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SELECTION OF PAPERS
RELATING TO
MALAYALIM BIBLE REVISION.



PRINTED BY DESIRE OF
THE CHURCH MISSIONARY CONFERENCE.



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yam, 1871.



MALAYALIM VERSIONS OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

About the year 1806 the Rev CLAUDIUS BUCHANAN found, at the Church of Mavollicara in Travancore, an Elder named THOMA, who had translated the Gospel of St. Matthew from Syriac into Malayalim, and which was described by the Catanars "as not in fine language, but yet the people loved to read it." At this time there were ancient copies of the Syriac Scriptures, or of parts of them only in most churches. Mr. BUCHANAN proposed "to make a standard Malayalim translation of the Bible for each Church, and that each man who could write should make a copy for himself." The Tamil Translation was now complete, and armed with it Mr. BUCHANAN proceeded to the Syrian Metran, MAR DIONYSIUS at Angamale, and found the Bishop engaged with three learned Syrian and Malayalim scholars in translating into Malayalim that which he had urged upon the aged Metran at a former visit. The Bishop longed to see the Tamil, he being also a good Malayalim scholar, three translators at monthly wages were left by Mr. BUCHANAN, and Colonel MACAULAY, the then British Resident superintended after the departure of the kind and good Chaplain. Mr. SWARTZ sent a Tanjore Catechist to be at Candonade to aid and assist. The two Gospels were printed in 1810 at Bombay from type cast there, and were very strongly recommended to the British and Foreign Bible Society's notice, and a Mr. THIMAPA PILLA superintended this version at Bombay.

The Rev. B. BAILEY, of the Church Mission, assisted by others, commenced translating, and the Bible Society of Calcutta sent a printing press to Cottayam, in 1820 the Gospel of

Luke was first printed, and so gradually the whole of the New Testament was printed as revised by the labours of other Missionaries, more especially Messrs. Norton and Baker of the Church of England, and Mr. Thompson of the London Missionary Society; Mr. Bailey was, however, the principal translator. Internal evidence fully shows that the English authorised version, and Fabricius' Tamil translation of the Scriptures into Tamil, which again was a revision of that of Ziegenbalg and Schultz, published by the Society for Christian Knowledge, were the authorities for Mr. Bailey's version.

Before 1836 several editions of the Gospels were printed at Cottaam and one was even stereotyped in England by the Bible Society. The whole Bible was published in 4 vols. 8vo, and improvements made before Mr. Bailey left the country. It should be here noticed that the language of this translation continued to be that rather of a colloquial or middle class character and not of a classical or Grundhum type, although many Sanskrit words were used. Some peculiar words and forms not common to Malayalam were also adopted, and these gradually came to be called Syrianisms by those who studied old Malayalam books or "adaptations" from the Ramayanam and other Sanskrit works into Malayalam.

About 1844-46 Dr. Gundert, of the Basel Mission, began to translate and write Malayalam very fully. Portions at least of the Gospels were lithographed and published in the Basel Mission in an entirely new version at Tellicherry. It was now felt that in a population of $3\frac{1}{2}$ millions of people, containing many thousand Christians of various sects, it was very undesirable to have two versions of God's word, as cavillers at once took occasion, from variations of language and even style, to object to the authenticity of the Writings professed to be inspired, while others even deided the simple language of the existing completed version. Confusion of ideas on religious subjects being likely further to arise among a semi-educated people, it was thought advisable to promote the improvement of Mr. Bailey's book by the more critical knowledge professed by Dr. Gundert. A mass of correspondence was thus

occasioned, meetings twice took place between Missionaries of the Church Mission and Basel Societies, but difficulties arose owing to the idea that Northern Malayalam was peculiar and impossible of reconciliation with the Southern. Names and phrases derived from old Syriac used for centuries by the Southern Christians were thought not to be admissable by the German Mission who adhered closely to the original Greek indeed, but used Sanscrit terms often used by the Hindoos for holy ideas or religious technical phraseology; and thus very diverse from that of the Syrians. Provincial words and others coined from Sanscrit roots had been used by both translators with not a few Tamil additions. As the years passed on, Dr. Gundert finished and printed the New Testament and went home to Germany, where he continues his work on the Old, the Psalms, and Proverbs being also completed. Urged by those who read both translations and saw the respective advantages, the Madras Bible Society again and often proposed, an union version; which was freely responded to by the Church Mission Conference, but the great alterations previously demanded by both parties prevented any approximation of the two versions or their friends.

