

tings? As to unfulfilled prophecies, it is generally admitted that they are often too difficult for even the ablest interpreters; as was strikingly exemplified in the case of Calvin, who, in his Commentaries on the New Testament, omitted the book of Revelation, because he could not, with all his matchless penetration and excellent erudition, discover its meaning. But even predictions that have been accomplished, such as those relating to Babylon, Tyre, and other places in the East, cannot be thoroughly understood and turned to good purpose, as evidences of a Divine Revelation, except by one who is conversant with the ancient and modern history of the nations and countries spoken of by the prophet, as well as with the original language. Can any one, for instance, make out a striking and convincing meaning in the promise (Isaiah xlv. 1,) 'to open before Cyrus the two leaved gates,' unless he is aware that such gates were actually left open in Babylon, at the time when the city was taken by that conqueror? Also in other parts, in which precepts or doctrines are laid down, obscurities occur, which cannot be readily and satisfactorily removed without a knowledge of Hebrew or Greek. Thus in 1 John iii. 3, 'every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself,' the words *in him* are often taken to signify *within himself*, while they in reality mean *on him* i. e. Christ, as a mere glance at the Greek will show beyond dispute.

II. *Ministers need Education, because it will enable them more effectually to explain the Scriptures to others.*—When a minister of the word acquires sacred knowledge, it is not so much that he may enrich himself, as that he may dispense it to those who are ignorant and out of the way. 'Therefore every scribe, instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like to a householder, who

bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.' But to communicate truth to others, is often difficult even for some, who find it easy to investigate and discover it for themselves. It is therefore one of the main objects of good literary training, to obviate this difficulty, by imparting a facility to express whatever useful ideas the mind has acquired. There are two modes of communicating instruction, viz. speaking and writing; and in both these, it is desirable that a religious teacher should be competent to explain and enforce the truths of revelation. The education then for which we plead will teach him how to express, in an intelligible, if not attractive form, his own discoveries and views to his hearer or reader. For it will teach him how to define terms, and so to distinguish accurately between them. Inability or negligence in this particular, is well known to be the cause of much confusion and many hot disputes in Theology. Thus a preacher once maintained that the atonement of Christ is made in heaven for sinners as they repent, and consequently scandalized many of his hearers, who believed that it had been already completed on the cross. Now had he stated exactly what he meant by the term 'atonement,' which was evidently an actual reconciliation to God, none of his hearers could object to his opinion, though they might to his language.

Proper mental discipline will also tend to make a minister observe sequence and method in his remarks, so that his discourses will not present a confused mass of ideas, jumbled together without connection and without design. Good arrangement or method is as necessary in a sermon, as sound tactics in the marshalling of an army for battle. What prudent General would ever bring his forces into conflict without order and design? No more should a preacher