

THE
PRINCETON REVIEW.

APRIL 1839.

No. II.

Joseph Owen

- ART. I.—1. *The Chinese: A General Description of the Empire of China and its Inhabitants.* By John Francis Davis, Esq. F. R. S., &c. In 2 vols. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1836.
2. *The Stranger in China; or, The Fan-qui's visit to the Celestial Empire, in 1836-7.* By C. Toogood Downing, Esq., Mem. Roy. Coll. Surgeons. In 2 vols. 12mo. Philadelphia. 1838.
3. *China; its State and Prospects, with especial reference to the spread of the gospel; containing allusions to the Antiquity, Extent, Population, Civilization, Literature, and Religion of the Chinese.* By W. H. Medhurst, of the London Missionary Society. Boston. 1838.

THE empire of China has for the last three centuries been drawing an increasing amount of attention from western nations. At the present time it is awakening universal interest among commercial and Christian people. It is by no means surprising that it should. Even independently of the commercial advantages which it presents, and the importance of bringing it under Christian influence, it affords subjects of inquiry well adapted to arouse the curiosity of the human

to write numerous folios, in the intervals of labour, but we have each his humble sphere in which if each were to labour with assiduity and singleness of purpose, we should soon see a new era in the condition of our church.

It is mentioned in the pamphlet before us that there are twenty one ministers in the presbytery of Elizabethtown, and with scarce a single exception, the work of the ministry is their only work. This is a most honourable distinction; but it is melancholy that it should be a distinction. What should be a matter of course, has become a matter for special gratulation. That these things should not be so, no one can doubt. What the church needs, more than any other outward blessing, is a ministry exclusively devoted to their work. And how it is to be obtained, unless the people will make such a provision for their pastors, that they may be free from worldly cares and avocations. To this they are bound by the principles of justice; by the ordinance of Christ; by a regard to their own spiritual interests, and the welfare of the church.

J. A. Alexander

ART. III.—*The Scripture Guide: a Familiar Introduction to the Study of the Bible.* Prepared for the American Sunday School Union, and revised by the Committee of Publication. Philadelphia. pp. 263.

WE give the title of this unpretending little volume for two reasons. As it is written in the form of dialogues, and published for the use of Sunday Schools, it is likely to be overlooked or slighted by adults. And yet it contains a large amount of information, highly important even to ministers and students of theology, many of whom can scarcely be expected to derive it from the various, remote, and scattered sources, of which this writer seems to have availed himself. The volume gives a succinct account of the various bibliographical particulars belonging to the subject, and in relation to which we fear that not a few men of some learned pretension would be found deficient. In these matters are comprised the literary history of the Bible, its divisions and authorship, the means of its preservation and transmission, (including a full account of the ancient materials of writing, the appearance, value, &c. of manuscripts) notices of the

principal versions, with a more detailed history of the present English translation, its origin and execution, and a complete guide to the difficulties of the margin, double names of books, acrostics, untranslated and obsolete words, and other topics of obvious inquiry which would occur to an intelligent student. Much that is diffused through Horne and larger works is here condensed, and numerous items are collected which would have to be sought for in various and uncommon books, so that we believe the author speaks no more than the truth when he says that "there is not in our language any book which presents at one view exactly the field which is here exhibited." Our other reason for inviting attention to the book is this, that it tends, and is designed, to promote the critical, discriminating study of the English Bible. On the relation which this study ought to bear to that of the original Scriptures, we have some opinions of our own to express, and shall unceremoniously embrace this opportunity to state them in detail.

When the gospel was first preached, there was a language common to the civilized world, or at least to its improved and educated classes. That language was the Greek, and in that language the New Testament was written. The early Christian missionaries carried with them, therefore, the original gospel in a form accessible to multitudes scattered over the surface of the world then known. They carried with them likewise the Old Testament in the same language, translated, it is true, but in a very old translation, and one from which the writers of the New Testament habitually quote. Some knowledge of this version is consequently necessary to the full understanding of the New Testament, not only on account of the quotations just referred to, but because the idiom of the one is founded upon that of the other. Here then was a great advantage attending the original diffusion of the gospel. The preacher could put into the hands of the heathen the original New Testament and the most ancient version of the Old, in a language generally known throughout the Roman empire. These writings were not, it is true, composed in such a dialect or style, as to attract or satisfy the rhetorician; but they were written in a language vernacular to many readers, and more or less familiar to vast multitudes besides. This advantage has remained in the possession of the oriental church. It is still the boast of that communion, that the gospels and epistles have been read in her public service, from its first institution to the present day,

