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The Lutheran Church and Unionism.

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This summer a notable discussion of the subject of unionism was embodied in several articles published in the *American Lutheran Survey*, the writer being the editor of that journal, Dr. W. H. Greever. The articles in question had, for the greater part, been delivered in the form of lectures at a pastors' summer school and were printed in the *Survey* at the request of those who had heard them. The author treats the general subject: "The Lutheran Church in America," the articles having these headings, respectively, "The Inner Life of the Lutheran Church in America"; "The Inner Relationship between Lutheran Bodies in America"; "External Relationships of the Lutheran Church in America"; "The Promotion of the Lutheran Church in America." The statements we have reference to are found in the second and in the third article. Dr. Greever's remarks are characterized by candor and frankness and should be productive of much good. Believing that what he says on unionism is an important contribution to the debate on this matter, we shall submit copious quotations from his articles. He says, p. 463: "From this study we conclude further that the chief obstacles at present to Lutheran unity, union, fellowship, and partnership in this country are in two *matters of practise*, which involve doctrines and principles concerning which there is agreement in formal confession. We do not overlook the obstacles of personal prejudices and deplorable obstinacies nor the weighty obstacle of the difference between the legalistic and the evangelical spirit in dealing with these two matters of practise, but we still insist that these two matters in themselves are the chief obstacles to better Lutheran inner relationships. We will speak plainly here, but we desire to give no offense through what we shall say. These two things are *Unionism* and *Secret Societies*."

"*Unionism*: This question will be more fully discussed in the

The Bible in Esperanto.

From the Esperanto text of W. M. PAGE, Edinburgh.

Translated by the REV. TH. HANSSEN, Bremer, Iowa.

Since the death of Dr. Zamenhof, nine years ago, the Esperantists of the world patiently waited for the publication of the Old Testament (*Malnova Testamento*), which he had Esperantized. Various circumstances until now prevented its being issued, chief among them the World War, but also the search for an editor and the lack of money. The manuscript was handed over to a British committee, which succeeded in finding, not only a publisher, but also the needed financial support, all the money required to set the type and to stereotype it.

The well-known British and Foreign Bible Society and the National Bible Society of Scotland undertook the publication, however, under the condition that the manuscript be once more diligently compared with the Hebrew original. This task was committed to competent scholars and the revising of the Esperanto style to certain members of the Esperanto Academy [one of them being the writer, Mr. Page], who had to guarantee to the publishers and to the public that the translation was true to the original.

Right here we may say that the revisers found no reason to make any fundamental change in any paragraph written by Zamenhof and that the reader may rest assured that the translation really is the work of Zamenhof, both as to intentions and ideas. Before his death he had pointed out a number of changes which he in-

tended to make in such parts of his translation as had been published before, and the Committee on Revision has duly respected his wishes in these instances.

When the Esperantists receive the Book, they will claim it to be the crowning effort of Zamenhof's life-work. We must be thankful that he lived long enough to complete this work, to leave it as his last bequest to the Esperanto people, whom he created an international community. One cannot say too much in praise of his fidelity to the original in translating the Bible and his mastery in Esperanto expression. One must remember that it is the translation of a Hebrew collection of writings (Bible), done by a Hebrew who from childhood was fully conversant with the idioms of the original text. It is the first time since the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek (Septuagint), in the middle of the third century before Christ, that the books of Old Testament Holy Writ have again been translated from the original by a Hebrew into an international language. True, the Latin Vulgate, translated about 400 A. D., was translated into the then international language, not by a Hebrew, however, but by a scholar of the Roman Church, Jerome.

