

felt. One principal reason why any and every version must be insufficient is that no language can fully express the idioms of another. There are terms and phrases of the Hebrew vocabulary, the expression of the life and thought of the race which was singled out for the development and conservation of the great underlying facts of the one true religion, which cannot be conveyed by any mere literal version in any other form whatever of human speech. But the faithful and earnest student of the original can *feel* the force of such unique expressions, and then he can *explain* them to others; and of course he alone can do this, as no second-hand student can. It is those who receive such explanations who can afford at need to do without a special Hebrew training, but not the interpreters and teachers themselves. And it is plain that the whole paraphernalia of helps and commentaries, many of which notoriously are merely got up to sell, cannot here serve the minister's turn. Probably enough there is a certain amount of misunderstanding as to the real occasion for the need. It is possible that most ministers justify their neglect on the plea that as far as they have gone in the study of the Hebrew Bible (*vide* statistics above referred to) they have observed a close similarity between the Hebrew and the English idioms, and that the phraseology of the former is at any rate quite simple and transparent and cannot fail to be properly represented in any fair translation. There could not be a greater misconception on a more vital point. It is true that as far as these critics have read or spelled there is not much difference between the two idioms; but the explanation is that but little more than a few passages of simple prose have been read, in order that some nominal acquaintance with Hebrew might be alleged before a generous if not credulous presbytery. A thorough elementary training in the study of the Hebrew literature would not fail to convince any intelligent student that there are radical distinctions in the different kinds of composition, and it will also be impressed upon him in this, as it can be in no other way, that as a general rule where there is the greatest difference between the two vocabularies, and consequently the greatest demand for the application of trained intelligence, the Hebrew original is the fullest, richest and most suggestive for purposes of instruction and inspiration. I need only instance the Psalms, the most profound and evangelical of the prophetic writings, and the book of Job.