✓ in the very tongue selected by the Holy Spirit as the vehicle of his communications, while the books of the Old Testament are publicly recited in a version made before the birth of Christ; a version disfigured, on the one hand, by innumerable errors and defects, but distinguished on the other, by its authority derived from age, and by the references to it, and the quotations from it, in the books of the New Testament. It is true that the Greek of the New Testament and the Septuagint is no longer the vulgar tongue of Greece; but it is also true, that the modern dialect is merely a corruption of the ancient language, and that much of the latter is of course intelligible to the modern Greek. It is true, moreover, that the preservation of the language, even so far as it has been preserved, is owing in a great degree to the possession and perpetual use of the Greek scriptures in the oriental church. Had this been wanting, the ancient tongue would have been overwhelmed by floods of barbaric innovation, and amidst the confusion of repeated revolutions, the very basis of the language might have undergone a change. But by continual repetition, the essential features of the Greek of the New Testament have been impressed too strongly, even on the vulgar mind, to be effaced or superseded by mere mixture or corruption. The vernacular Greek of our own day is as near to the Greek of the apostles as our English is to that of Chaucer or Wiclif. ✓ The same conservative influence on language has been exerted by the national versions of the Bible in German and in English, but with this advantage on the side of the Greeks, so far as the New Testament is concerned, that the standard writings which have thus preserved their language from extinction, are not a translation, but the ipsissima verba of the holy men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. While the oriental church continued, from age to age, to enjoy this great advantage, the western church at an early period, began to lose it. With them Greek was not a vernacular language, but, like the French in later times, the language of foreign travel and diplomatic intercourse, of politeness, erudition, and the fine arts. They soon, therefore, felt the need of a Latin version, and as the learning of the priests declined, the faith of western Christians became more and more dependent on the venerable Vulgate. Especially after the decline and downfall of the western empire, when political and literary intercourse between the east and west became less frequent, and the knowledge of Greek less indispensable to Latins, the ori-

ginal New Testament grew less and less familiar to the occidental priesthood. And this effect was heightened by the operation of collateral causes. The Christian ministry was gradually changed into a hierarchy, and engrossed with secular affairs. The powers of the clergy were no longer concentrated upon holy things, or if they were, it was to change the holy things themselves into a monstrous system of corruption and imposture. To sustain these unscriptural and unchristian innovations, the aid of tradition was invoked, first as a vassal, then as a consort, and finally as a sovereign or lord paramount of scripture. No wonder, therefore, that the latter was neglected, and the originals almost unknown. No wonder that, by slow degrees, the Vulgate version was practically substituted for the inspired Greek and Hebrew as a rule of faith. We say practically substituted, for although the change was, to all intents and purposes, effected early, it was not until after the close of the "dark ages," that the revolution was consummated in form. It was reserved for the Council of Trent, in the 16th century, to set the seal of ecclesiastical authentication on the version of a book in preference to the book itself. The effects of this revolution were of course disastrous. Even while it was as yet but partial and inchoate, it began to bring forth fruit which is to poison generations yet unborn. Besides the obvious sin and folly of setting the originals aside in favour of any version however perfect, there are momentous consequences springing from the imperfections of the versions used. To those who have not been in the habit of comparing translations with originals, it would not be easy to convey a just idea of the false impression which may be produced by a version scarcely open to objection in detail. Without insisting on the faint and feeble character of almost all translations, as compared with their originals, a difference not unlike that between copy and original in painting, it is a fact familiar to all scholars, that the proportions, texture, and complexion of a passage may be altered in a version, while the thoughts are all exhibited, and even the expressions very accurately copied. The explanation of this fact, from the influence of association on the reader's mind, may be waved as too familiar to require repetition. But when, in addition to this fault of the *ensemble*, this refracted view of the whole context as a whole, there are specific errors and defects in the translation, which obscure, or mutilate, or change its meaning, it is needless to observe that its effect upon a reader who

knows nothing of the original, must be a false impression, false in the general, and false, to a certain point, in its details. And this false impression, as it may be corrected by continual comparison with the original, may likewise, in default of such comparison, grow more and more remote from that original. That which is merely incidental in the latter may be rendered emphatic by unskilful version, while that which is really emphatic becomes secondary and obscure. And this false relation of the parts, by constant repetition, may grow more and more distorted and grotesque. A similar effect may be produced, but in another way. An unequivocal expression may be rendered by one more or less ambiguous. To many readers the inappropriate sense may first suggest itself, and thus become associated with the context. In this case, every repetition of the version, apart from the original, renders the association stronger and more natural, until at last it seems to be not only true but necessary. And yet the meaning thus connected with the text may be entirely foreign from its real import. With all these faults is the Latin Vulgate chargeable, and in all these ways it acted upon the religion and theology of the middle ages. How many Popish errors and corruptions may be more or less directly traced to the exclusive use of this translation of the Bible, is a curious question, into which we cannot, on this occasion, enter. What has already been suggested will suffice to show at least the possibility of such effects from such a cause. And with these considerations in our eye, we cannot wonder that at the first dawn of the Reformation, and before the great Reformers had appeared as authors, the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures were neglected, and the Vulgate version was the exclusive standard of the universal church. There are facts which would even seem to lead to the conclusion that the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures were forgotten, and their very existence unknown to the men by whom they should have been expounded. But how far this disgraceful depth of ignorance was common, cannot well be ascertained, especially as nearly all our knowledge of the fact is derived from the satirical and controversial writings which grew out of the revival of letters. Let us charitably hope that there were not many priests or monks, who could have thought that the Hebrew Bible was forged by Reuchlin and the Greek Testament by Luther.