Messrs. Peet, HAWKESWORTH, and G. MATHAN, who had been appointed by the Church Mission Conference to revise Mr. Bailey's Translation, although they could not agree with Messrs. Gundert and Fritz of the Basel Mission in adopting all the alterations of the German revision, still took advantage of the lithographed portions and adopted many improvements in both words and phrases, their revised edition is that now in use in the South, and is published by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 2 vols. oct and 1 vol. quarto.

At a meeting of the Church Mission Conference held on the 26th September, 1866, Rev. R. COLLINS, the Secretary of the Bible Society for the Malayalam Auxiliary, urged the reprinting of more copies of the Scriptures and the necessity for one uniform translation, and the Conference resolved to ask the British and Foreign Bible Society to sanction 5,000 copies of the Bible in small type, and further to take the most important step of organ-

ising a proper Revision Committee from the Missionaries of the C.M.S., L.M.S., and Basel Societies.

Correspondence was opened between the Bible Society and the German Mission, and the resolution was responded to by the Rev. Mr. THIRZ in a letter to Mr. SPENCILY, dated 11th March, 1867:—

“I am rejoiced to see from your letter that a new prospect is opening to obtain a revised Bible acceptable to all the Missionaries labouring in Malayalam. I, with my whole heart, agree with you that it will be a glorious thing to have one version for the Malayalies, though past experience has taught me not to be over sanguine on a subject that hitherto proved beset with serious difficulties. I think I may assure you of our hearty co-operation in this important work *if it be agreed* that Dr. GUNBERT's translation be made the basis for the new revision, whilst at the same time Mr. BAILEY's be closely consulted by the Revisers. To this I suppose there will be less objection now, as the last edition of Mr. BAILEY's New Testament bears many marks of corrections taken from our translation, and as our translation was made by an acknowledged scholar in Greek and Hebrew as well as in the vernaculars. As the revision work will prove a tax on our time, and probably also entail pecuniary expenses, we cannot bind ourselves without the sanction of our Home Committee. But if Dr. GUNBERT's translation is made the basis for the revision, I have no doubt that the Home Committee will sanction our taking a part in the work, and in the mean time I see no objection as a temporary measure to assure you of our willingness to assist in the prosecution of a work which, with the blessing of our Heavenly Father upon it, will prove of great benefit to the whole population of Malabar.”

At Mavelikara Conference, held 11th September, 1867.
“Bible revision has long appeared to the Conference to be most necessary, and it appears preposterous that among a population of 4,000,000 of Malayalam speaking people two distinct versions should be introduced by the Missionaries of different Protestant Societies. Former obstructions to an united Revision Committee

now seem to be removed, and the Conference would desire to agree with the answer of Rev. J. M. FRITZ to an appeal of ours through the Rev. J. M. SPEERLEY, viz., "that Dr. GUNDETT's translation be made the basis for the new revision, whilst at the same time Mr. BAILEY's be closely consulted by the Revisors." On these grounds we request the Secretary of the Corresponding Committee to make such arrangements with the British and Foreign Bible Society that the expenses may be met, and with the German Mission and the London Malayalam Missionaries, that a proper revision be thus formed with delegates from each Mission appointed by the Conference that we be enabled in time to have one good translation approved of all."

