

## Mis-Readings of Scripture.

## II.

**T**HERE can be little doubt that the Bible is the hardest book in the world to read properly. It therefore demands, if but for this reason only, all the more attention at the hands of those who attempt to read it in public. The difficulty of reading it arises no doubt in part from the character of the book itself, in part from the archaic language of much of the authorized version. There is a necessary awe and reverence connected with the Book of books, which naturally oppresses the conscientious reader with a nervous sense of responsibility attaching to his office. There is, however, some little difficulty about the use of obsolete words; and some difficulty about the obscure meaning of whole passages. It is the same as ever about God's word. When in the Temple on the Tuesday in Holy Week, God's word was revealed by a voice to our Blessed Lord, "the people that stood by said that it thundered; others said an angel spake to Him." Our Lord knew what the voice said. So it is now; the careless curious people hear and read God's word, and it seems like a noise in the dark, a matter of interest and perhaps curiosity, but without much special meaning—"it thundered"—others again with reverent mind recognize a voice from Heaven articulate with meaning but do not understand. Some there are that hear and receive and understand the message. All readers of the Bible in public should endeavor that if his hearers are not of the last named class it is no fault of his own.

Before we pass on to consider some other points which are apt to mislead, some further remarks may be made about printers' errors. One Bible is known as the "printers Bible" because of a remarkable misprint in the sixteenth psalm 161 verse, which read "*Printers* have persecuted me without a cause." It may be that it represents a grim irony of the compositor who recognized how he had persecuted the poor authors and readers; or it may have been an unintentional slip. Be this as it may, while printing has increased knowledge, it has occasionally stereotyped error.

There is one advantage now-a-days; the long *s* has dropped out of fashion, and almost all the Bibles in our Churches have the modern printing, so that no warning in that respect is necessary. But a few years back we heard a layman read without misgiving on his part, though not without giving pain to others, "All the people that came together to that *fight*, smote their breasts." (Luke xxiii. 48.)

In one passage a mistake has been stereotyped which might now be remedied, though perhaps many would be astonished if not

scandalized at first. The passage in S. Matt. xxiii. 24. should run "which strain *out* a gnat and swallow a camel." The misprint is due to the authorized version in 1611. Before that date Tyndall, Crammer, and Geneva all had "strain *out*." The idea is well expressed in the Homilies "they would, as it were, nicely take a fly out of their cup, and drink down a whole camel." (Of Good Works, pt. 2). It would help the understanding of the passage if the error were corrected.

In the extremely useful "Parallel Bible" (as it is called) the Authorized and Revised Versions are printed side by side. In the Old Testament the editor has taken great pains to mark in the margin all deviations (except in mere matters of spelling) from the real Authorized Version of 1611; in the New Testament the editor has not been so careful. We proceed to point out some errors in printing which should be taken heed to.

From some perverseness the printer or editor has been pleased to alter the word of conscious virtue, "shamefast," to the word of conscious guilt, "shamefaced": it is hard perhaps to imagine a greater mistake. Thus in II. Tim. ii. 9, the printer makes S. Paul say that women "should adorn themselves with *shamefacedness*"!! To be "shamefaced" is to show conscious shame for having done wrong. The good old English "shamefast" implies the instinctive avoidance of anything unseemly; the nearest approach to its meaning is in the word "modest." In reading, therefore, the reader should be careful to pronounce as it was printed in 1611, "shamefastness."

The same verse is fruitful in traps for the reader. First the word "women" should be emphasized, as marking the first subject of the Apostle's injunctions. In verse 8 read with emphasis on the word *men*, "I will therefore that *men* pray everywhere"; that is, as the Apostle is speaking of public worship, none but men are to pray aloud in public, women are to be silent in Church. The Greek word is *men* as distinguished from, and not including, women. In verse 9 the Apostle passes on to speak of women. A little stress, therefore, should be laid on the word, as marking the new subject of the address. Then the printers have played havoc with "broided hair," that is, "braided hair"; some Bibles have "broidered hair." Fancy embroidering the hair on the head!

Another misprint is found in some Bibles in I. Cor. xii. 2, which is not of so much importance. The true reading is "I knew a man in Christ *above* fourteen years ago," when some printers have *about*.

But worse difficulties have arisen from mistakes in punctuation, whether by omission or wrong position of stops; and from the modern