmation, he found it hard to reconcile some points in the Thirty-nine Articles with the statements of the New Testament. He stated his difficulty to the rector of his parish, who treated him, it is said, with most un-Christian harshness. With a boy's hasty logic, young Bradlaugh assumed that Christians had nothing to say for their faith, but could only scold. And once started on the down grade, he did not stop until he landed in secularism,—a form of atheism once very widespread among the laboring classes. Mr. George J. Holyoke, the founder of the Secularists, says that he became an unbeliever through the reception of similar treatment at the hands of a Nonconformist minister. Both were men of great abilities, and of nobleness of character in some directions. When Mr. Bradlaugh was dying, prayers for his recovery were offered in many of the churches of Northampton, which he represented in Parliament. Both wrought great harm to the cause of Christ, and yet, so far as human judgment can go, both might have been won for him by the wisdom of kindness.

Our interest in the misfortunes of others is likely to be measured by our personal esteem for those who are newly in trouble, rather than by their needs, or by their personal relation to others. We read of a railroad accident. Quickly our eyes run over the list of killed or injured, and it is with a feeling of relief that we find no one of our dear ones named there. If, indeed, there be no name which we have heard before, no neighbor or prominent fellow-citizen, mentioned in that list, the accident seems a less important one than we feared. And if it be shown that no passengers were among the injured, but only employees of the railroad company, the whole thing is likely to pass out from our mind as a matter hardly worth another thought. Yet why should we feel that our circle of affection or of acquaintance is alone of importance to us? Why should we fail of being impressed by the thought that every one of those killed or injured was a center of interest and of influence in a circle as important as that of which we are a center? Why should we not see that the very fact that it is an employee of the company who was stricken down increases the probability that a needy home was bereft of its support, and that stricken hearts had now the double burden of

sorrow and of want? It is a selfish measure of misfortune that is gauged by its effect on ourselves and our dear ones. If we would but go outside of ourselves in our thinking, and would consider how other hearts are affected by the misfortune that attracts our attention, it would seem a very different matter to us. And if we would but think of those who are newly sorrowing as those who are dear to our Friend of friends, and who are commended to us as his representatives, we should find that our relation to them is closer than we had imagined. It is true that we cannot take the whole world into our hearts; but it is also true that we ought not to think and feel as if there were no world of importance outside of our personal circle of acquaintance.

A CHEERFUL CHRISTIAN.

The centenary of John Wesley's death, which is just now here, has turned the attention of the Christian world to perhaps the most notable personal influence the Protestant Church has enjoyed since the Reformation. What was the secret of the man's power? The first suggestion which will occur to us is that it lay in his intense earnestness. He was a man—as Carlyle says of one of the early bishops of Germany—on whom a transcendent message laid its hold in a transcendent way. Chalmers suggested this explanation when he defined Methodism as "Christianity in earnest." But the explanation is not quite adequate. Men who are in earnest quite as much as John Wesley are not rare in the history of the Church; and yet men of his reach of influence are rare indeed. Combined with his earnestness there were other qualities, such as his English practicalness, his common sense, and his capacity for restless activity, which went to make up the founder of Methodism. And above all these, as a spiritual force which molded his whole career, we may put his Christian cheerfulness.

In the divine preparation for his work there were many influences which seemed intended to evoke this sunshiny quality. His first training in the Epworth rectory, where Anglican piety of the Bishop Ken type, with its delight in things delightful blended with gravity in graver matters, laid the foundation. His trial of asceticism at Oxford, and its failure to bring him peace, worked in the same direction. But the crown of the work was found in his contact with the Moravian Peter Bohler, to whom he owed the great emergence into the full day of the gospel, which he called his conversion.

Count Zinzendorf, the reorganizer of the Moravian body, had been brought up among the Pietists of Germany, but had undergone a strong reaction against their gloomy and severe views of what personal devoutness involved. He put the joyful aspect of the Christian gospel into a prominence it had not enjoyed. In the manners and customs of the Church, its hymns and liturgies of a new and joyous type, he embodied the idea of a communion whose central principle was rejoicing in Christ and his gospel. And Peter Bohler, himself full of this spirit, was the means of imparting it to Wesley. He did not make a Moravian of him; for Wesley was much too strong a nature to receive so deep an impression as that involved. And he was too intensely English in the

structure of his character to adapt himself to the German tone which prevailed among the Count's followers even in England. But he never lost the impulsion toward a cheerful view of the Christian life, its duties and its outlook. He learned from the Moravians that God means only and altogether good to his children, that Christ's love and self-sacrifice are the perfect expression of the mind of the Father to us, and that Christian-rejoicing is not a weakness to be discouraged, but a virtue to be fostered in every way.

The sixty years of Wesley's labors for his fellow-men are full of the joy and comfort of this faith. He did not shut his eyes to the darker facts. He laid bare and searched the natural depravity of the heart. He lifted up his voice in indignant protest against the crying sins of his times,—drunkenness, uncleanness, slavery, and other social iniquities. His constant warning was to "flee from the wrath to come." But all these were but the shadows of the picture in his vision of life. Deeper, higher, broader, than all evil, was the redeeming love of God disclosed in Christ and enjoyed in the Spirit.