We find on March 16th, 1868, further letters passed on the subject. Extract from minutes of a meeting of General Committee of the Madras Auxiliary Bible Society. Read letter from Rev. J. M. FRITZ of Cannanore, 18th December, 1869. Acknowledges receipt of communication, reports favourable reception of proposals for Malayalam revision and general acquiescence in views of Committee, excepting in immediate necessity, as Scriptures are now being printed. States necessity for obtaining sanction of Home Committee before deciding upon any course; but if Dr. GUNDETT's Bible be taken as basis of revision, expenses be paid by Madras Auxiliary Bible Society. Thinks he may assure us of hearty co-operation on the part of the German Missionaries and waits further instructions. Resolution VII. "That Mr. FRITZ be informed that this Committee is prepared to incur the expenses necessary for travelling, munshis, postage, &c., connected with the proposed revision of the Malayalam Scriptures, in the same way as for the Telugu Revision now in progress. That it is understood that the proposed revision shall be made on the basis of Dr. GUNDETT's translation, that of Mr. BAILEY being closely consulted throughout, and that the German Missionaries be therefore requested to obtain the necessary sanction from the Home Committee to allow of their co-operating in the revision, a work which would probably occupy a considerable time before it could be completed, and to inform the Committee of the result."

Mr. GARTHWAITE, the Inspector of Schools, wrote and proposed an entire revision, and offered to assist the Missionaries by becoming a member of the Committee. On this the C. M. Conference say, January 14, 1870. "The revision of the Malayalam Scriptures in unison with the Basel Mission, though likely to be prolonged, and not possibly completed for a long time yet, notwithstanding difficulties, considering the terms used by Syrians and others as established for centuries, yet the Conference think eventually a playful earnest Revision Committee would overcome all difficulties to the advantage of the Church of Christ."

Madras, 28th December, 1869.

From the Secretary Madras Auxiliary Bible Society, to the Rev. H. BAKER.

"Your letter in regard to the Malayalam Revision, with its enclosure (Mr. GARTHWAITE's letter), has been laid before the Committee, and they have asked me to send the Secretary Basel E. M. a copy of the letter and of a minute on the subject, which was communicated to them in reply to a letter from Mr. FRITZ. I enclose a copy of this minute for your information. You will observe from it that Dr. GUNBERT's version was proposed as the basis of a new version, and that Mr. BAILEY's translation be closely consulted. Of course, the *Textus Receptus* would have to be followed as the Society's Standard Greek Testament. I am not very sanguine about the formation of a Malayalam Committee of Revision. During the past fifty years it has been found practicable to form only one such body, which worked very unsatisfactorily, and apparently not very satisfactorily, between the years 1835 and 1840 (?) when it was closed, as Mr. FAIR declared that the very few members who remained of those who originally composed it, rendered it desirable to bring its labours to an end. Since 1840 there have been one or two Committees of Publication who may or may not have attempted a slight revision of Mr. BAILEY's original text and every attempt to secure unanimity of action between the various Missionaries occupying the Malayalam country has completely failed. I trust the present

movement may be more fortunate. The desirableness of having one version only in Malayalam is acknowledged by all parties, but the inconvenience of having two versions so very different as Mr. BAILEY's and Dr. GUNBERT's has not been pressingly felt by any one—certainly not so pressingly as to induce the surrender of individual preferences for the purpose of securing a general boon. Besides, no new edition of either the Old or New Testament will be wanted for some years yet, and the inaccuracies in Mr. BAILEY's version do not appear to be so serious to render the preparation of a new translation particularly urgent. If Mr. GARTHWAITE's suggestion be adopted, it will prepare the way for such a translation or revision, and which will be ready just about the time the want of a new edition of the Scriptures will begin to be felt."

March 15th, 1870.

Rev. J. M. FRITZ writes to the Bible Committee at Madras.

"Our Home Committee was written to on the subject of the proposed revision of the Malayalam Scriptures. In their answer, in which they give their consent to our co-operating in the proposed undertaking, they express their wishes for our guidance which may be summed up in the following:—

a. "If any of their Missionaries are to be members of the Revision Committee, they would look to the two oldest of their brethren, Messrs. FRITZ and MULLER being appointed.

b. "They would wish in consideration of the other direct Mission work, that the revision work be as much as possible carried on by correspondence, and that the actual meetings be limited to two—the one at the beginning and the other at the close of the revision of the New Testament. The former they consider necessary that the members of the Revision Committee may become personally acquainted, and also to come to an understanding as to the principles on which the revision is to be carried on; and the other finally to settle such questions which may have been found too difficult to bring to a satisfactory conclusion by correspondence.

c. "That Dr. GUNBERT's translation be made the basis of the

new revision, and that care be taken that although essential alterations be made, the *character of Dr. Gundert's translation on the whole be preserved.*

d. "The Home Committee advise us to say that though they give their consent to our taking part in the revision, they cannot *a priori* promise to abstain from printing Dr. GUNDETT's original translation, but reserve to themselves the right for the future also.