At the Reformation a new era commences. That glorious revolution had its origin in the study of the Bible, and no

sooner did the reformers recognise the Scriptures as the exclusive rule of faith than they began to reinstate the inspired originals in their long-lost rights. An authentic statement of the influence exerted on the minds of the most eminent reformers by the study of the original Scriptures would be the most effectual refutation of the dogma, that all philosophical and critical study tends to unbelief and irreligion, as well as of the kindred error, that religious truth is to be discovered by the aid of metaphysics, independently of scripture. One thing is certain, as a matter of history, that the two giants of the Reformation, Martin Luther and John Calvin, spent a large part of their time and strength in simple exposition. And as a necessary part of exposition they translated anew from the original those portions which were to be expounded. Almost the first blow aimed at the corruptions of the church was the rejection of the Vulgate as "authentic" or inspired. And this was followed by new versions without number, more or less extensive. Luther, indeed, gained immortal honour by a complete translation of the Bible, a stupendous work considering the character and circumstances of the man. What should we think if one of our own agitators, spiritual gladiators, moral or immoral agents, moral, theological, or radical reformers, should produce a translation of one book of the Old Testament? Alas, we may congratulate ourselves when we can find these public benefactors even moderately versed in the vernacular contents of our own English Bible. From such look back to Luther, with an energy of character and warmth of temperament which might well have fitted him to lead a mob or head an army. Look at him, with his soul of fire, labouring at the composition, not of inflammatory pamphlets and reports, but of that imperishable work, which has identified his name with German literature, and from which the Germans date the rise of their fine language towards refinement and perfection. That Luther was the bona fide author of this version, may be read on every page of it, in thoughts that breathe and words that burn. There is perhaps no extensive version extant, which approaches so nearly to the freshness and vitality and warmth of an original. There is no other version of the Scriptures which, without attempting scrupulous adherence to the letter, represents, with such fidelity, the spirit of the Scriptures. It is plain that in translating Luther made the thoughts and languages of the sacred books his own, the consequence of which is that of-

ten when he seems to be most loose in the expression, he is most successful in embodying the very life and soul of his original. Though a hundred generations of philologists and critics should arise in Germany to re-translate the Bible, the nation would be false to their own honour and the cause of truth, if they should suffer one or all to supersede this noble monument of Luther's learning, skill, and zeal for God.

This bright example was soon followed. The Germans were not suffered to monopolize the honour of a national translation. Wherever the reformed religion was embraced, there was a hungering for the word of God. And at no remote period from the finishing of Luther's work, the Dutch, the Danes, the Swedes, the English, and the Protestants of France, had the whole Bible in their mother-tongues. A late biographer of Calvin expresses his regret that a French translation of the Scriptures was not executed by the great Reformer, who might then have shared the honours of his German fellow-worker in this as well as other things; and the two might have stood forth to posterity in this, as they now stand in so many other points of view, the Jachin and Boaz of the Reformation. The effect of such a version must have been immense, as the writer already cited well observes, not only on the Protestants of France, but on the language, taste, and intellect of that great nation. But these are vain regrets, and may especially be spared over the grave and amidst the memorials of such a man as Calvin. If he did less than Luther for bible translation, he did vastly more for doctrinal theology. *Non omnes possumus omnia.*

Among the national translations of the Bible, which the Reformation brought into existence, we have mentioned that of England. The history and character of this important version have, of late years, been favourite subjects both of investigation and discussion. Into this inquiry it is not our present purpose to enter. Instead of inquiring whence our version came, and wherein it excels, we rather wish to bring before the reader some of the effects which have resulted from its general adoption and continual use. Premising, then, that it is, by those most competent to judge, regarded as one of the best versions of the Bible, or of any other book, now extant, we would call attention to the fact, that when this version was, by common consent, taken as a national translation, for the benefit of all who speak the English tongue; when the zeal for original research and re-translation had been merged in general approbation of this common version; there was of

necessity a tendency, however slight, to the same evils which have been pointed out, as flowing, in the middle ages, from the exclusive use of the Latin Vulgate. The very excellence of the translation, while it gave the unlearned reader a desirable confidence in its correctness, tempted the clergyman and educated layman to rely upon it as an ultimate authority. And just in proportion as this faith grew strong, the disposition to examine the originals of course grew weak. The impulse given to the study of the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures at the Reformation, by the novelty of the subject, its being a forbidden one, and the necessity of vindicating truth from official mutilation and infallible corruption, could not last, without fresh causes and occasions, through succeeding generations. When the general necessity for searching the originals came to an end, the study was soon limited to a few professional and zealous scholars, while the rest were glad to be relieved from the necessity of translating for themselves, by a translation which all sects and parties were agreed in thinking admirable. Here then was the foundation laid for just those evils which the sole use of the Vulgate had produced in other times, and still produces in the church of Rome. One grand distinction, it is true, existed in the far superior correctness of our version; so far superior, that in order to correct the evils flowing from its use, it is not requisite, as in the other case, to discard the version itself, especially as ours is in the vulgar tongue, but merely to correct the manner of its use. All this notwithstanding, the evils to be remedied, in their own nature, are the same in either case. There is the same tendency to indolent stagnation, resulting from a passive acquiescence in the common version, without the exciting and improving trouble of comparison and judgment. Nothing so effectually rouses and concentrates the attention in perusing a translation as the attempt to judge of its correctness for one's self, and the inertia resulting from the want of this excitement, not only impairs our knowledge of the Scriptures, but tends to produce a general paralysis of intellect and feeling. There is also, in both cases, the same tendency to misconceive ambiguous expressions, and to fasten on inadequate translations, to the detriment of gospel truth. Is it possible that some men, seated in high places, could have ventured to insist upon the language of our Bible, that "sin is the transgression of the law," in proof that sin consists in voluntary acts alone, if there had been such a general habit of comparing the original and ver-

