

MORE DEAD FLIES IN THE PRECIOUS OINTMENT

Pastor Russell Points Out More Deceptive Additions to the Word of God Contained in Our Common Version Bibles, But Shown to Be False Because Not Found in the Oldest Greek MSS.—One of These "Flies" Has Moulded Accepted Theology—Dead Flies Cause the Apothecary's Ointment to Stink (Ecclesiastes x, 1).



Not long ago I pointed out that in the last two verses of St. Mark's Gospel in our Common Version are spurious—so recognized by all scholars, because these verses are not to be found in any of the oldest Greek MSS. and were evidently added to the Word of God in the seventh century or later. Moreover, we gave proofs of the untruthfulness of this addition. Is it true that whoever believes the Gospel of Christ may handle serpents with impunity and may drink deadly poison without harm? Surely not. It is nothing short of a sin for those who know better to acknowledge these verses and to use them to bolster up theories of Divine Healing. It is as much a crime to add to the Word of God as to take away from it.

Today I invite attention to some other dead flies, some other additions to God's Word, which have had much to do with twisting the theology once delivered to the saints. Take, for instance, the closing words of the Lord's Prayer:

"Thine is the Kingdom and Power and Glory."

These words, if uttered by our Lord, should be found in the old Greek MSS. But they are not found therein. They are, therefore, to be rejected as additions made by people centuries after Matthew's Gospel was written. These words were introduced when the faith of the Church respecting the Kingdom of Messiah was changed or changing from what it was originally. All through the New Testament the Second Coming of Christ in power and glory to establish His Kingdom and to glorify the Church, His Bride, is set for the end of this Gospel Age. But as the time grew long a change of sentiment came into the Church. It became popular and rich. Its bishops were respected. Finally the theory prevailed that God did not intend to delay the establishment of the Kingdom until the Second Coming of Christ, but did intend to establish it in the hands of the Church during this Age and to use the Church for the conquering of the world and the fulfilling of all the promises of the past.

In line with this the most prominent bishop of the time was recognized as Divinely appointed to represent Christ in the world and to reign over the nations in His stead and to bring about the Millennium, etc. This was the Bishop of Rome, who subsequently was styled the Pope and who claimed and was accorded the honorable title, "Viceroy of the Son of God." It is said that the equivalent of this title to this day is worn by the Pope on his tiara or three-crowned hat—Vicarius Dei Filii.

Thus the change came in the general sentiment of the "Christian world." Messiah's Kingdom was no longer to be looked for as coming, but was to be recognized as here. The Pope, as Messiah's reigning representative, was to be acknowledged. All Kingdoms that were to honor and obey Messiah were commanded to honor and obey the Pope. The various prophecies which tell of Messiah's Kingdom glory were applied to the Pope, and are still so applied.

As Messiah was to ride forth conquering the world and "wound the heads over many peoples," so the Popes in succession sought to do, to fulfill these prophecies. As the inauguration of Messiah's Kingdom is promised to be in the midst of a time of great trouble, it was not thought improper that Papacy should cause great trouble in the world in its endeavor to establish itself as the Kingdom of Messiah. As whosoever would not receive Messiah was to be "destroyed from amongst the people," it was not considered wrong to destroy those who rejected and opposed the Papal Kingdom and to give them to the burning flame.

"Thy Kingdom Come on Earth."

The Lord's prayer was already in the Scriptures, and was known to many. It could not be eliminated. But some zealous person, fully believing that God's Kingdom had come, felt justified in amending the prayer to correspond to what he supposed were the facts. Hence the prayer which begins, "Thy Kingdom come," is made to end by saying, "Thy Kingdom has come in its glory and power."

If Papacy is the Kingdom of Messiah, it is certainly not what the Jews expected. It is certainly not what we expected. It is certainly not what the masses of mankind had any reason to expect, although it is so accepted by the majority of Christendom.

Although our protesting forefathers broke away from the Pope and denounced him as Anti-Christ and declared that he falsely sat in the place of Christ without authority, they, nevertheless, were imbued with the same error. They did not think to go back to the message of the Scriptures and to look for the Son of God to set up His Kingdom at His Second Advent and then to bless Israel and the world through His glorified Church. Instead they held to the Papal theory that God's Kingdom was set up and was conquering the world, and that thus the Messianic reign mentioned in the prophecy is being fulfilled. They hold that Christ himself is the invisible King but that the Pope is not authorized to represent him. Hence this spuri-

ous addition to the Word of God is an acceptable to Protestants as to Catholics; indeed more so, if we may judge by the fact that the Catholic Bible omits the spurious words, while the Protestant Bible quotes them.

