

# THE PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY.

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## I. BURNEY'S SOTERIOLOGY AND THE CUMBERLAND THEOLOGY.<sup>1</sup>

DR. BURNEY'S book is, on several accounts, worthy of the attention of the Christian public:

1. Along with a world of sophistries it occasionally exhibits a real truth in a vivid light.

2. It is a most virulent attack on the penal and substitutionary theory of the atonement, and presents a "new theory" of the atonement, which would suit, with only a slight modification, a Unitarian.

3. Its author's position makes the book worthy of consideration; for he is, perhaps, the most distinguished and honored teacher in a great church; and the doctrines of that church can, because of its numbers and aggressiveness, no longer be looked upon with indifference.

4. The production of such a book in such a quarter presents an excellent example of "the logic of events." Our Cumberland brethren set out, in 1810, with the rejection of the doctrine of predestination, professing to receive remaining Calvinism in its integrity. The reader of this volume will see evidence only too good that the Cumberland Church has already moved far out of Calvinism and into Pelagian Unitarianism, or, if not into it, hard by it, and only kept out by gross and ridiculous inconsistencies.

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<sup>1</sup> *Atonement.—Soteriology.* The sacrificial, in contrast with the penal, substitutionary, and merely moral or exemplary theories of propitiation. By *S. G. Burney, D. D., LL. D., Professor of Systematic Theology in Cumberland University.* Nashville, Tenn.: Cumberland Presbyterian Publishing House. 1888.

OUR INDEBTEDNESS TO THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY  
IN FOREIGN WORK.

In the work of evangelizing the world, to which the church is appointed under her great commission, the importance of the circulation of the printed Scriptures among the people can hardly be too highly estimated. When Jesus, with exquisite beauty and aptness, portrayed this work under the agricultural imagery of a sower going out to sow, he said, "The seed is the word of God." And when Paul pictured it under military emblems as a soldier going forth to do battle for his king, clad from head to foot in "the whole armor of God," he said, "The sword of the Spirit is the word of God." And now that this word, which is at once the living, fruit-bearing germ in spiritual husbandry, and the mighty, conquering weapon in Christian warfare, may, in its completeness—in its "*all* Scripture, given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness"—be brought to bear upon the minds and hearts of men, it must, as a printed volume, be placed in their hands. This is necessary too in order that the oral preaching of the word may be attended with proper effectiveness. The herald of salvation, restricted under his divine commission to "preach the word," must always base his appeal ultimately upon the Scripture, the one divine and infallible standard; and it is only as the hearers, like the Bereans of Paul's day, with the Bible in their hands search the Scriptures, along with his preaching, that it can produce its due effect in their hearts and lives. Experience also proves that the circulation of the Bible among the people is requisite to the permanency of the work of evangelization. The utter failure of the once promising missions of the Roman Catholics in Congo and Japan has been cited to show how quickly and entirely Christianity may disappear when the Bible is not given to the people; while in striking contrast stands the Protestant mission in Madagascar, where, though the missionaries were driven out after a few years' labor and the church was allowed no visible organization or public worship, the truth remained and Christianity grew, amid the fiercest persecutions of twenty-five years' continuance—the Christians actually multiplying five-fold during that period, with nothing to maintain and promote the faith but the printed Bible, which was read in secret. If, however, this be not a valid argument because of the errors and corruptions of Romanism, what is to be said of the transitory character of the work of the Apostles themselves, since many

of the nations among whom they propagated Christianity and planted the church sank back very quickly into practical heathenism? But, on the other hand, who can show us a people that have been evangelized and had the Bible circulated among them in their own tongue, that have ever again relapsed into heathenism? And how many instances are constantly adduced where the Bible itself in the hands of the heathen, even without a human teacher, has led souls to Christ who stood ready and waiting to be organized into a church of believers upon the first arrival of the missionary? The words of Scripture, which are *spirit* and which are *life* (John vi. 63), carry in themselves convincing, converting and sanctifying power to the human soul. The Bible itself is its own best witness of the truth it contains; and in the hands of the blessed Spirit, who dwells in it and works through it, it is able to make men wise unto salvation.

So, when we confine our view to foreign evangelization, the circulation of the Scriptures in the common language of the benighted people whom we would evangelize, rises to an importance that is simply incalculable. Foreign missionaries fully realize this, and bear their loud and earnest testimony to the fact that Bible distribution is altogether indispensable to the success of their work.

Now the missionaries of our church in all the various foreign fields which it has been our privilege to cultivate for Christ, have had in their labors the full advantages of this most needful and helpful Bible work. In China, in Japan, in Greece, in Italy, in Brazil and in Mexico, the Bible has been translated into the common tongues of the people, printed in quantities to supply all our demands, and circulated as freely as circumstances would permit. But who has been doing this grand work and rendering this inestimable service to us and to our missionaries in the foreign fields? Chiefly the American Bible Society. As the great agent and representative of American Christianity in the work of distributing the Scriptures, it accompanies our missionaries in all the fields of labor whither we send them, and *without expense to our Foreign Missions treasury*, attends thoroughly to this Bible work. If new translations of the Scriptures be needed, it has them made; it prints the book yearly in quantities sufficient to meet all reasonable demands of the work; and through its own agents and colporteurs in the field it distributes the word as our missionaries teach and preach it.