sion even among clergymen, as to endanger the unfortunate discovery that ἀνομιία means something more than actual transgression? It is true that the deception has been fully detected and exposed in controversy; but the original suggestio falsi, or at least suppressio veri, argues either profound ignorance in those who made it, or a supposition of profounder ignorance in those to whom it was addressed. Another effect, common to both cases, is the tendency to distort and falsify the context by false emphasis, by making that predominant which ought to be subordinate, and vice versa. Of this there are perpetual illustrations in the sermons of some admirable preachers, and even in their manner of reading the scriptures, a manner often of itself demonstrative, that the English Bible, and the English Bible only, is to them the word of God.

To convey a more definite idea of this error, we will give an illustration. Matthew Henry, in remarking on the 21st verse of the 24th chapter of Proverbs, says "He does not say, with *them that change*, for there may be cause to change for the better; but *that are given to change*, that affect it for change sake." Now it unfortunately happens that this pregnant and emphatic *given* belongs entirely to the English version; the original word is a participial form, and means changers or those changing. Particular illustrations might be multiplied; but we rather choose to point out a whole class of passages, in which the exclusive student of the English version is apt to betray his want of acquaintance with the original. We refer to those parts of Isaiah where the church is personified as the object of address. In exposition or quotation it is not uncommon to apply these passages to God himself, there being nothing in the form of the translation to prohibit such an application, though in Hebrew it is rendered impossible by the gender of the pronoun. We have known, for instance, these words—"the nation and kingdom, that will not serve thee, shall perish"—to be cited and explained as if the pronoun "thee" referred to God himself, whereas in Hebrew it is feminine, and determines the object of address to be the church. Another text which we have known to be thus misconceived, is Isaiah 41: 15—"Behold I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth"—where a slight inspection of the Hebrew text will show, that the pronoun "thee" is not masculine but feminine; so that the whole verse is addressed, not to the prophet, as the mere English reader might imagine, but to the

“worm Jacob” mentioned in the verse preceding, that is, to Israel, or the ancient church. A similar inspection of the Hebrew will detect another error also arising from the ambiguous version of this text. We have known preachers to explain it, or allude to it, even in print, as if “I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument” meant “I will make one for thee,” whereas the original can only mean “I will make thee to become one.” These are innocent mistakes, and in themselves not worth recital; but they serve to illustrate the particular sort of error into which we are apt to be betrayed by the exclusive use of versions. There are, however, errors far more serious, arising not from the mere ambiguity of our translation, but from its unauthorized additions to the text. To give a single example: in Acts 13: 33, the gratuitous insertion of the word “again” puts a false meaning not only on the sentence, but on the prophecy which is quoted in it, by making both refer to the resurrection, to which there is in fact no reference whatever in the thirty third verse. Against such unintentional perversions of the Scripture how can the mere English reader be upon his guard?

Another evil, produced by the same cause, is a tendency to lose sight of the nexus between passages, and consequently of their general scope. This is especially the case in the obscurer parts of Scripture, as, for instance, in the prophecies, and the more difficult of Paul’s epistles. Why the exclusive use of versions should have this effect is easily explained. However paradoxical it may appear to others, those familiar with philology are well aware, that some parts of speech which, in the grammar, appear most insignificant, are, in the actual combinations of the language, very often most important. Connective particles and phrases, for example, though they cannot of themselves convey a definite idea, nor determine the meaning of an independent sentence, may powerfully influence the whole scope of a passage by determining the sequence and relation of its parts. How much may depend upon the presence or the absence of an interrogation; how much on the conversion of an *and* into a *but*, or of an *if* into a *for*; how much on the precise mode of supplying an ellipsis, which certainly exists, but may be variously filled. Even where the original exhibits no obscurity in these points, the translator, by an error of judgment or a simple inadvertence, with respect to something which he thinks of no importance, may distort the meaning of a proposition or the