"With what is said under b. c. and d. your Society will doubtless agree when you remember that besides money and precious time and strength, that it has been executed with well-known ability and a faithful attention to the original, and therefore has its particular value for our Society, and that consequently they feel anxious that in spite of alterations that may be made, its characteristic features should as much as possible be preserved. If your Committee proceed to form a Revision Committee I would repeat what I told Mr. GARDINER that I think it would be well if *previous* to the first meeting each member was supplied with an interleaved copy of Dr. GUNDETT's New Testament, and was asked to read with pen in hand, say the first two Gospels, and make notes of what he considers needful alterations. At the first meeting these notes might be compared, and thus a practical way opened to come to an understanding as to the points on which the members agree, and on which they differ, and to lay down some rules by which to be guided for the future. I shall be very glad if the issue proves that all the members have, as you say *con amore* engaged in this work, and that we have put the hand to the plough, not because we are led by outward circumstances, but because we feel that we are thereby conferring a boon on our Churches and the heathen population of Travancore, Cochin, and Malabar. Awaiting further communications &c. J. M. FRITZ."

Resolved at the Conference of the Church Mission, June 15, 1870. "The letters regarding Bible Revision having been considered many difficulties presented themselves, but it was thought the only way to meet them would be to have a preliminary conference with the German Missionaries, Rev. Messrs. FRITZ and C. MULLER, the committee appointed by them. Hence the Rev.

H. BAKER and J. JOSEPH were appointed the delegates of the Church Mission to confer with these gentlemen and report to the next Conference."

The Bible Society, 17th August, 1870, say: "That the Committee think it advisable that a meeting of the delegates for the Revision of the Malayalam Bible should be held as proposed by the Church Mission Conference of North Travancore for the purpose of settling preliminaries in regard to the degree of revision required, and the manner in which it should be carried on, but they would leave the arrangements as to time and place of the meeting to the delegates themselves."

Agreed at another meeting of Church Mission Conference, 7th December, 1870: "In order to facilitate the revision and remove difficulties in the way of the delegates, Mr. BAKER's proposal that on condition certain words be altered by the Basel Missionaries in their edition of the Scriptures, that book be adopted by us as a tentative version, and the Bible Society be requested to circulate it with our own edition of the Bible till a perfect knowledge of each will enable our people and clergy to decide what union version of the two can be adopted as the most feasible course towards a common book for the use of all. Mr. BAKER and Mr. JESUS JOSEPH be therefore authorised to meet the Basel Missionaries as soon as convenient."

The following letter was written to Mr. FAITZ by Mr. BAKER: "The Secretary of the Bible Society has asked me to write to you about a meeting our Church Mission Conference proposes for arranging preliminaries respecting the possibility of a united version. You are aware that our agents and people are very favourable to our version, which however is founded upon Syrian words, ideas, and their own ancient translation. I have myself been reading Dr. GUNDELL's version lately with great pleasure, and held consultations with heathen Munshis on its language, and decidedly believe it to have many advantages over ours. But there are words in it not in use here or used in a very diverse sense. My own idea is that we should meet, and as you say in your letter to the Bible Society, that you must retain the power

