

"work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Finish the work by destroying the body. You can do no more: you have hastened the pilgrim home; you have placed him before the throne of his God, and crowned him with victory. And in the common afflictions of life, the friends of God are safe; for "all things work together for good to them that love" him. Poverty brings heavenly riches; and reproach, the honour that cometh from God. The storm makes you feel your refuge; and the rocking tempest makes you root yourselves, like the trees of the forest, more firmly in your God.

5. Friendship with God is friendship with every thing beside. It harmonizes the soul with all that it has to do. It has no enemies; no discontents with Providence. All dispensations are sweet and welcome. It is attuned to the whole world of nature. The sun shines more brightly, and the fields look more lovely, in consequence of his union with the great Author of all. Reconciliation with God reconciles man even to death, and to another world. Heaven is peopled with the friends of those who are reconciled to God; and hence they are taught to regard it as their Father's house, and their home.

**Biblical Literature.**

**HERMENEUTICAL INTERPRETATION.**

The last branch of knowledge which belongs to the study of exegetical theology, may very suitably be distinguished by the appropriate name of Hermeneutics.\* The term Exegesis,† taken in a limited sense, has been applied to it, and such an application of the word may easily be justified, since, according to the use of language, the very same thing may be signified both by hermeneutics and exegesis. It may, however, still more easily be shown, that in the distribution of the various parts of theology, a distinction between these two should be observed; or, that there are reasons for considering hermeneutics as one species of learning, which indeed belongs to a course of exegetical study, and is subordinate to exegesis.

In order to place this beyond the reach of doubt, it is only necessary to develop with accuracy the idea which the term expresses, and to set in a clear light the object to which it is particularly devoted.

The general design of exegetical study, it is plain, is simply this; to place us in such a situation, that we may be able to use the sacred Scriptures, wherein the divine truths of our religion must be contained, as the very sources of those truths, and from them derive our knowledge. Now, after satisfying ourselves, first of all, respecting their genuineness, their incorruptness, and their origin, the very next condition which is required to understand and properly to use those writings, is, to become acquainted with the languages in which they were composed. A previous study of sacred philology is therefore necessary, although it is easy to see, and still more so to experience, that this alone is not enough to enable us thoroughly to attain the design in view. Knowledge of the languages does indeed appear to lead to it more nearly than any other. In fact, it is of itself sufficient, in many cases, to make us acquainted with the true sense of those writings, but not so in all, for there are very many in which something else is required.

It is possible, whatever writing we may be examining, very often to understand all the words by which a sentiment is expressed, while, at the same time, we are unable to discover any intelligible sense in them. And yet oftener may we understand all the words of a sentence, and still not be certain of the writer's meaning, because his words may admit of various significations, and, when taken together, may give several different senses. Consequently, certain rules, directions, and marks are necessary, to enable us to ascertain and define what sense the author of a writing connected with the expressions which he selected, for this alone can be the true sense of the writing.

It is this which makes hermeneutics a distinct branch of learning, and thus a particular part of exegetical study; for it is this which makes it obligatory to find out, examine, and apply those rules, aids, and

directions of a higher character, by means of which, the true sense of our sacred Scriptures, can, without error, be investigated and perceived.

But, before entering into the actual discussion of the question, whence hermeneutics must derive these rules and directions, and obtain these aids and marks to guide the inquirer, it may not be useless to dwell for a moment on a preliminary observation, the immediate purport of which is indeed only to place the necessity of this particular science in a clearer light, but which, at the same time, may give most of the results in reference to that question.

The necessity of hermeneutics is undoubtedly shown in the strongest light, from the fact which experience attests, that our sacred Scriptures not only can be interpreted in the greatest variety of manner, but also that from time immemorial they have been so interpreted. All Christian sects, both those of ancient, and those of modern times, have always known how to explain scripture in such a way, as to elicit their own particular opinions; and since their opinions are often contradictory, some of them must therefore find there the opposite views to those which meet the eyes of others.

Let it be supposed now, that each of these sects announces its determination to proceed according to certain hermeneutical rules. Although, indeed, this would afford no favourable presentment respecting the confident reliance which ought to be placed in them, yet it would be a strong proof of the absolute necessity of establishing such rules as a foundation to act upon. For whoever is not conscious of having conducted his interpretation according to such rules, cannot certainly think of attempting to defend or to oppose the correctness of an exposition. Now, there is not a single one of these sects willing to confess, that they have interpreted, in a merely arbitrary manner, and consequently every one of them does, by this very circumstance, allow the necessity of hermeneutics, but at the same time also, every one of them shows very plainly what sort of hermeneutics is necessary, or what kind of rules ought to be established, in order to be useful.