general effect of a long line of propositions. And how vastly are the chances of this evil multiplied where the original is really obscure. And when to this we add the chances of mistake upon the reader's part, with respect to the meaning of the version itself, the aggregate amount of possibility of error is of course very great. Lest the evil should, however, be exaggerated, let it be again observed, that what has now been said applies, in any great degree, to none but the obscurer parts of scripture, and that even there, it affects not the substance of detached parts, but only their connexion with each other. This however is an evil of no trivial magnitude. It cannot be doubted, that multitudes of unlearned Christians have derived unspeakable advantage from some of the darkest and most faulty parts of the English version; because, with all the disadvantages of form, there is a principle of life there which nothing can destroy, a treasure of gold in an earthen vessel. But it is no less certain, that the ministry, the clergy—those who ought to have preceded their unlearned hearers, through the dark places of the scripture, with a blazing torch, but have ingloriously chosen to grope with them in darkness—there can be no doubt that these have suffered loss, in their own souls, and in their usefulness to others, even from this single, and as some may think it, trifling cause of error, with respect to the connexion and coherence of the parts, even where the parts are separately not misunderstood. In proof of the extent to which the evil exists, we may again refer to the mode in which the public reading of the Scriptures is too commonly performed, especially the reading of the prophets and epistles. It is indeed not easy to obtain an opportunity of witnessing the former exhibition in some churches, where the public lessons are confined to the New Testament, perhaps with the addition of a few familiar psalms. It is not one of the glories of our church, that she makes no provision for the methodical reading of the Scriptures in her public service. It is the glory of the Protestant Episcopal church, throughout the world, that those who attend her services, however little they may profit by the preaching of her ministers, are sure to have the word of God dealt out to them in regular and goodly portions. But though our ministers are not required to read the Bible in a stated order, they are required to read it, and many at times read even the Old Testament, and even those parts of the Old Testament which are the most obscure in our version. At such times it is often very easy to perceive the

effect produced by the exclusive study of translations. If, for example, some sublime and interesting chapter of Isaiah is the subject of the operation, you shall hear it read precisely like a chapter of the same length in the book of Proverbs. Instead of being uttered as a coherent chain of sentences, it is transformed into a series of insulated aphorisms, which might just as well have stood in any other order. Another curious effect of the same cause is an almost superstitious reverence for the conventional and arbitrary separation of the text into chapters and verses. To those who can find out no connexion for themselves, a ready-made division is exceedingly convenient, and it is frequently amusing to observe with what fidelity the reader follows this unerring guide, even when it leads into inextricable nonsense. The first clause of a long verse, for example, may be quoted to establish or illustrate a position, and then the last clause must be added to complete the verse, however irrelevant or foreign to the subject. So in reading, some appear to think it sinful to abridge a chapter, even when the last part self-evidently appertains to the succeeding context. It may even be doubted whether some of our good brethren do not look upon the chapters as an inspired division of the text.

There is, however, a far more serious and extensive evil, arising from this want of clear perception in regard to the connexion of the Scriptures. This evil is the general neglect of the Old Testament. It is in that part of the English Bible that the nexus of the parts is most obscure: partly because the original itself is there more dark and broken; partly because the English version is less accurate and masterly in the Old Testament than in the New. Hence the prophecies are really a sealed book to multitudes of authorized expounders, sealed not by their own intrinsic difficulty, but by wilful ignorance. There are, indeed, difficulties which no erudition, ingenuity, and skill, have ever solved completely; but the persons here referred to, are unable to distinguish between these and other passages involving no such difficulty. Instead of learning to explain that which is explicable, they secretly set down the whole as unintelligible, and confine their labours to the more perspicuous scriptures. And this abandonment of the obscure parts of the Old Testament has led to a general neglect of all its parts. Many who are familiar with the gospels and epistles, have a vague feeling with respect to the Old Testament, as something antiquated and outlandish. I speak not now of those whose theological opinions lead them to disparage the Old Testa-

ment; but of those who receive it as a part of Holy Scripture, and in theory allow it equal rank with the New Testament. The incapacity to understand large parts of it, has led to the neglect of other parts and of the whole, so that, practically, the two Testaments which have, by God's Providence and Spirit, been joined together, are by his very ministers put asunder. Among the effects which have resulted, and must still result, from this neglect of the more ancient Scriptures, we may specify the following.

1. Comparative ignorance of all that precious truth which the Old Testament contains, and more especially of that immense amount which lies concealed in the obscurer and most slighted parts.

2. Shallow and erroneous views of the New Testament, arising from this want of acquaintance with the Old. What an idea must we form of the fulfilments which the one records, without a thorough knowledge of the prophecies and promises abounding in the other. What can he know of the winding up of God's decrees and dispensations, who is not familiar with the earlier scenes of the stupendous drama?

3. Doctrinal error, arising out of superficial notions of the system of divine grace, and these notions, in their turn, arising from the neglect to look at the two Testaments in mutual connexion. Can there be a doubt that the tendency to shallow and unworthy mutilations of the doctrine of atonement, has been owing in great measure to an ignorance of that which Christ and his apostles presuppose as known? We mean the ceremonial law and the Mosaic ritual.

4. From the want of insight into the connexion of the parts of Scripture, and the habit of regarding it as a succession of detached propositions, a habit fostered by the usual mode of printing bibles, has arisen a neglect of exposition, as a necessary part of public teaching, and a habit of discoursing altogether upon insulated sentences, thus leaving untouched an immense amount of sacred truth, and rendering that which is touched, disproportionate, unsatisfactory and obscure.