to print Dr. GUNDELL's version for your own Mission, so the version we print should also be considered as allowable for us to reprint at a future time; *still* my feeling^e is, that provided a few words can be altered in your book, which would then be better understood by all Malayalies, and possibly convey the true meaning of Holy Scripture, both our Missions might then write and ask the Bible Society to print the amended work as a tentative version for our Southern people. I made a list of these words in the first 19 chapters of St. Matthew, and I believe that there are about 35 in all. The style, conciseness, and language I would not wish altered. If by God's grace you will consent to the small modifications I have proposed, and we have our meeting, it will be my duty to propose your book with its modifications to our Church Mission Conference, and I earnestly hope they will then agree to allow it as a tentative version. We have in store Bibles and portions to last five or six years: this will allow the new version to be read and compared side by side with the old one of BAILEY revised lately. And, then, when *the* Standard Book is to be published, may we not have all our three Societies uniting in showing opponents that we hold to one text? The London Missionaries do not now (there being but one Malayalim Missionary) take an active part in my proposal, but I believe I have their full acquiescence. Messrs. MULLER and DIEZ are proposed, as members, on your side. I have a native brother to assist me, but the acquiescence of our Conference will give us full power after consulting them on our return, and then I sincerely trust an answer may be given to my long waiting hope. I enclose a list of the words and expressions I allude to, the question being, not of translation, but of the expression only of what the two translations, independently of each other, already show the meaning to be."

H. B.

Extracts from various letters of H. FITZPATRICK, Esq., Secretary.
Madras Auxiliary Bible Society.

"16th January, 1871. While doubts have been expressed regarding the advisability of adopting the plan proposed by the North Travancore Conference of Church Missionaries, the Bible

Committee is of opinion that the delegates should assemble as proposed, with a view to determine the conditions on which they are prepared to proceed in the work of revision."

"2nd March, 1871. The impression conveyed by the minute of the Church Mission Conference, and your own note communicating it, was that the German Missionaries would continue to print Dr. GUNBERT's version *unaltered*, while the Bible Society were to issue Dr. GUNBERT's modified and Mr. BAKER's, and that thus *three* versions, instead of two, would be thrown into circulation. But *if*, as you now write, the German Mission will at once adopt the modified text, much of the anticipated difficulty will be obviated. There is nothing the Madras Committee so earnestly wishes to accomplish as a united or union version of the Malayalam Bible. I trust that the meeting will take place, and that all, and more than you expect, will be effected through it."

"23rd February, 1871. I have particularly requested the Rev. F. WILKINSON, of Quilon, to be present at the first meeting."

"23rd August, 1870. Should you feel unable from assuming the office of convenor, I would suggest that Mr. FARRZ be asked to become the convenor of your Committee, and call a meeting without delay."

The illness and death of members of the families of the delegates of the German Mission prevented a meeting till the 26th July. Mr. WILKINSON was unable to attend, but Messrs. BAKER and JUSTUS JOSEPH of the Church Mission, furnished with notes by Mr. WILKINSON and various members of the Missions*, and from their own reading, proceeded to Cannanore, where they were met with the utmost candour and Christian feeling, and after a prayerful consideration of nearly a week, and studying 10 chapters of St. Matthew with the Greek and both translations in hand, they agreed to the following report:—

"The Rev. Messrs. H. BAKER and J. JOSEPH, the Committee appointed by the Church Missionary Conference of Travancore to confer with the German Basel Mission regarding the union version of the Malayalam Scriptures, after collecting objections made to Dr. GUNBERT's version by members of the two Southern Missions,

proceeded to Cannanore and met the Revs. J. M. FRITZ and C. MULLER, the Committee appointed by the Basel Mission.

“ Dr. GUNDEK's version having been agreed upon by the British and Foreign Bible Society as the basis of the new version, it was examined in Conference together with the objections mentioned above and Mr. BAILEY's translation, closely observing their adherence to the original Greek.

I. “ The Conference find that Dr. GUNDEK's translation is as nearly as possible a literal translation from the original, irrespective of any other translations, while Mr. BAILEY's approximates the colloquial of Southern Malabar.

II. “ Considering that there are certain terms, proper names, &c., rendered in a different manner to those long in use among the Christians of the South, and that it is most desirable to have one Bible in use among all the Malayalam speaking population, the German Mission on their part agree to make such alterations in order that Dr. GUNDEK's version may be acceptable, in no wise altering the style or character, but not to contain words unknown in Travancore and Cochin.