This translation is of inestimable value for the cause of Esperanto; for it furnishes us the chief book of Christendom in this international language. The Hebrew holy writings (together with the Greek writings of the New Testament) constitute the fundamental literature of the greatest part of the civilized world. And the Bible is not a single book, but a library of books. The Old Testament is a collection of thirty-nine books. Its many-sidedness is simply wonderful, from whatever angle it may be studied. It contains history and biography, laws and morals, philosophy [?] and popular notions, dramas [?] and poems, prophecies and psalms; above all, however, the holy Law of God and the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. Each part in itself is the product of an [inspired] great man at divers times; and they come to us as testimonies of the spiritual, moral, and intellectual state of that respective period. A thousand years lay between Genesis and Malachi. While we read book after book, we may count the steps of the ladder of progress to the base of our present modern civilization. The Bible, which chiefly is and remains God's revelation to men, is also, in a way, a record of human progress, unto the time when Christianity began to spread. . . . In the light of these facts it is easy to comprehend why the Bible has become the chief book in almost any existing language. One who is familiar with the

English language had to obtain this knowledge from that great standard of this language, the English Bible, or from such as had obtained it from that source. In the same manner Luther's translation of the Bible is the foundation of German language and literature. All peoples without a literature until the missionaries labored among them, receive the Bible as their first and fundamental literature. The new Bible fixes those peoples' languages, and it becomes the standard of forms and expressions used in all further literature developing in that language. Therefore one can hardly overestimate the importance of the Esperanto Bible. Esperantists already knew the remarkable ability of Dr. Zamenhof to translate the old Hebrew into fluent and smooth Esperanto from those sections of the Bible which he had Esperantized before (Genezo, Eliro, Levidoj, Nombroj, Readmono, Psalmaro, Sentencoj de Salomono and Predikanto). They will find out that the language of his later translations of the Bible in the same admirable manner reflect the peculiar style, eloquence, fire, and rhythm of the Hebrew originals. The same fidelity of translation could hardly have been shown [?] in any national language,* and this will convince many doubters that Esperanto is able to express adequately every shade of human thought.

One condition customary in British publications of Bibles was that the New Testament should be bound in the same volume with the Old Testament. But the translation of the New Testament is not the work of Dr. Zamenhof. This translation was made by a committee under the leadership of Pastor John Cyprian Rust in Soham, Cambridge, and was issued, a little over thirteen years ago, by the British and Foreign Bible Society and the National Bible Society of Scotland. However, a great part of the Old Testament had been translated and published by Zamenhof before any one ventured on the translation of the New Testament; therefore the influence of Zamenhof's Old Testament translation is noticeable in the Esperanto *Nova Testamento*. Furthermore, the revisers of Zamenhof's manuscript improved the opportunity of making a few changes in the text of the Esperanto New Testament in order to make it agree better with the Old Testament, especially where it contains exact quotations from the Old Testament.

A careful Bible reader will notice many things in the Esperanto text which he does not see so plainly in his vernacular version. The almost invariable rule of Esperanto, "Only one word

* This is said especially with regard to the Authorized Version, with its many synonyms.

for one idea," makes it possible for the Esperanto rendering to give the exact meaning of a certain Hebrew or Greek word or phrase. The Esperanto version, therefore, is not merely a translation, but at the same time a brief commentary. For such as will hereafter be commissioned to translate the Bible into a new language the Esperanto Bible will for that very reason be of special value. And it is possible that people into whose native language the Bible has not been translated, may be able to use the Esperanto Bible after but little previous instruction, and understand it well enough, until a vernacular version can be provided for them. In the field of heathen missions, the Esperanto Bible can be made a usable help in many ways, especially in the training of national helpers.

We wish to improve the present occasion for expressing the thanks of all Esperantists to several kind ladies whose liberal gifts have made it possible to issue this translation, as well as to Prof. Dr. McFayden, Hebraist of the College of the United Free Church in Glasgow, who served as expert adviser in the revision of the Old Testament manuscript of Dr. Zamenhof.

The text was for the first time used at the divine service in the Cathedral of St. Giles, Edinburgh, during the Eighteenth Universal Esperanto Congress in August of this year. It is to be regretted that on account of the recent strike in England too much time was lost, so that not enough finished copies were available for general sale during that congress. However, one may order a copy from the British and Foreign Bible Society in London or from any of its agencies in the world; also from the American Bible Society and its agencies.