His friend Alexander Knox, who studied him with more sympathy than any one else who stood outside the Methodist movement, recognizes this cheerfulness as his especial characteristic and a source of his power. He says "his very look gave testimony to his doctrine in this respect," and "nothing but such piety as his could have produced that easy, pleasant, I may almost say, gay manner in which he wrote and spoke of religion." And Knox pronounces, both from his personal observation of the close of Wesley's life and the study of his "Journal" of sixty-five years of it, that Wesley's life was one of singular happiness.

Yet Wesley had few of the social surroundings we are tempted, at times, to think necessary to happiness. His marriage was one of his gravest mistakes. He had "neither chick nor child" of his own to elicit the family affections. His brother Charles and his wife were the only persons in his social circle with whom he lived in close familiarity. He was detested or distasteful by the class to which he belonged,—the educated classes, and especially the clergy of the Church of England. He spared no self-denial that was demanded by his work, and gave himself no rest in that itinerancy of sixty years. Yet a heart open toward God, and a supreme confidence in the divine goodness, were enough to give him the victory over all disadvantages. He—in Methodist phrase—enjoyed his religion, and he taught others to enjoy theirs.

Thus Wesley marks a new era in the history of Protestantism, not by any new doctrine, but by a fresh perspective of doctrines already accepted. He brought home to people the command, "Rejoice in the Lord always." And the common people heard him gladly, because his face, his bearing, his words, told them of a rest they had not attained. He seemed to them to have found the key to the secret of a true life.

And this characteristic of John Wesley's religion has its lesson for all of Christ's followers to-day. Christian cheerfulness is a duty, and Christian cheerfulness is a source of power. "The joy of the Lord is your strength" is the inspired assurance to every willing-hearted believer; and he who accepts this assurance rings back the joyous response: "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart hath trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him."

NOTES ON OPEN LETTERS.

These Old Testament lessons of the International course are raising many a question that cannot be answered with positiveness by even the most careful scholars. The root-idea of Baal worship is one of these questions. A Michigan teacher says:

I am unable to get satisfactory information, as to just the nature of Baal worship. I note that some of your learned commentators speak of Baal as the "sun god." Are we to understand that Baal worship was sun worship? Was this worship at the time of Ahab that of Baal-Peor? Some of your friends

at this place will be obliged to you if you can set us right on this line.

A Sunday-school worker from Canada writes:

A controversy arose in a certain class, while studying the lesson 1 Kings 18: 25-39. The class thought the four hundred and fifty prophets expected Baal to send fire, or else they would not have continued praying all day. The teacher maintained, however, that, if they were Israelites, they knew Baal could not hear them, and only agreed to the test because to refuse would be to own defeat, and, having commenced, they continued. Did they expect fire? Were they foreigners? Do heathen priests expect their idol gods to answer their prayers?

The term "Baal" means "Lord." It is a term that was at times applied to the true God. Yet it means "Lord" in the sense of Sovereign, or Owner, or Possessor, rather than Lord as a loving and fatherly Ruler. Herein was a radical difference between the very best idea of Baal, and the idea of God as indicated in the term "Jehovah." Baal worship had many phases, and Baal came to represent various false gods. The worship of the sun as a symbol of Baal's presence and power, was a popular form of Baal worship. That seems to have been the form prevalent in the land of Israel, as imported from Phœnicia in Ahab's day. Baal-Peor was a divinity known among the Moabites and Midianites. It is thought by some to have indicated a locality rather than a special cult; but that is an open question. That there were priests of Baal who were thoroughly sincere, is not to be doubted; for sincerity is to be found even among those who hold to gross error of opinion and conduct. It is quite likely that the priests of Baal in Israel were colonized from Tyre by Jezebel; but if they were Israelites they may have thoroughly apostatized. Elijah thought for a time that all the Israelites had gone over to Baal. That there are heathen worshippers even more sincere in their beliefs than many a half-hearted nominal Christian, is a reasonable supposition. It is not enough to be sincere, nor yet to call one's self orthodox. It is needful to be both right and sincere.

Unfailing accuracy of statement is not claimed as an attainment by any editorial writer in these pages; yet there is an unfailing purpose of accuracy on the part of every such writer. The Sunday School Times is not a newspaper, and it does not attempt to chronicle passing events, but occasionally it uses a current incident as illustrative of an important truth, and in this way it is liable to be unintentionally inaccurate as to details. A writer from Massachusetts calls attention to a slip of this sort, as follows:

In speaking of the permanence of early impressions, you use as an illustration the death-bed scene of King Kalakaua. What your source of information was I do not know, but two of the statements are so inaccurate that I would fain protest. I should not have been surprised at seeing them in the news columns of a daily paper, but I confess that I was surprised at seeing them in the editorial columns of your paper. First, then, the king was not on a journey around the world. His intention on leaving Honolulu was to stay in California in hopes of gaining some benefit from the climate. Second, his childhood's language had not long been unused by him. True, he used English correctly and fluently, but the official language of the kingdom is Hawaiian; his queen, when he took the throne, could not speak English, and most of the royal household are perfectly familiar with Hawaiian. The probabilities are that not a day of his life passed without the use of his mother-tongue, generally more often than English. My knowledge of these facts is due to my being Hawaiian born, resident there until eight years ago, and since then being in close and constant communication with Honolulu by means of my father, who is a citizen there. Hawaii is a small place, but may at any time become of considerable importance politically; so that any misinformation concerning it, especially in such a paper as The Sunday School Times, which is an authority among its large and intelligent class of readers, ought not to be allowed to pass without correction.

