

of his primal state. But how has his vain and ungodly attempt to become independent, multiplied and accumulated his wants? Contrast his present humiliated condition with the blessing he enjoyed when recent from the hands of his holy and beneficent Creator. Adorned with the Divine image, and admitted to the most intimate communion with his God, the perspective of felicity that then expanded before him was without a shadow and without a limit. But now he is "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him." Now he is an arraigned culprit at the bar of eternal justice. Now his noble powers are desecrated by the "wisdom from beneath, which is earthly, and sensual, and devilish." Now his inheritance on high is forfeited; and he is without God in the world. Whether shall he flee? To whom shall he go? "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." In the gospel of salvation thou hast opened the profound of thy compassions; thou hast displayed the riches of thy redeeming grace! We are blind, and guilty, and polluted, and lost; but thou art made of God unto them that believe, wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

Contemplate their abundance. Redeeming grace knows no parsimony. It is as exuberant as it is unmeasured. Would that I could commend to you, in a manner worthy of the subject, the love of Christ. But though I speak with the tongue of men and angels this were impossible; for it "passeth knowledge." Go to him, ye sons of ignorance; and he will "fill you with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." Go to him, ye sons of guilt; for "he will abundantly pardon" you. Go to him, ye slaves of sin; and you shall find "plenteous redemption." Let those who feel their misery, of every class, repair to him; and they will be blessed with "the peace of God which passeth all understanding,"—with "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Is this the word of truth? Are the promises of Him who cannot lie, thus "superlatively great and precious"? Is such the plenitude of the provisions of grace?—of the riches of Christ? Who then can repress the burst of praise, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with ALL spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

The superabounding grace which thus "reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life" in the experience of those who receive it not in vain, is designed for all—solicits the reception of all at the hands of a beseeching God, and bleeding Saviour. And in entreating sinners to be reconciled to God, the apostles of the Lamb entertained no mental reservation; they knew nothing of that ostensible distinction (without any real difference) of a vain philosophy, between natural and moral ability, by which it has been attempted in modern times to bring together the poles of free grace and limited salvability—of unfettered liberty and ineluctable necessity. They "warned every man, and taught every man, in all wisdom, that they might present EVERY MAN PERFECT in Christ Jesus."

Consider their inestimable value. The devious and endless speculations of philosophy concerning the supreme felicity of man are precluded,—the sigh of conscious misery, which the utmost profusion of earthly blessings has never been found adequate to suppress, "Who will show us any good?" is dissipated forever by the authority and the charm of that voice which declares in the gospel, "I will give you rest." Here are true riches. Here is happiness suited to the nature, commensurate with the faculties, and imperishable as the being of the immortal soul. The whole material universe is represented as valueless in comparison with the worth of one soul by him who made them both. Yet without an interest in CHRIST the soul must be lost; it must pine in spiritual indigence, a disunited exile from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power forever. Oh! how unutterably precious then is redemption. How transi-

ent and inconceivable the value of the blessings which secure and constitute that redemption! To what shall we resemble the kingdom of heaven? It is "like a treasure hid in a field, which, when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." What cause have the poor to whom such a gospel is preached, to survey the portion of the earthly with an

eye of envy or a heart of covetousness? Does his wealth procure him honour? With the riches of Christ are connected the faith by which "the elders obtained a good report"—the righteousness which truly makes a man "more excellent than his neighbour"—"the honour that cometh from God." Does it contribute to his protection? The eternal God is the refuge of those who are "rich in faith," and "underneath are his everlasting arms." Does it invest him with power? The moral triumphs of those who are enriched by the grace of life throw into shade all the conquests of an Alexander or a Cæsar; they overcome the principalities and powers of darkness—they rule their own spirit—they have "power with God," and with holy violence take the kingdom of heaven. Are earthly possessions desired because they command so many sources of enjoyment? Infinitely more enviable are the pleasures that flow from peace with God—from the contemplation of divine truth—from the enrapturing anticipation of a blissful immortality, than from all that can be derived from the gratification of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Happy then—supremely happy is the man who findeth the riches of Christ. "For their merchandize is better than the merchandize of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold." His is "the pearl of great price," his "a treasure in the heavens that fadeth not."