5. The neglect of the Old Testament has reduced, in an immense degree, the preachers store of scriptural illustration, by far the most attractive and acceptable to ordinary minds. Compare the Puritans, with their inexhaustible allusions to the history and poetry of the Old Testament, with some of our contemporaries, who appear to make no other use of that part of the Bible, than as a storehouse of fantas-

tic texts. A single conceit or quaint allusion struck out in the heat of composition, by an Owen or a Howe, shall furnish the foundation and a large part of the substance of a modern sermon. The mere froth cast up by the teeming effervescence of those mighty minds is gathered up like manna and laboriously wrought into unsubstantial aliment by some of their successors. For let it be remembered, to the honour of those noble preachers, that they never build a whole discourse on a conceit, but always on some great truth of the law or gospel. But then in the way of illustration, they make use of the Old Testament, to give an almost infinite variety and life to their instructions. The minutest incidents, the very proper names of the Old Testament, appear to have been stored up in their memory for use; and if that use is sometimes fanciful, it is but the flower of their scriptural research; its fruit is to be sought in their profound, consistent, comprehensive views of truth, and that depth and richness of experimental knowledge, which is never found apart from thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. The want of all this at the present day may be ascribed, at least remotely, to the neglect of the Old Testament, and more remotely still, to the exclusive study of the English version.

6. In default of illustration from the Scriptures, there is a tendency to seek it in rhetorical embellishments or abstract speculations. It is not too much to say, that the causes we have mentioned lie, in some degree, at the foundation of that speculative mode of handling truth, which has produced so much corruption and contention. Inferior minds, especially, when cut off from the vast resources furnished by an intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures, are delighted to adopt a succedaneum which costs nothing, to cloak their ignorance of God's word with the cant terms of a puerile philosophy, and even to hide their diminished heads by ducking them beneath the muddy waters of a spurious metaphysics. If you wish to save a young man of moderate abilities from the maniacal delusion of imagining that he is a deep thinker, and from an everlasting babble about *laws of mind*, set him to study the Old Testament in all its parts, in such a way as shall excite and task his faculties; and long before he finishes his work, he will repent and be ashamed of his philosophy.

7. If to any mind the evils, which have been described as springing from neglect of the Old Testament, should appear of small importance, let us add one other lesson, drawn from the experience of the church in Germany. The first assaults

✓ upon the truth and inspiration of God's word, among the Germans, were aimed at the Old Testament, and for many years confined to it. Hence not a few, who had experimental faith in the New Testament, but who had been accustomed to neglect the Old, were drawn into the snare of neological criticism, under the impression that a great deal might be safely conceded, with regard to the Old Testament, without at all detracting from the truth and inspiration of the New. There have in fact been many cases, in that country, of apparently sincerely believers in the truth of Christianity, and in the divinity of the New Testament, who seemed almost prepared to go to any length with infidels in cavilling and carping at the rest of scripture. But mark the event. The very same principles of criticism and logic which were employed against the one, have now been turned with equal force against the other, and the mistaken souls in question are beginning to repent of their delusion, and to tremble for the mutilated basis of their faith. Let us learn wisdom from the folly of our neighbours. A prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself, but the simple pass on and are punished.

But here the thought may possibly arise in some mind, that the evil we complain of has already been provided for. A new impulse has been given to the study of the original scriptures, new facilities have been provided, and a growing number are engaged in using them. All this is true, and calls for devout gratitude. But let us not imagine that the work is done, or that all the efforts made in this way tend to the promotion of the cause of truth. There are too many symptoms ✓ of a disposition to make biblical study a mere branch of polite learning, as it has been made in Germany. One of these symptoms is an obvious inclination to conduct the study, without any reference to the English version. If a man would have the reputation of a Greek or Hebrew scholar, he must be above the imputation of consulting, much less studying, the English Bible; he must ape the latest fashions of the German critics, and support himself by catalogues of German names. Now what has all this pedantry and foppery of learning to do with popular instruction? Critical works, for the instruction of the clergy, and the educated classes, are imperatively called for; but if biblical study is pursued by our ordinary pastors, merely as a polite accomplishment, it will only tend to the neglect of our own version, and, when it has attained its height, will leave the Christian ministry divided into

students of the English Bible who neglect Greek and Hebrew, and students of Greek and Hebrew who neglect the English Bible. Of the two extremes the former is to be preferred, because it is more likely to promote the growth of piety; but both extremes are hurtful. The bad effects resulting from an exclusive study of the version, have already been described. Those of the opposite extreme may be best learned by a single glance at Germany, where talent and learning of the highest order are without the least effect upon the general diffusion of religious truth. It may also be perceived, upon a small scale, here at home. There are men of talent, ministers and students, who pursue the study of the original Scriptures with some ardor, and with a sincere desire to make their acquisitions instruments of good to the community at large. And yet they find that, though they grow in knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures, they are not the better qualified to benefit the public. The reason, as we apprehend, is that they keep their learning at a distance from their every-day employments and instructions. Their Hebrew Bible and Greek Testament are not upon the same shelf with their English Bible. What they study in the former is laid up in some repository when they go abroad; and the English version, with its old associations and impressions, is their exclusive text-book in the pulpit. Many a preacher of this class, after studying a passage in the Greek or Hebrew, and arriving at satisfactory results, has, on taking up the English, just relapsed into his old associations, and committed his old sins of misconception and mistake.