III. “ And the Church Mission consider it right that Dr. GUNDEK's version thus rendered intelligible to all their congregations by the few verbal alterations necessary should be the standard version of Malabar, and to this the German Mission also consent. Future revisions when necessary will be carried on they trust on this basis.

IV. “ A certain portion of the Gospel of St. Matthew having been gone over by the Committee, and preliminaries arranged, the Committee consider the future work can be carried on by correspondence, Mr. BAKER collecting opinions in Travancore, and sending the formal lists of *words determined on*, by the Travancore Missionaries, to the Revs. J. M. FRITZ or C. MULLER, who will agree on their parts to what alterations they would allow. If any diversity of opinion should arise, a second consideration will take place, and the terms may be fixed even at a future meeting, which after a time may take place. The revision can thus be pushed on without delay. Mr. FRITZ as

senior shall have a casting vote, and Mr. MULLER will see the MSS through the press.

V. "As soon as the Gospel of St. Matthew has thus been gone over, the Committee would request the British and Foreign Bible Society to print that Gospel as a portion at the Mangalore Press and issue it as soon as possible for use, the Committee, on their part, undertaking to complete the work with God's Grace as soon as possible. The portions may be in large type octavo as now printed, some of this print being reserved to form part of the whole Testament.

"Another edition 16mo. in small type will also be needed and issued in portions only."

Note.—The above is a true copy of our agreement, and a perfect copy was left with Mr. TARTZ, together with the alterations agreed upon for the first 10 Chapters of Matthew.

HENRY BAKER, Secretary Malayalam Branch Bible Society.

On this the Church Mission, on receiving the report, passed the accompanying resolutions at a Conference of their body on the 5th July, 1871.

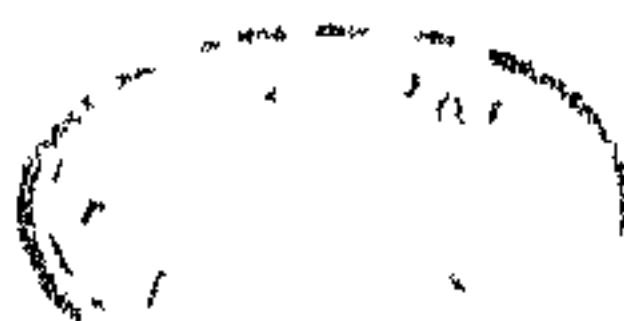
a. "That the thanks of the Conference be given to the Revs. H. BAKER and JUSTUS JOSEPH for their labours in connexion with the preliminary proceedings relative to revision of the Malayalam Scriptures, and that they be asked to act as Revisors for the whole on behalf of the Conference.

b. "That a pamphlet be printed and circulated on the subject of the new version of the Malayalam Scriptures, to enable all parties interested to understand thoroughly the nature and extent of the proposed alterations, and the plan of procedure, as well as to ensure hearty sympathy and co-operation.

c. "That a copy of the proposed alterations (in the first ten chapters of Matthew) of the German Testament be sent in circulation among the Missionaries, and another copy be sent to the Syrian Melian (MAR ATHANASIUS), and that he be requested to appoint two delegates to assist in the proposed revision."

The future mode of procedure will be to circulate papers among those Protestants and Syrians who are willing to

study the two versions and the Scriptures in the original, and their notes and suggestions will be sent to Mr. BAKER, the present Acting Secretary of the Malayalam Bible Association, Cottayam. The Revs. H. BAKER and J. JOSEPH, with the representative of the London Mission (the Rev. F. WILKINSON at present, but replaced by Mr. MATHER on his return from England), and the representatives of the Syrian Church, will collate the proposals or corrections of the members of the Churches sent them, and act regarding them as proposed in the report; and thus, with God's help, as large editions of the two old versions are on hand, the new book printed by the Bible Society will come into gradual use by all the Bible reading Christians of Malabar. Future improvements and alterations are provided for, and Mahomedans and Heathen will no longer have the opportunity, hitherto so freely made use of by them, of asserting that we "are not agreed as to our Vadum," and "have very opposite texts to build our faith upon." Scholars will be satisfied that the devotion and learning of old Missionaries have given them a good translation, and glory be rendered to God alone.



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