

"The fact that the Word of God was written in Hebrew and Greek is of itself sufficient proof of the necessity, in modern times at least, of an educated ministry. Men who, like Timothy, read Hebrew and spoke Greek from childhood, might dispense with a large part of our curriculum. It is only by arduous and prolonged study that we can place ourselves alongside of those by whom the Gospel was first preached, in respect to a knowledge of the languages of Scripture.

Let it not be supposed, however, that we would disparage in the slightest degree the labours of good men, though imperfectly educated, who, fired by zeal for God's glory and yearning with compassion over the perishing, employ themselves, whether occasionally or systematically, in disseminating those glorious truths which lie upon the surface of every translation of the Scriptures, and thus winning souls to Christ. So far from feeling jealous of such agencies we would gladly see them multiplied a thousand fold. 'Let him that heareth say, come' It is the duty of every Christian man, as well as of the Christian minister, to do good to all men as he hath opportunity. But what we contend for is that, in addition to such agencies, the Church also requires something higher in point of literary accomplishment—that it is requisite for the edification of Christian congregations that they should have one to minister to them in holy things who is in some good degree qualified to *expound* the Scriptures, as well as exhort to a life of faith and holiness—and that an extended course of preparatory study is necessary, on the part of those who are to be consecrated to this work of feeding the flocks of God."

The Professor then pointed out three reasons why Hebrew should be studied. We can only give the last, with which we must conclude our extracts :

"Hebrew scholarship is requisite, in the present day, for the purposes of apologetics as well as of exegesis—or rather, a scientific exegesis is necessary for the defence of truth as well as for ascertaining it. The tactics of infidelity vary from time to time; and the Christian apologist must of course defend himself when he is assailed: In one age, for example, the truth of the leading facts of the Gospel history was coarsely denied; and it was necessary to show that the New Testament was not a collection of legends written in the dark ages, by exhibiting the Historical Testimony in its favour. In another age it was maintained, on grounds of a general and abstract kind, that no amount of human testimony was sufficient to prove the reality of a miracle: and a deeper metaphysics was required to expose the fallacy. In our day the camelion wears a more fascinating hue. It is learned and literary in its tastes and habits. It smatters Hebrew, as well as Sanskrit, Prærit and Pehlvi. It is conversant with ancient M.S.S. and still more ancient versions. It is skilled in discovering interpolations, exhibiting anachronisms, fixing dates of documents—in tracing Mosaic institutes to their supposed sources in Egyptian or Zoroastrian lore—and generally in finding errors and absurdities where we have been wont to look for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. Infidelity, in its literary and antiquarian phase, must be met by a literary and antiquarian research more thoroughgoing and profound. And as the older of the two Testaments affords many a favourite battlefield, a mastery of its language must be the first and most essential literary equipment of those who would descend to the arena, and take their part in the momentous contest.

"For these three purposes, then,—that we may be competent to weigh the opinions of interpreters—that we may be able to investigate for ourselves, when the views of others are unsatisfactory—and that we may be prepared to give every man a reason that will command his respect, however high his literary attainments, for the faith that is in us—Hebrew scholarship, and that of no mean order, is required of us, that we may be qualified to discharge aright the functions of the Christian ministry."