It is vain to talk of an amended version for popular use. The scheme is not merely an impracticable one, but the event is undesirable. It is morally certain that the new Bible would be far worse than the old, unless it should be thought a great improvement to translate Anglo-Saxon into Saxon of a very different sort, by the substitution of *progress* for *go—female* for *woman*—*individual* for *man*, and *transpired* for *came to pass*. And even were the version better, there are manifold advantages attending the conventional adoption of one bible as a common test and standard, while the imperfections of the version might be remedied, and even made occasions of extensive good, if those, whose work it is to teach it, would but do their duty. To sum up the evil and the remedy together—if the preachers of the gospel would but make themselves familiar with the English Bible, in the good old way, and then verify or rectify its versions by continual com-

parison with the divine original, and communicate the fruits of this comparison to those who are dependent on them for instruction, there would be new life infused into the study of the Scriptures; there would be a resurrection from the death-like stupor which so generally reigns. To every preacher who reads the Hebrew Bible and Greek Testament with critical attention, we would say, read them often with reference to the English version, and determine in relation to each sentence, as you read, whether the common version needs correction. This will fix your attention while engaged in study, and supply you with a test for your progressive growth in knowledge. It will also establish a fixed association between private studies and public performances. Many are indisposed to critical research, because it seems to be a thing remote from practical utility and duty. But if every new advance in learning qualifies the learner, not remotely but directly, for the duties of his office, these pursuits will be regarded, not as penances on one hand, or as pastimes on the other, but as necessary parts of a man's daily business. To those who, on the other hand, are utterly neglecting the original Scriptures, we make one suggestion. We are aware that it is usual to turn this matter off with levity and laughter, and that some men of standing in the church make a boast of their neglecting an important part of duty. We speak not now to such. We address ourselves to those who are willing to make use of any means which will increase their usefulness, but who are disposed to shrink from the repulsive task of wading once more through the bogs of Hebrew grammar and Greek syntax, as an unprofitable waste of time. Let not such discharge their conscience until they have reduced the matter to a fair experiment. Let any man, however great and numerous his burdens, form the habit of comparing but a single verse daily in the version and original. The mere act of reading the same thing in different languages will stimulate the faculties; the use of critical appliances and aids will be spontaneous, not compulsory; and sooner or later there will spring up, imperceptibly, an inclination to determine for one's self the sense of doubtful scriptures. This, under proper regulation, will be salutary, as it will give new life to the study of the scriptures, suggest innumerable fresh associations, and impart to what is known a new solidity and permanence. It will also, in time, produce genuine independence as to matters of opinion; a thing very different from the boyish swagger of affected fearlessness, in searching

after truth, which is frequently exhibited by lads who know less of the obscurer parts of Scripture than many a little girl in some unnoticed country Sunday school.

If this simple method were successfully adopted by our working clergy, we might look for good effects. Not to indulge the visionary hope of seeing Greek and Hebrew made familiar branches of a genteel education—though it might perhaps be thought that they have quite as good a claim to a place in the prospectuses of fashionable schools, as the art of breeding silk-worms, or converting beets to sugar—there are other effects not quite so visionary which may be expected. Among them are the following.

1. The minds of the clergy will be undergoing discipline, without oppressive labour or suspension of their duties.

2. The sense of the original Scriptures will be better understood by its expounders, and through them by the community.

3. The English Bible will be better appreciated, better understood, and more extensively made use of, both by ministers and people. That sort of biblical study which results in a neglect of our own Bible, or an insolent contempt of it, is not the sort required by our church and country. Nothing indeed would more effectually silence the vain prate of sciolists against our noble version, than a thorough understanding of its real defects, and its abounding excellences. No men were ever more familiar with our version than John Owen and John Flavel, and yet both perused it constantly in juxtaposition with the Greek and Hebrew.

4. This discriminating accurate acquaintance with the Bible would tend to reproduce that ancient love of it, which seems to have become extinct, except in a few corners, where the reign of ancient usage has continued undisturbed. And while the study of the original would render a man's knowledge more profound and thorough, the simultaneous study of the version would fill his mind and memory with its language, so that in preaching, prayer, and private conversation, without sanctimonious affectation or quaint oddity, his dialect would have a tinge, delightful to the Christian and the man of taste. A knowledge of the Bible in detail would be regarded as essential to the school boy and the youth at college, and we should not be compelled to receive into our seminaries, under the authority of venerable presbyteries, men who know almost as little of the Bible, as to definite and circumstantial knowledge, as they know about the Vedas

or the Zendavesta. An important step towards this end would be taken, if our young men, in preparing for a course of theological study, were advised, instead of reading philosophical or learned works above their reach, to make themselves consummate masters of the English Bible; and if every man, whatever his pretensions or his recommendations, were subjected to a rigorous examination, prior to admission into any of our seminaries, on this branch of knowledge; a branch which many a poor labourer in Scotland masters early in life; which would furnish the best possible foundation for the study of the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures; and the want of which, at present, is a blot upon the reputation of our church and seminaries. In this respect, as well as others, a general reformation may be confidently looked for, when the ministry at large shall do their duty to the scriptures. Then too the ministers of Christ would not be satisfied with coldly and mechanically reading the sublimest parts of scripture without comment, even when obscured by an erroneous or imperfect version; but their minds would sometimes overflow with brief and pertinent remark, filling up the yawning chasms, shedding light on the dark places, and converting thorns and briars into flowers and fruits of Paradise.

