

Read at the Sabbath-school exercises at Leominster, N. Y., May 31st, 1879, and published by request.

Only a lamb from out the flock, A offering from the fold, Taken of love, and trust and faith, Did Abel bring of old.

Only a rod in Moses' hand, On which the stars were fast, Behold!—an angry host.

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The Sabbath Recorder.

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CATALOGUE OF BOOKS AND TRACTS.

AMERICAN SABBATH TRACT SOCIETY. ALFRED CENTRE, N. Y. NATURE'S GOD AND HIS MEMORIAL. A Series of Four Sermons on the subject of the Sabbath. By Nathan Wardlaw, late of Shanghai, China, and now residing in Scotland. 112 pp. Paper, 15c.

may, transfer the writer to our own time, surround him with our customs, familiarize him with the peculiar idioms of our own language, make him think in our modes of thought; or, on the other hand, do our best to put ourselves alongside of him, and catch if possible his spirit, discover the genius of his mother-tongue, and let our thoughts flow along the channels which he has used. The latter, no doubt, must be attained to, if the interpreter would give the best possible exposition of the writings of an ancient author. But here, as often elsewhere, the ideal right is not the first to be sought after. It is exceedingly difficult, if not absolutely impossible, for the Bible exegete to impute the spirit of the author, and put himself in the exact current of his thoughts, till the writer has been made to think in his modes, to at least the degree that provides a good translation.

TRANSLATION. This leads me to mention first a good translation as a necessary element in the basis of Scripture interpretation. The importance of the method already suggested, as an initiatory measure, may be seen when we remember that comparatively few can do consecutive and accurate thinking otherwise than in their own mother tongue. But when the thoughts of the sacred penmen have been draped in words well understood by the exegete, he has then a highway laid out for him, along which he may travel until at length he finds himself standing beside his author, and feels the breath of his spirit, see the thought as he saw it; then is he able to spread out, before others, not all he saw on the route, nor all the details of his work, but the general result of his labor. The object sought in all this is oneness of mental and spiritual vision between author and the ordinary reader. No man can become a really successful interpreter until he is able to make those for whom he expounds see the idea as the author saw it, since it is not for himself alone that he explains the Word of God, but that the many may also understand, who are not supposed to possess his exegetical ability.

AN ESSAY. Read before the Western Seventh-day Baptist Association, and a copy requested for publication in the SABBATH RECORDER. BY REV. S. P. ROBERTS. What is the True Basis and Proper Method of Scripture Interpretation? GENERAL STATEMENT. The duty assigned me at a former meeting of this Association, to answer the double-faced question—'What is the true basis and proper method of Scripture interpretation?'—is one not easily accomplished. The very fact that the question has been asked supposes difficulties existing, which may in some measure hinder the ordinary reader from getting the true meaning of the Scripture writings.

DEFINITION. The word interpretation is evidently used with different significations in the Bible. Sometimes it is the translation of words of one language into those of another, as proposed to be better understood, as in Mark 16: 22—'And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.' Again, it signifies the effort to explain dreams. Joseph, referring to the dream of Pharaoh, answered and said, 'The interpretation thereof.' Gen. 40: 18. Still another use is to define words, and show their relation, together with sentences, to others in the same language. This no doubt should be mainly the object sought after in this essay. Interpretation, then, is an attempt to reconcile or remove differences which may exist, or be supposed to exist, between an author and his readers.

DIFFICULTIES. These differences are likely to be increased or lessened by the circumstances that surround each. If the author lived and wrote in the 'time long ago,' and used a foreign and perhaps a now dead language in the communication of his ideas, or if the customs of the country in which he lived were strangely different from those of his readers, multiplied will be the obstacles in the way of a clear understanding of the one by the other. Whatever of difficulty, then, may come of any of these antagonisms mentioned, it will surely attend all attempts to interpret some portions of the sacred Scriptures.

TRUE EXEGETICAL STANDPOINT. To effect a relatively clear understanding between the Bible authors and the reader, a standpoint of observation must be reached, where as few as possible of the hindrances may exist that are liable to obscure the thoughts of the writer, and thus prevent the reader from catching his true meaning. To do this, it is evident that we must, as well as we

THE SCRIPTURES TO BE INTERPRETED AS ANY OTHER BOOK OF ANTIQUITY. It matters but very little what theory of inspiration may be held by the exegete, so far as the mechanical part of his work is concerned. If he holds to plenary inspiration, that the Holy Spirit took complete control of the writers, so that not only the thoughts, but the drapery with which those thoughts were clothed, were inspired, he must still recognize the necessity that, even when God would communicate his will to men, he must do so by symbols and words which men can understand, for not otherwise could it be a revelation. This, then, will settle the question that the same general rules of exegesis are to be applied to the Scriptures that are applicable to other writings in the same languages. The Bible is not a book out *generis*; it is not a book that the human elements therein contained are not to be treated in the same manner that similar ones are in purely secular writings. The same laws of utterance govern the Bible authors that control those of Homer and Thucydides. Prepositions, conjunctions, peculiar cases, and verbal endings in each serve the same end. It is true that Hebrews, peculiar idiomatic expressions occur in New Testament Greek; but these are to be studied by the interpreters, in their relationship to the general structure, just as Atticism, Ionicism, and unique Homeric usages are in classic Greek.