The intimate and vital relation these blessings sustain to CHRIST is a cardinal point in the Christian system. They are His riches. And if the contemplation of their variety, abundance, and intrinsic excellence is so adapted to impress us with their inestimable value, how must our appreciation of them be enhanced, when they are viewed as emanations from him, of whose fulness, as the mediator of the New Covenant, "we have all received, and grace for grace." To apprehend aright the nature and extent of our obligations to him for "the grace that bringeth salvation," the following consideration must enter essentially into our views of redemption.

The original of all saving truth is in the person and office of JESUS CHRIST. In him is resident the fulness of the Godhead, and he alone is "the effulgence of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." If, therefore, "the glory of God" has irradiated our hearts, it has been reflected from "the face of Jesus Christ." If the eyes of our understanding have been enlightened, to "know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," it is because we have received "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." Take away Christ; and an immediate, total, and fearfully-ominous eclipse extinguishes the glory that dwells between the Cherubim.

Biblical Department.

ANCIENT VERSIONS OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

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The ancient VERSIONS made of the Hebrew Scriptures into different languages, rendered the destruction or material alteration of those Scriptures morally impossible. The principal versions of the Hebrew text are, 1st, in the Law or Five Books of Moses, the very ancient Coptic Samaritan, made for that motley mixture of different nations, which were sent into the kingdom of Israel by the kings of Assyria, after they had subdued that nation, and carried into captivity the principal inhabitants of the land. This version still exists, and is in the main, a very fair representation of the sacred original. This has been printed with the Hebrew and Hebrew-Samaritan text, in the 1st vol. of the London Polyglott. And as it has been preserved from the remotest antiquity, before the invention of printing, it is not likely to perish now that it has been committed to the perpetuity of the typographic art.

2. The CHALDEE Targums, or paraphrases of the Law and the Prophets, in the Chaldee language. That of Onkelos on the Law, and Jonathan on the Prophets, have also been carefully preserved, as the former especially has been considered by the Jews of all times, as a work formed under an especial Divine direction. These also have been multiplied, both by Jews and Christians, by means of the press.

3. The SYRIAC version, which is very ancient, and faithful to the strict tenor and integrity of the Hebrew text, is still extant, and also multiplied by means of the press, and is still in use in all the Syrian churches.

4. The ARABIC version of the Pentateuch, made by a very learned Jew, Rabbi Saadias Goin, who flourished in the ninth century of the Christian era, is a most faithful work. Of this version, a very ancient copy, probably of the time of the author, is in my own library, and is one of the most faithful versions I have ever seen in any language. It has been the basis of most of those in that tongue which have been since published.

5. The GREEK version of the SEPTUAGINT has been both to Jews and Christians, of the utmost importance, as a faithful testimony of the antiquity of the Jewish Scriptures, and their uncorrupted transmission to posterity.

This version was made by Jews, learned both in Hebrew and Greek, at the command of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, about 280 years before the Christian era; and for several hundreds of years, was the sole text-book of the Hellenistic Jews, or Jews dwelling in all Greek nations, from the time of its formation to some centuries after our Lord's incarnation; and its general fidelity is shewn, by its being that very version from which our blessed Lord and His apostles drew their quotations of the Law and the Prophets, which are still found in the Evangelists, and in the Apostolic Epistles.

The existence of the Old Testament in Greek, and its universal acceptance among the Jews, had probably no mean influence in causing the New Testament to be written in Greek also; that the Jews, who were exceedingly numerous in Egypt, Arabia, Syria, different parts of Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy, who all used the Greek version of the Septuagint, might have the New Covenant in the same language; and thus be able to compare both Testaments, and see how the prophecies of the Old were fulfilled in the New.—And, that the Jews, both in Palestine and in all the countries of their dispersion, might, as God had ordained, have the first offer of the Gospel made to them: for the apostles, who were commanded to preach the Gospel to all the world, were strictly ordered to begin first at Jerusalem. And as the Greek language by the conquest of Alexander the Great, and the subsequent conquests of the Romans, had absorbed the dialects of the conquered provinces, the Greek became not only the language of the learned everywhere, but also that of the people at large. There was no other tongue then in the universe so well calculated at once to preserve and convey the records of salvation; hence, the Greek language was the original of the New Covenant, as the Hebrew had been that of the Old. But after that Jerusalem had been taken and destroyed by the Romans, and the Jews captivated and scattered over the face of the earth, as far as the Roman arm had reached, the Greek version of the Septuagint became the common text-book of the Jews, as above noticed; and the New Testament in Greek was its constant companion among all the converts to Christianity, whether originally Jews or Gentiles. And thus, by the especial providence of God, that which was written of old, was so constructed as to become the means of spiritual and saving learning to the principal nations of the earth.