We ought, in one word, to have such rules as both can and must be regarded, generally, as true and binding. So long as such principles are applied as are admitted by one party only, and rejected by others, it is impossible to unite in the true meaning of Scripture, because it is impossible for the one party to convince the other of the truth of their interpretations, or to show the falsehood of the opposite. But while this has always been attempted by each, even from the earliest periods, each has also maintained, that its own laws of interpretation are of such a nature, that they ought to be admitted by every one, for on no other supposition could a wish to make the attempt occur to any one's mind. On other grounds also, we know that each party is satisfied of this. Each, therefore, does certainly receive it as an axiom, that there are rules of interpretation, which are to be generally admitted as true, and that merely these and none others ought to be prescribed as hermeneutics.

It might be foreseen, also, that it must be very possible to deceive one's self, either in ascertaining these rules, or in trusting too much to their generally connecting power, or even in the application of them; for, if this were not the case, inquirers would not have been able to discover such various and conflicting views in the Bible. The true reason of this is immediately perceived, as soon as the source is named from which these rules must be drawn, and from which alone they can be drawn. This source need no longer be sought for; for as soon as it is admitted, that the rules must be so framed that they can be regarded as generally true and binding, only one can possibly be recognised.

In a word, that which alone must be generally respected, and the authority of which must be generally acknowledged, is pure reason; so that it is this alone from which hermeneutics can receive its directions, and borrow the respect which it requires. This principle must the more necessarily be allowed, as soon as we come to explain what God's revelation, or what the meaning of his declarations must be. The man whose reason cannot tell, that such a sense, and none other, lies in a revelation, is not bound to take it in this sense. If, then, it cannot be proved, that an interpretation of a pas-

sage in the Bible is agreeable to reason, or, in other words, that sound reason can find no other sense in it than this, it ought not to be expected, that a man should acquiesce in the interpretation.\*

The whole art then, and the whole duty of hermeneutics, must consist simply in this, to explain with reason, that is, to explain in such a manner as is agreeable to those general laws of nature, according to which the soul of man must always govern itself in forming its thoughts and conceptions, in conveying its conceptions to others, and in receiving those which others communicate; or, in other words, all hermeneutics can be nothing else than unsophisticated logic applied to the explanation of Scripture.

It is unnecessary now to prove this. But the clearer it is placed before our eyes, and placed before them as incontrovertibly true, the more natural does the question become, — whether such laws of interpretation, agreeable to reason, do really offer themselves, and whether from the general natural laws of thinking, such principles can be drawn, the truth, correctness, and applicability of which, can generally be perceived.

Judging from experience, as already suggested, it would seem scarcely possible, that such principles can exist, or else extremely difficult to discover them; for otherwise, how could opinions, so numerous, so diversified, and even in part so contradictory, be deduced by interpretation from the Scriptures? If true hermeneutics must derive its principles only from the general laws of thinking, or, in a word, from logic, hermeneutics can be but one for all persons, as is the case with logic and reason. But then, all persons, by applying this one hermeneutics, would necessarily find only one and the same sense in the Scripture, or it is clear that they could not conduct their operations according to the same laws. This appears to be undeniable, and therefore it is at least no less so, that these rules of a reasonable hermeneutics, which are universally recognised as the true and only correct rules, are not very readily discoverable; else, they would not have been so various as they must have been, if we may judge from the variety of interpretations which have resulted. Yet the phenomena on which this conclusion has been founded, undoubtedly do often arise from a cause altogether different from this difficulty.

The variety of interpretations and methods of interpreting, which, in various ages have gratified the fancy, originated much less frequently from variety in the principles of interpretation themselves, than from the various application which was made of them. There have, undoubtedly, been interpreters, who were guided by principles entirely false and unreasonable, and therefore their expositions bear on the very face of them the character of falsehood so remarkably, that the sound understanding perceives it at the first look; but still, most interpreters, or certainly the greater number, proceeded upon principles altogether correct, and differing from each other only in the application of them, for which many qualifications are requisite, which are not so easily found in connection, because they cannot be brought together without difficulty.

