

ation that 'the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin,' though quite intelligible to a Jew or any one conversant with the law of Moses, can scarcely suggest the proper idea to an ignorant mind; yet the very truth here taught is elsewhere stated in the plainest manner, as when it is declared that God forgives sin for the sake of Christ. But while it is thankfully admitted, that 'he who runs may read' the things which belong to his peace; yet all must allow that there are 'some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction' (2 Pet. iii. 16); and many will be ready even to confess that the Bible is a difficult book. And who, that knows the history and contents of the Sacred Volume, can wonder at its difficulties? A collection of writings, that are of such high antiquity, several of them being the most ancient in existence, that were composed by Orientals for the use, in the first place, of people whose mode of living, thinking, and speaking differed widely from our own, that treat on the most sublime and abstruse subjects, and that too in languages which have long since ceased to be spoken, and therefore not easily mastered, and that have been handed down for many generations by the labor of the pen, which is a process far less favorable to correctness than printing,—surely a Collection of such a character, must be expected to contain parts, exceedingly obscure to us, however clear they may have been to the first readers.

How then, we ask, can an untaught preacher understand these obscure and seemingly unintelligible portions of the Divine Oracles? Will commentaries suffice to instruct him? We think not. Some of these may doubtless often help, but they seldom satisfy, a person that is intent, as every minister ought to be, on discovering the sense of every part. A sensible

and inquisitive reader of a commentary always feels desirous of forming an opinion for himself, as to the soundness of the critical remarks and the various attempts at explanation, which abound in such a work; but this he cannot do, without possessing a considerable knowledge of the original languages of the Scriptures, not to mention other aids to Biblical interpretation. It is a fact that many have been induced to learn Greek and Hebrew, in consequence of meeting with some words in these languages, in an exposition or critical remark. But while it must be the desire of every intelligent reader, to form a deliberate judgment on the sense of Holy Writ, how much more ought every professed and public expounder of the lively Oracles, both to desire and to be able to form an enlightened and matured opinion. He at least should never be under the necessity of believing implicitly, what this or that expositor asserts. He ought to be scholar enough to put to the test the correctness of the criticisms of others, and to discover some of the shades of meaning and valuable hints, which the original words often present, but which commentators seldom point out. We, have, for example, a word of this kind in Phil. iii. 20, where the Greek term *πολίτευμα*, which is rendered *conversation*, may suggest that heaven is the Christian's country—that his conduct is ruled by heaven's laws—that his desires and affections centre in heaven—and that his permanent abode will finally be in heaven. We must then maintain, that notwithstanding all the common helps which exist for explaining the Bible, a minister is not likely to gain a competent understanding of its meaning, without possessing himself a good degree of learning and information. Can it be expected that an unread person, however good his natural abilities may be, will properly comprehend the prophetic writ-