

a kind of education, inconsistent with the exercise of any other profession."

These attainments therefore are in the highest degree necessary to the Christian Minister, not only to qualify him for discharging his ordinary function of teaching, but for stopping the mouth of the gainsayer, and meeting any discussion that may arise among Christian interpreters, who are always entitled to appeal from the common vernacular translation, to the inspired Author as he speaks in the original language. Protestants in their discussions with each other concerning points depending on critical construction of language, are frequently obliged to make this appeal; but far more is it required in combating with* Roman Catholic controversialists, who are apt to charge our English version of the scriptures with inaccuracy, and to seek shelter for their peculiar dogmas under some gloss, or interpretation of their own. By such appeal both parties refer to an acknowledged authoritative standard. Farther, it is the more necessary that skill in the ancient languages should be required in all Ministers of the gospel to preserve the integrity of scripture translation. Between the years 1478 and 1820, the scriptures have been translated into forty two of the modern languages of Europe. Within a later period the whole, or parts of them, have been translated into forty of the languages, or dialects, of Asia, and into eight of the Indian languages of North America;—and relying on the

sure predictions of God, we look forward to the time, when all the words of this Book shall be translated into every language under Heaven. Now, it must be deemed a designed arrangement of that wise Providence which watches over all the interests of the Church, that the original languages in which the inspired books were written, have acquired a permanent and universal character, from the circumstance, that they have so long ceased to have place among the living and spoken languages of the world.— Their literature, whether sacred or profane, can now undergo no change.— What they were two thousand years ago, or more, they are now; and the sacred records which have been handed down to us, in the words which Moses, and David, and Isaiah spoke, and in which the Apostles of our Lord announced the glad tidings of great joy, will descend to the latest generations unchanged and imperishable. The interpreters of the faith in every nation will appeal to their authoritative voice. Every new translation will be compared with, and made from, the original, and thus the Church Universal will maintain her adherence to the same form of sound words; and the pure light of heavenly truth will not be dimmed or refracted by its varied transmission through the coarse and imperfect vehicles of thought, which prevail in this many-tongued earth. May we not infer from all these premises, that it is the design of the Head of the Church, that those who are chosen to be the instruments of disseminating revealed truth, should be acquainted with the original languages in which it was written, that they may know to present a fair copy of it to those among whom they labour.

Now if it be conceded that this degree of learning is necessary for a Christian Minister, and it will at least be univer-

*These statements must be received with some limitation, in so far as they respect the Romish Church. Some doctors of that communion, assert that the Vulgate or Latin translation, is not only superior to all other translations, but even to the Greek text itself, in those places where they disagree. Such assertions, however, do the more confirm the general argument for the necessity of skill in the ancient languages, in order to the right interpretation of the sacred scriptures, and the defence of true Christian doctrine. If it be alleged that there are corruptions in the text, the greater critical skill is needed for their discovery and emendation.