

ordinary purposes of doctrine, of correction, of reproof, and of instruction in righteousness, the translation is amply sufficient.

It may, however, be said, "Is our English Bible, being only a translation, the real word of God? Is it inspired? We answer, that, *as fairly giving in English the thoughts which were originally recorded in Hebrew or Greek*, it is undoubtedly the word of God. No one will deny that thought may be accurately transmitted from language to language, or assert that a command loses any of its binding force, because the letters required to express it in one language, are different from those required to express it in another. Assent is given to Acts of Parliament in England by the expression "*La Reine le veut*," and the bill becomes law just as if the same thought of assent had been conveyed in English, by the words, The Queen wills it. I read a certain sentence in Greek; this sentence expresses the thought that "*Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins*." The mere expression of the idea in English does not change its character as a revelation; it was God's word in Greek and it is God's Word in English also.

The question of translations, however, is conclusively settled by the quotations made in the New Testament from the Septuagint. We have this evidence, that a translation was to the Apostles what our English translation is to us, "The Word of God."

Reserving any further remarks on translation, and also on the transmission of the records, until the *difficulties* of the word are spoken of, we now wish to make a remark or two on the right method of understanding and applying it. With regard to the understanding of the Word of God, very nearly, if not quite, the same rules apply as to the works of an uninspired author. For example:—

With an uninspired author, you read him carefully and patiently; if he seem obscure in one place, you wait in the expectation that he will explain himself in another; if the work is in a series, of which one part was written earlier than another, you take the latest as expressing the writer's matured views. You do not go with a predetermination to find that he corroborates certain views of your own, but let him speak freely for himself. If the writer is an acknowledged master, you read him with a certain sort of reverence; if you do not understand him, you attribute it to your own weakness or want of information, and any error of spelling or punctuation you do not charge upon him, but as the unavoidable accidents of type setting. *But far more than this, it may safely be said, that unless we enter into the spirit of an author*, especially when the subject is of a moral or philosophical nature, so as to see and feel as he does, we cannot understand his book. For example: the works of a satirical writer cannot be appreciated by those who have no perception of the ludicrous (and there are very many who are so deficient); and however patiently they may read through his book—with how much soever of attention they may plod their way through its pages, they will fall into the same mistake that a worthy rural clergyman did over Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, which he returned to a friend with the sapient remark, "There are some things in it which I cannot believe." The higher departments of scientific literature have a peculiar character, only to be apprehended by those who have a scientific cast of thought; and this even extends to the particular divisions of scientific knowledge. Thus, it is quite common to say that such and such a subject can only be understood by one who has a mathematical *head*.

Coming now to the Word of God, we observe that it also is to be read carefully