We here remark that according to Protestant theory Messiah's Kingdom is represented in the civilized nations of the world, especially of Europe. These all claim to reign "by the grace of God," in which case, of course, wars and battles between them are conflicts between the various parts of Messiah's Kingdom. And present military preparations on land and sea portend a most sanguinary conflict between these "kingdoms of this world," which think themselves and are called by Christendom "kingdoms of God."

How glad we are to see the Truth on this subject; that the Kingdom of God's dear Son has not yet been set up, in any sense of the word—that it is still future. It cannot be set up until this Gospel Age ends and the "elect" saintly few of every nation—Jew and Gentile—shall be changed from earthly to heavenly nature by the First Resurrection, which will qualify them to be "kings and priests unto God and unto Christ and to reign with Him a thousand years" (Revelation xx, 6).

It is well that all Bible students should mark this "fly" and extract it from the Precious Ointment, and notice how much sweeter and fresher the Lord's prayer is to them forever.

"Oh, What a Whopper!"

Thomas Paine was an enemy to the Bible and to the Christian religion, but largely so, we believe, on account of his poor understanding of it. And his misunderstanding of the Bible was largely due to the false doctrines handed down from the "Dark Ages" purporting to be biblical. Who cannot sympathize with the great infidel, Thomas Paine, who, when reading the last verse of St. John's Gospel, exclaimed, "O, what a whopper!" It reads, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John xxi, 25).

Surely any one of reasoning mind should see the absurdity of such a statement. Surely all Christian ministers should have informed the Lord's sheep under their care respecting what is and what is not the Word of God, the Bible, as it was recognized by the Apostolic Church and written down in the original Greek manuscripts. Why any Christian minister should assail me because I endeavor to do for the people what he has neglected to do I cannot understand. I must leave it to the Lord to judge between us. I am informed that hundreds of ministers went to the Editors of the papers which publish my sermons weekly and endeavored to have them discontinue their publication.

But the Editors perceive that their readers are no longer under the bondage of the "Dark Ages," but have begun to think for themselves, and that many of them are hungering and thirsting for the Truth respecting the Bible—the Christian's spiritual food and drink. To the claim that many read my sermons instead of going to Church the answer is, that Pastor Russell is preaching to the non-church-going ten millions who are in the majority and that it behooves the ministers to provide for their people the spiritual food for which they are famishing, if they would not lose them all.

Another Big Fly.

To the credit of such men as Luther, Calvin, Knox, Zwingli, Wesley and others living prior to our day we must explain that they had no opportunity for knowing of the spurious passages of the Scriptures. They, therefore, have no responsibility such as devolves upon ministers of our day who do, or should, know all about these matters. We cannot on this occasion make further investigation, take out more of these dead flies; but, the Lord willing, at some future time I John v, 7, 8 will have our attention. It is worthy of it. It has caused the Ointment to stink and has confused the minds of many of God's dear saints by the way in which the error in this case has been interwoven with the Truth.

My hearers should bear distinctly in mind that what I am here presenting is not at all in line with the presentations of the Higher Critics. Their method is to read through the Scriptures and judge of them by their own keen intellectual powers, and thus to discriminate between which were written by the Prophets credited, and which were additions. Their Higher Criticism claims a keener scent or mental discernment than ordinary mortals enjoy, by which they know these things whether others can see it so or not.

I resent Higher Criticism and accept the Word of God in full. I reject nothing because of my own or other men's surmises, but merely go by the facts. If the oldest Greek MSS. do not contain certain passages of Scripture, how could they get into later MSS. except as spurious additions?

Nor should I be considered as fault-finding with our Common Version of the Bible. While it is not without its faults, it has so many excellent qualities and beautiful translations that I prefer it to any other and generally use it. But I must not, I cannot, approve those portions of it which all orthodox scholars admit to be spurious. We must not handle the Word of God carelessly. If we do we must expect darkness instead of light, confusion instead of harmony.

Our Bible's Ter-Centenary.

Just three centuries ago our English Common Version Bible was published.

This year its Ter-Centenary is celebrated. It is a grand book. It has done a grand work. The fact that it is not perfect must not condemn a work possessed of so many glorious qualities. It was the result of seven years' labor on the part of forty-seven persons learned in the languages and appointed by King James of England for its preparation. They labored to some

disadvantage by reason of the command given them to follow an earlier translation styled, The Bishop's Bible, and to alter it as little as the original would allow. They were also instructed that if the Tyndale, Coverdale, Matthew, Cranmer or Whitchurch translations and the Geneva Editors agreed better with the text, theirs should be accepted as instead of the Bishop's. The translation was, perhaps, the best that could be made at the time.

Published by kingly authority, it is now venerated by English and American Protestants as though it had come direct from the finger of God. This is a mistake. We are to worship God and to reverence His Word and to search as carefully as possible to have the precious Ointment provided by the spirit of the Truth free from all dead flies—free from all human additions and mistranslations and superstitions of the "Dark Ages."

