

in the original, fails to appreciate the Bible, besides being consciously or unconsciously guilty of gross irreverence. Since he believes the Bible to have been given to the world by God himself it must be admitted that something more than mere curiosity should impel every professional student to get acquainted with its contents as closely and accurately as possible. No doubt there are many earnest ministers and students who flatter themselves that they know their Bibles thoroughly, in spite of ignorance of Hebrew and Greek, and, to tell the truth, there is some sort of excuse for the popular delusion on account of various miserable habits of thought and study induced by prejudices against the "dead" languages, and Hebrew in particular, by bad theories and worse systems of education, and other misfortunes in the lot of preachers. But no one, I should hope, will deny that, if the Hebrew language is properly learned, one can by its use get nearer to the meaning and the spirit of what has been written in that language. I know that this may be admitted and that it may still be denied that any gain would thereby be made, for it is quite certain that many expounders of the Old Testament (that is of the Hebrew literature) practically hold that the English version, and not the Hebrew original, is the real Bible, and therefore regard all study of Hebrew as so much waste of time and talent. It is true for all that, that as the Old Testament was not originally written in English it was not expressed in English forms of thought, and that just because it was written in Hebrew, the original is considerably nearer itself than any translation that has yet been made, not excepting our fairly passable English version. At any rate reformers can, in the meantime, afford to do without the support of those who in private or in the public press, with a logic worthy of the Council of Trent, maintain or imply the contrary; and if it be granted by the majority or even by a respectable minority of ministers that the Hebrew Bible is its own best interpreter, and that it is possible to gain a knowledge of it through itself, the painful but unavoidable and wholesome conviction must in so far prevail that as God gave the Church, for its use and for the salvation of the world, a Book intelligible and usable in the form in which it has been given, those who are its appointed custodians and interpreters, in persistently neglecting to use it to the full, have been treating