5. The return to scripture and good sense would expel, from the pulpit and the press, that farrago of cant phrases and bad English which now constitutes the lingua franca of religious society. If we must have cant, let it be the cant of scripture, not the cant of ignorant and vulgar fanaticism. He whose mind is overflowing with the rich, pure phraseology of scripture, and the older English writers, cannot stoop to borrow either thoughts or language from the newspaper-office or the tabernacle-platform. When the Bible is more studied, there will be less disposition to adopt the floating slang of our ephemeral literature. We shall hear fewer great swelling words from little men on small occasions. We shall hear less of "great principles," "broad principles," &c. from men who seem to have none, either broad or narrow; less of moral this, and moral that, from men whose own morality is more than problematical; and less about the laws of mind, and grasp of mind, and march of mind, from those whose quality of mind would almost tempt us to believe, that the less mind there is, the more it grasps and marches. In short, the reign of cant would cease before the growing prevalence of scripture and good sense. Theologians would exchange the slang of modern metaphysics for the technics of the Bible; and the

jargon of Ashdod would be swept into oblivion by the long-lost language of Canaan.

6. After such a revolution, we may confidently look for one still more important. With the language of Ashdod the idolatry of Ashdod shall be swept away. When the study of the Bible shall again begin to occupy the minds of men, it will preclude that state of restless indolence which breeds fanaticism in all its forms. Well may we say in our day, as Gurnall said in his: We see what advantage Satan hath got in these loose times, since we have learned to fight him out of order, and the private soldier hath taken the officer's work out of his hands. But this shall have an end. Our laity, instead of laying hold upon the ark of God, to shake or keep it steady, will learn from the example of the Uzzahs, who have been already "smitten for their error," to observe their proper place, and find delightful occupation in the unfathomed depths of Holy Scripture. Into those same depths will be plunged some of the other sex, who now "learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but tattlers also, and busy bodies, speaking things which they ought not," and doing things which better become men than women. It is also to be feared that the same gulf will swallow up certain organizations which, by some, are deemed essential to the being of the church; that the moral-reform cause, and the vegetable-food cause, and a host of other causes, which are now so numerous that we really seem to have more causes than effects, will be absorbed in the one great cause of truth and holiness. Then shall these kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ; and instead of beholding Christianity cut up into a dozen small religions, each with its altar, and its ephod, and its teraphim, its urim and thummim, its expurgated Bible, and its priest to slay the character of Christian men for sacrifice, we shall behold the unadulterated scripture, like the roll of the Apocalypse, spread out before the people, the pure flame of God's altar burning free from all obstruction, and the spiritual idols falling prostrate from their pedestals, while from the throne of God a voice shall be heard saying: If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues written in this book, and if any man shall take away from the words of this book, God shall take away his part out of the book of life.

7. Finally, the Christian would have little satisfaction in the prospect of these mere external changes, if he could not see beneath them an internal revolution more momentous

still. The objectionable forms, in which religious ardor shows itself, are mere external indications, that there is something wrong in the religion which produces them. The restless, turbulent, censorious spirit, which so generally reigns, is the product of shallow, superficial views and exercises in the hearts of men. Now the study of the Bible, among ministers and people, while it will unfit them for fanatical excess, will give them deeper insight into their own hearts, and make them feel that there is more to be done there than they supposed. And instead of imagining, as some have taught, that their own souls will take care of themselves if they are faithful, as they call it, to the souls of others; they will learn that they cannot do a worse thing for their neighbours, than to let their own souls run to waste. Instead of believing that the care of our own hearts will make us selfish and indifferent to others, they will learn, that it is only out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks to advantage; that the opus operatum of external effort, made from stress of conscience or a vague feeling of benevolence, is likely, in the long run, to do more harm than good; and that the only sort of active effort likely to be lasting, and ultimately useful, is that which overflows, without constraint, from the swelling of a heart which has been filled, in secret places, and by means with which a stranger intermeddleth not. We have only to lift up our eyes, in these days of reaction and collapse, to see multitudes who, in keeping other men's vineyards, have let their own vineyard run to desolation; and we may even walk upon the graves of some who have preached to other men like sons of thunder or sons of consolation, and themselves been cast away. And thus it will be till this process is inverted by a closer acquaintance with the truth of God; till, instead of trusting to mere effort for religion, men shall trust to religion for the effort which is wanted. Then there will be less talk about moral machinery, but more profound and intimate communion with that God, without whose finger all machinery stands still, or falls to pieces, or explodes. The stream of men's religion will make less noise than it now does; it will foam less; it will cast up far less mire and dirt; but instead of being sucked in by the sands of the first desert, it will gradually rise and overflow its banks, not with a transient and impetuous inundation, but with general expansion, until stream meets stream, and all dividing lines are lost in one great gathering of the waters.