The basis for our Common Version was the Latin Vulgate, which was diligently revised and compared with the Greek MSS. of the time. But there were few Greek MSS. known at that time, whereas at the present time there are over 700. Three of these are quite ancient.

(1) The Sinaitic MS., found in a Convent on Mt. Sinai so recently as 1800. This is acknowledged to be the oldest Greek MS. known in the world. Its date is estimated to be about the year 331 A. D. This MS. is now in the possession of the Russian government at St. Petersburg.

(2) The Vatican MS., 1209, is credited with being next in age. It was found amongst old MSS. in the Vatican Library and is still there and catalogued. The date of its writing is estimated to be about the year 350 A. D.

(3) The third of these oldest known Greek MSS. of the New Testament is styled the Alexandria, because it was found in Alexandria in Egypt. It is now in the British Museum, where any visitor can behold it in a glass case. It is supposed to have been written about A. D. 450. The readings of all three of these Greek MSS. can be secured and the variations between their readings and our Common Version are so simply arranged as to leave no excuse for ignorance on the part of Bible students. Our Common Version with notations of these MSS. can be obtained through any bookseller.

A Responsible and Sacred Trust.

Prof. Tischendorf, writing respecting these ancient Greek MSS., says:—

"To treat such ancient authorities with neglect would be either unwarrantable arrogance or culpable negligence. Indeed, it would be a misunderstanding of Providence if, after all these documents had been preserved through all the dangers of fourteen or fifteen centuries and delivered safe into our hands, we were not ready to receive them with thankfulness as most valuable instruments for the elucidation of Truth."

The Truth in the Love of It.

The Lord speaks of some who receive not the Truth in the love of it, and tells that they ultimately will be ensnared by the Adversary. Evidently heart-honesty is one of the most precious elements in the Divine sight. It is not sufficient that we should be Christians in name merely and with form and ceremony. It would not be sufficient in the Lord's sight that we should worship sect or party or even the Bible. It is the Divine Truth that we must reverence next to the Divine person.

It is not sufficient to have Bibles on our center tables merely, nor sufficient to carry them under our arms. We must "eat" the Word of God—that is to say, we must, as spiritual children of God, feed upon His message. And this truly implies careful discrimination to discern between God's inspired Revelation and all human additions and admixtures. There is, therefore, a difference between reverencing and loving the Word of God and reverencing and loving a particular translation, errors and all.

"Thy Word is Truth."

Our Master's prayer for all of His true disciples, or footstep followers, was and still is, "Sanctify them through Thy Truth; Thy Word is Truth." Whoever would have the sanctifying influence of the Divine Word should so far as possible rid himself of every un sanctifying admixture of human tradition and interpolation. The true sanctification or setting apart of the heart to know and to do the Lord's will could not be content to accept with the sanctifying Truth defiling errors, chaff and nonsense.

If thousands are turning away from the Bible there is a reason. It is not the pure Truth that drives them away, but the foreign admixture and the slanderous misinterpretations handed down to us by our well-meaning but deluded ancestors of several centuries ago. It is high time for all to manifest to God their love of the Truth by spending some of their time in studying it—in learning its precious lessons and in telling forth its "good tidings of great joy to all people."

"It is one thing now to read the Bible through. Another thing to read, to learn and do. It is one thing now to read it with delight and quite another thing to read it right. Some read to prove a pre-adopted creed. Thus understand but little what they read. And every passage in the Book they bend to make it suit that all-important end. Some people read, as I have often thought, to teach the Book, instead of to be taught."

Police Battle With Thugs.

KEARNEY, N. J., April 1.—In a pitched battle at Hackensack Meadows early today between police and a gang of wire thieves, three patrolmen were wounded, one probably fatally. The battle today was the climax of a series of raids which had netted the thieves thousands of pounds of copper and telephone and telegraph wires. As the police approached the scene

of the recent robberies, they met a wagon containing four men. When called upon to stop, the four robbers drew revolvers and opened fire. Sergeant McGee and Patrolmen Smith and Doland were wounded. It was believed the wire thieves escaped unhurt.

Charges "Too Much Preacher."

RENO, Nev., April 1.—"Too much preacher," in his home was the ground on which Albert Wells of San Jose, Calif., asked Judge Moran for a divorce from his wife, Sarah M. whom he married in 1883. When Wells explained that his wife be-

came so fond of a San Jose minister that she spent most of her time in his company, Judge Moran signed the decree.

No woman is educated in values unless she is a persistent reader of the ads. She wouldn't know the

news of the day unless she read the paper every day—and the same necessity applies to knowing buying opportunities. She must read the ads regularly.

Miss Gertrude Tricheker visited friends in Grants Pass last week.

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