The errors named are admitted. King Kalakaua was not, at the time of his death, returning from his voyage around the world; yet he had made such a voyage, and memories of royal courts and palaces might well have been in his mind. He was not entirely unused to his native tongue, but he had been speaking English, and his recurrence to the language of his childhood in his last hours was noteworthy. One who was near him at the time, thus wrote of the scene in his bed-chamber: "Although unconscious, the king was yet dreaming. But he had forgotten all his English." Colonel Baker heard him murmur something, and had to lean over to catch the sound issuing from the dying king's half-opened lips. He heard, in accents of his island tongue, something of oceans and waves, and references to scenes of the beach, and things that happened long ago when David Kalakaua was a boy." These facts illustrated, as has been said, the permanency of early im-

pressions. The corrections made do not in any measure impair the force of the incident as such an illustration; and the Massachusetts correspondent need not be surprised at finding such errors in these fallible pages.

Now that so much has been said in these columns concerning the popular use of the Revision of our English Bible, a peculiar interest will attach to the following letter on the subject from the Rev. Dr. Schaff, who is the principal American representative of the Bible Revision Committee:

NEW YORK, February 13, 1891.

EDITOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES:

I have just read in your pages the remarks of your correspondents which were occasioned by Dr. Riddle's article on the prospects of the Revised Version. I was much pleased with the sensible suggestions of the "Christian mother in Georgia," and your Missouri and Western New York readers. They are on the right track, and indicate the trend of public sentiment.

Perhaps, as the President of the American Committee on Revision, I can throw some light on the subject. It is well known that the Revised New Testament was finished and published in 1881, the Old Testament in 1885. By an agreement with the English University Presses (which bore the expenses of the British Committee), the American Committee (which bore their own expenses, without any aid from abroad) were bound to give their moral support to the University editions, and to abstain from issuing an authorized American edition till the expiration of fourteen years from the date of publication.

But the American Committee have kept up their organization, and held several meetings in New York with the view to prepare an American standard edition for the time when they will have the right to publish it; that is, in 1895 and 1899.

This standard edition is to differ from the authorized Oxford and Cambridge editions in the following particulars:

1. The American Appendix is to be incorporated in the text, and a corresponding Appendix to be substituted, in which the preferences of the British edition are indicated.
2. Chapter headings, to be taken from the words of the text.
3. The references to the quotations from the Old Testament in the New.

These will be real improvements and helps to the popular reader. Whether the Committee will go farther and select parallel passages, and suggest, in a new appendix, some additional changes for future use, I cannot tell. They were spoken of, but no action was taken.

The New Testament Company has done about half of the work, and may easily finish the whole before the expiration of the fourteen years; that is, before 1895.

There are two difficulties in the way of progress. The Committee is diminishing fast by death, and the members have to pay their own traveling and other expenses, being unwilling to ask the public for contributions. New members should be elected or trustees appointed to make sure.

If the American Bible Society would shoulder the responsibility and risk of publishing the proposed standard edition, the difficulties would be removed at once; but there is no indication or probability that a movement in that direction will be made in that extremely conservative body, unless the churches which support it request it to do so. It would require a change in the constitution authorizing the Society to print, publish, and sell the Revised Version alongside with the Old, according to the option of the purchaser.

That is all the Revisers ever contemplated or desired. They ask only that the work which has cost them fourteen years of earnest and disinterested labor, and in which the scholarship of all the leading denominations was represented, should have a fair chance. It is not for them, but for the Christian public or the churches, to decide the question whether the Revision shall be authorized for optional use or for exclusive use in the place of King James' Version.

I agree with your correspondents, that the chief hindrance of the success of the Revised Version is the absence of those auxiliaries to the text to which the people have so long been used, and which they have come to regard as indispensable. The original Committee was simply commissioned to give the most faithful version of the purest text attainable. This they have done, and it is very remarkable that the severest critics have not been able as yet to discover any real error of translation. On the contrary, their objections amount to this: that the Revision is too faithful, or, in the words of the late Bishop Wordsworth, that it was too well done.

Should the churches adopt the standard edition of the Revised Version, it would be perfectly lawful for the Bible Society, or any other publishing-house, to issue several editions, with all the auxiliaries and conveniences of the old Bible.

PHILIP SCHAFF.

How difficult it is for the Western mind to comprehend the Oriental figurativeness of language in the Bible! We are always taking figures of speech in the inspired record as if they were dead literalisms, when an Oriental would not think of being understood literally if he employed such a term in ordinary conversation. But there is a growing readiness to comprehend the need of a translation of the figurative Eastern language of the Bible into the matter-of-fact language of the West, even after the original Hebrew or Greek has been translated