In China, where we have our largest missionary force, the American Bible Society entered the land as soon as it was opened to Christianity, and commenced its operations there along with the first Protes-

tant missionaries. At its own expense it speedily translated the whole Bible, and printed and distributed many million copies of this version. It has since borne a large share in the labor and expense of other translations that were needed, and is to assume one-half the expense of the now proposed union, uniform versions of the Scriptures in high classic style, and the simple *Wenle*. "The annual sales of the American Bible Society in China," Dr. Du Bose writes, "now amount to 270,000, Bibles and portions. It is an increasing figure, and so may be put down at 300,000 per annum, and in a few years much greater than this. In the provinces of Kiangsu and Chinkiang, the American Bible Society has sold and distributed from the beginning 5,000,000 Bibles and portions of the Word."

In Japan, where we have at present four mission stations and nineteen missionaries, the people for the first time received the whole Bible in their own familiar tongue about the beginning of the year 1888. This translation was the product of fifteen years' combined labors of the American Bible Society and other Bible and missionary societies. And the expense of the translation alone to the American Bible Society, as its proportionate share, amounted to \$17,000. Of course the version was promptly printed and circulated, the demand being very great; and in the years 1888 and 1889—up to the last report received—about 100,000 volumes of Scripture have been printed and circulated by the American Bible Society through its agency in Japan.

As to Greece, where we have done mission work for many years, and now have four missionaries employed, many who were present at the last General Assembly, in Asheville, N. C., will doubtless remember the ardent and emphatic testimony to the valuable help of the American Bible Society in that country, borne by the Rev. T. R. Sampson, who remarked that, unlike Roman Catholic countries, in Greece the circulation of the Bible was not prohibited, and the American Bible Society did a generous and noble work in disseminating the word among that people.

In Mexico, despite Roman Catholic opposition, the American Bible Society in 1889 circulated 8,543 volumes of the Scriptures among that benighted and priest-ridden people. And for several years past the Rev. H. B. Pratt, a minister of our own church, has been in the City of Mexico in the employ of the society, preparing a better version of the Scriptures in the Spanish language, for the use of our missionaries and the people there. At the present time Mr. Pratt is in New York, aiding in the printing of the translation that he has made.

In Brazil, where we have expended so much labor and time and money, sacrificing some of our noblest young men in the work of evangelizing that people, ground down and wasted under papal bondage, the American Bible Society has always fully coöperated with us. It distributed, through its agency there in 1889, about 7,800 volumes of Scripture; and now that religious liberty and the free circulation of the Bible seem to be assured through the establishment of the republic in that land, the work of distribution will no doubt be vigorously and extensively prosecuted.

Nor has the power of the Pope in Italy been sufficient to shut off our two faithful lady missionaries at Milan from the direct aid of the American Bible Society. Its last report mentions "a grant of \$750, which was made to promote the circulation of the Scriptures through the Committee of Evangelization of the Waldensian Church," in cooperation with which our missionaries are acting. And in Cuba also, where the Lord seems now to be opening up such "a wide and effectual door" to us to participate in planting a pure Christianity on that island, the American Bible Society has gone ahead of us, and through its established agency there has for years been diligently spreading the Scriptures. Its agent, laboring single-handed, sold personally 2,300 volumes of the Scriptures in 1889.

These facts, gathered from the latest official sources, indicate somewhat the character and the extent of the work which the American Bible Society is doing from year to year in the foreign field, upon which it expends annually about one-half its net income, and employs twelve general agents and several hundred colporteurs. And from this brief survey of its work in the fields where our church is doing missionary labor, one can gain some idea of the invaluable aid that it has rendered to us in our foreign missions. When, therefore, we consider all the benefits accruing from its work to which we have fallen heir in entering these mission fields, and all the help which we have constantly realized from its most important, abundant and efficient labors continued in them, how shall we estimate the debt which we owe to the American Bible Society in our foreign work? How could we get along without this invaluable agency? One of our own noblest and most efficient missionaries, who has had a large experience of missionary labor in China, thus records his own appreciation of this Society in his work: "Suppose there were no Bible Society! How shall I express it? Well, you know I have one of the best of wives; a faithful, self-denying mother, who looks so watchfully to the family, teaches



the children, superintends the native schools, and received social visits from 1,500 women last year, to all of whom the way of salvation was explained. Well, what my home would be without this guardian angel, my work would be without the Bible Society."

But how are we, as a church, meeting this weighty obligation? Do we recognize it; do we appreciate it? Are we acting in accordance with it? The annual receipts show that a very small portion of the funds which the Society uses in its benevolent and missionary work comes from the South, probably not one-fourth enough to meet the expense of circulating the Scriptures in the home field, not to count the foreign field at all. Is it not high time then to recognize our obligations, understand our duty, and come up to the help of the Lord in this most essential department of Christian evangelization? Our last General Assembly took its position clearly, positively and prominently in regard to this matter. It reaffirmed its relations with the American Bible Society, recommended annual collections in all our churches for the cause, provided a column in its statistical tables to report these contributions, and ordered that hereafter a standing committee of the Assembly be appointed every year to consider and report upon this important work. Our chief judicatory has thus marked out the line of duty for us and called us to it; will the Lord's host whom it commands march promptly and faithfully up to the standard it has planted?

THOMAS H. LAW.

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### THE INAUGURATION OF DR. C. A. BRIGGS AT UNION SEMINARY, NEW YORK.

THE Presbyterian Church in this country is making history rapidly. In aggressive work at home and in extensive efforts abroad, the different members of the Presbyterian family are purchasing for themselves a good report at the present day. Our brethren of the great Northern branch of Presbyterianism, however, are just now engaged in what will doubtless make some important history in the near future. They have entered, in a carefully guarded way, upon the revision of the historic doctrinal symbols of Presbyterianism, and a large and representative committee is now preparing a report for the next General Assembly, which meets in Detroit in May.

The echoes of the revision discussion of a year ago had scarcely died away when an event occurred which can hardly fail to have great signifi-