

CONCORDANCES TO THE SCRIPTURES, AND THEIR USES.

AMID all the aids to the study of the Holy Scriptures—and they are now really very numerous—there are none that can compare in value with Concordances. Many of the so-called aids are what learning, with piety and reverence it is hoped, has brought *to* the Scriptures, especially in the form of Commentaries ; but, alas, when we have several of these we may get *as many* interpretations of a passage, and perhaps find that we have obtained no real help. How often a text of Scripture seems much more simple *in itself* than it does when elaborately explained ; as it was with Mason's explanatory notes to Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, which were more difficult to a simple man, to whom he gave a copy, than was Bunyan himself. In very early days one was led to exclaim, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel with words without knowledge?" Much greater would be his surprise now.

On the other hand, what we gather by a Concordance, if a rightly made one and rightly used, is something we get direct *from* the Word, instead of something brought *to* it. Indeed, it is the Word itself dissected, and then the parts collected together, showing the places where the same word occurs. But even this, though very useful, may sometimes mislead ; for occurrences of the same word may be collected together from different parts where the *meaning* of the word may be quite different. The immediate context, as well as the subject in hand, must always be studied in order to learn the truths intended to be taught. If we wish to gather from Scripture, we must take care that we gather only what is really there.

It will readily be seen that some text must be taken on which to form a Concordance. For the Old Testament it would naturally be formed from the Hebrew. There was one