THE GRAMMATICAL SENSE. It is impossible to grasp the thought of an author, sacred or profane, except their written speech be understood; and since this can no otherwise be done but by studying the grammatical law upon which it rests, it is clear that the grammatical sense must be the basis of research, and pressing all exegesis to corroborate these pre-dilections. But the end and the methods used to reach that end in this system of Bible study must be condemned.

THE PESTICIDE MODE. Neither should the pesticide mode of interpretation be fallen upon as a means of reaching truth with an unaided intellect. The end sought in this method is good; the awakening and empowering the emotions, the sanctifying of the life, rather than imparting instruction to the understanding alone, but the methods of procedure are reprehensible. Many an attempt to expound the Word of God is so overwhelmed with pious reflections as to render the whole effort abortive of good practical results, as it would be to start a ship from port, and expect her to make a successful voyage under the drapery of flags rather than with sails of well-stitched canvas. Flags are good for gala days, or to signal with, but have no propelling power, so pious reflections are good to meditate upon, but have little or no revealing power. What has been said of methods already mentioned would apply equally well to the rationalistic, the spiritual, and the allegorical. In our searches after truth, it is often in the highest degree serviceable that we notice where truth and error part company, so in an effort to discover the true exegetical methods of Scripture exposition, it is necessary that we find, if possible, what is true in all, and this can no otherwise be done but by turning on them the pure light of exegetical and historical criticism.

HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION. Side by side with the grammatical must go historical investigation. It is absolutely impossible for an author to be so individualized in his methods of thought as to altogether ignore a style of writing that may, to a great degree, have become a national possession, and subject with which others besides himself may become acquainted. A knowledge of this historic usage of language is very essential to a thorough understanding of any author. It is not common for a writer to make an attempt at a concealment of his mental or even classic peculiarities of style; the greater danger is, that he gives to them an unwarrantable, if not an offensive exhibition. With Scripture writers there is no effort at either a concealment or exaggeration of style peculiar to an age or nation. This makes it the more necessary that whatever has become historic in their writings, should be known by him who would become their interpreter.

GRAMMATICO-HISTORICAL METHOD. In the grammatico-historical method of interpretation can, in the opinion of your essayist, be found the correct principles of Scripture interpretation. In the pursuance of this mode, the interpreter consents to a willingness to hear the author himself, and not some near or remote echo of his own opinions. This does not preclude the presupposition that the Bible is an inspired volume, but that it stands in historic relationships, and was written in human languages, and may be studied by the use of the same principles as in any other writing of antiquity.

THE UNITY OF SCRIPTURE. In the use of this method, the verbal sense having once been found, and it being clear that the writer has written in allegory, the interpreter is prepared to discover, appreciate, and exhibit in its true proportions the real allegorical sense. Or if the object of the writer is discovered to be a didactic one, having in view the definite statement of some doctrinal point, this doctrine is allowed to stand forth in the electrical light of fair exegesis, unobscured or antedged by any hue that the exegete may have imparted to it. No setting beforehand what the sense or doctrine of a passage must or must not be.

THE ALLEGORICAL METHOD. To be able to use the allegorical interpretation with profit, or to escape its many dangers, the exegete would be greatly assisted in his work should he study carefully the peculiar sentiments entertained of the Bible, upon that doctrine by whom and in the country where it originated. He would doubtless find that it sprang from an effort to harmonize the antagonism that arose from the coming together of an ex-

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OUR EUROPEAN LETTER.

Bismarck's protectionist policy—How the money for the support of the Imperial army is raised—The German manufacturing industry must quietly submit—Germany doing the uniform of an international police—A remarkable trial—King Alfonso must be tried.

WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENCE.

In the session now drawing to a close, there has been little of the personal animosity one would naturally expect to spring out of so earnest a contest. Only one duel has reached so far as a challenge, and that challenge was an extremely ambiguous one.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON.

Springfield, Mass., for July has in the way of fiction, "A Sorrowful Guest," by the author of "Deephaven," Miss S. O. Jewett; "The Monkey's Story," by Mrs. L. W. Champney, and two chapters of "Calvin the Sinner," by "One Sunday Morning," Mr. E. Gardner.

SOMETHING GOOD.

The Temperance Pledge Album, just copyrighted and published by Eben Shute, 52 Bromfield street, Boston, can not fail to do good service in the hands of the workers.

SONG.

"The Mayflower, or the Pious Pioneers." A new and original service of song, illustrative of the history, trials, and triumphs of the famous Pilgrim Fathers.

and newspaper articles by the accused were read, containing violent utterances against the Russian government, and schemes for a revolutionary agitation, the necessity being frequently expressed of winning over the intelligent youth of Europe to their cause.

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