It is well known, that by an irruption of the Northern nations (who are generally termed Goths and Vandals, the inhabitants of Scandinavia, the countries now called Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and the islands and territories dependent on them,) the Roman Empire was dismembered, they seizing on the Western parts. and by this means the empire was alternately formed into two grand divisions, called the Eastern and Western Empires. In the latter, the Roman or Latin language prevailed, in the former the Greek. In these two vast divisions, Christianity made a rapid progress. In the beginning of the fourth century, the conversion of Constantine the Great became the means of converting the major part of the great Roman empire to the profession of the Christian faith; the church of Christ was then universal in all parts of what was called the Roman empire; but from the ninth to the eleventh century, a gradual separation took place between the Eastern and Western parts of the church in this empire, which at last settled in a complete dis-

memberment of the church, which continues to the present day, one part bearing the name of the Eastern or Greek Church, the other that of the Western or Latin Church. The ecclesiastical government of the former being vested in Patriarchs; that of the latter in Popes. The language of the former was Greek, and all the services of that church were celebrated in the Greek language; and their Bible was, and still continues to be, the Greek version of the Septuagint. The general language of the Western Church was Latin, and its services were performed in this language. To meet the necessities of the people, many attempts had been made to translate the Scriptures into the Latin tongue, but these being done by persons of no name or credit in the church, and but little skilled either in Hebrew or Greek, and the versions made, being various, and often contradictory, it pleased God to provide a remedy. In the beginning of the fourth century, a very able and learned man, called Hieronymus, and now commonly St. Jerome, was raised up in his church. He saw and deplored the want of a proper Latin version of the whole Scriptures for the use of the Western Church; encouraged by the chief ecclesiastical authorities, he undertook this work; and the better to qualify himself for the task, took a voyage into Palestine, and remained there seven years, that conversing with the most learned of the Jewish Rabbins, he might acquire a thorough knowledge of the Hebrew tongue; he then translated the whole of the Old and New Testament into Latin, which being approved by the church, was universally adopted, and thence was called the Vulgate, from Vulgatus, "published," "common," or "ordinary;" and this is what is used by the Latin, or Roman Catholic Church, to the present day.

Thus we find that the two languages which are allowed to be the most elegant and energetic of all the languages of the universe, and those in which all the learning, theology, poetry, and philosophy of the ancient world, have been handed down to us, the Greek and the Latin; and which are still, by general consent, the grand vehicles of sciences and arts, have been those employed by Divine Providence to bring down the Scriptures to the present times. These are the vouchers for the authenticity of the Hebrew text, from which they have been taken, and the Hebrew of the Old, and the Greek of the New, being still preserved, are the touchstones to which these and all other versions and translations must be brought, to ascertain their correctness, and prevent additions, omissions, and corruptions of every kind; and thus has God further provided, that, that Revelation so essentially necessary for the salvation of man, should be written for our learning in Hebrew and Greek; and that the most important languages of the universe, Greek and Latin, should be the means of bringing down from those original springs, the pure and salubrious waters, for the salvation of mankind. On this account the Greek version of the Septuagint, and the Vulgate Latin, are of the utmost consequence to the Christian Church. Had it not been for those ancient versions, there would have been found, especially in the original Hebrew, a multitude of words and phrases, the meaning of which, in these latter times, we should have been utterly unable to find out. And I can safely add, that the best Greek scholar in the universe, must labour in vain in a great variety of cases, to make out the phraseology of the New Testament, without the assistance of the Septuagint version; and we have already noticed what light this version throws on many words and forms of speech in the Hebrew originals.

It is impossible to consider this subject, without being struck with the kindness and admirable providence of God, not only in giving us those Scriptures, but also in the choice of the languages in which they were originally written, the principal versions in which they have been handed down to posterity;—the very characters in which, and the materials on which, they have been written, and the preservation of the whole, both in the originals and the ancient versions, by numerous MSS., which have been spread over the principal civilized nations of the world, and are at once, the oldest and most important of all the MSS. which have survived the ravages of time. The Hebrew originals exist in numerous and very ancient MSS. in the hand of Jews and Gentiles, in different parts of the earth.—The Greek version of the Septuagint, be-