This will show itself in the clearest light, when some of these principles of interpretation themselves are developed, which simple reason prescribes to hermeneutics, or which this alone derives from unsophisticated logic. This development will most

\* I have endeavoured to express the author's meaning, without confining myself closely to his language. It is evident that he speaks of reason uninfluenced by prejudice, and in this sense, the correctness of his remark is undeniable, as, truth must make its appeal to this principle. "This is the foundation of argument." All truths must be agreeable to pure reason, although many are far removed from the grasp of limited reason which man is able to appropriate. "Whatever truths are rejected by the understanding, are rejected from ignorance or prejudice."

† "Into the word of God," says Hooker, "being in respect of that end for which God ordained it, perfect, exact, and absolute in itself, we do not add reason as a supplement of any man or defect thereon, but as a necessary instrument, without which we could not reap by the scripture's perfection that fruit and benefit which it yielded." — "Because the sentences which are by the Apostles recited out of the Psalms, to prove the resurrection of Jesus Christ, did not prove it, if so be the prophet David meant them of himself, this exposition therefore they plainly disprove, and show by manifest reason, that of David the words of David could not possibly be meant. Exclude the use of natural reasoning about the sense of holy scriptures, concerning the articles of our faith, and then that the scripture doth concern the articles of our faith, who can assure us? That which by right exposition buildeth up Christian faith, may unreasonably, breedeth error; between true and false construction, the difference reason must show." — *Practical Philosophy*, Book III. § 8. The whole question is particularly worthy of the reader's attention. — Dr. F. H. Turner, Translator.

evidently show with what ease, on the one hand, these general rules can be formed, or at least be proved to human understanding to be correct and obligatory; and at the same time also, on the other, how much the application of them requires and presumes; how easily, therefore, they may be variously applied; and how necessarily this must produce variety of interpretation. — Dr. G. J. Plinck.

**Biography.**

**"THE DAIRYMAN'S DAUGHTER."**

To the Editor of the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine.

The following particulars respecting that truly excellent young woman, Elizabeth Wallbridge, were collected by the writer for the purpose of incidental notice in a brief memoir of her brother, Robert Wallbridge, who has recently gone to join his devoted sister in a better world; but as they were found both too long and too interesting to occupy such a position naturally, they are here presented in the form of a separate narrative. Any thing new in reference to "the Dairyman's Daughter" must needs be a matter of interest to the religious public, seeing that intelligent Christians from all parts of the world, on her account, come to the Isle of Wight, and repair to Arreton and elsewhere with all that intensity of feeling which is awakened in others by the sight of objects connected with classical antiquity. But what is here written will be found to be more especially interesting to those who cherish the most devout and grateful feelings on account of the good which it has pleased God to accomplish in the earth by the form of Christianity which is called "Methodism," but who may not have heard how much "the Dairyman's Daughter" was indebted to it for all that "seasoning power" which has made her a blessing to so many, and that in so many nations.\*

Elizabeth Wallbridge was a native of the Isle of Wight. Her parents, who were always commendable for their morality, were indebted to their daughter for the knowledge of the way of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. Her father survived her many years. He came to reside at Newport, where he became a member of the church of which that distinguished minister, the Rev. Mr. Tyerman, was the Pastor. An account of him was published by Mr. Tyerman, in a well-written tract, a little before he sailed on his Mission to the South Sea Islands.

Elizabeth was born at Hale Common, in the parish of Arreton, in the same cottage whence her happy spirit took its flight to paradise. She had five brothers and sisters. Robert was the eldest, and survived them all. He died at Newport, February 25th, 1837, much respected for his Christian character, and having been more than forty years a local preacher in connexion with the Wesleyan Methodists. Leaving her parents at an early age, Elizabeth lived many years as a servant in respectable families; and, having good wages, she was enabled to lay by a little money against the time of need. But notwithstanding this important testimony in favour of her prudence and economy, yet, according to the concurring statements of all who knew her, she was plainly far from righteousness. Being naturally cheerful and talkative, given to levity, and rather witty, she directed her ridicule and sarcasm with considerable force against those who manifested any serious concern for the salvation of their souls. The pride of her heart was likewise manifested in her great fondness for dress.

At the time when it pleased God truly to awaken her to a sense of the vast importance of eternal things, and the necessity of caring for her deathless soul, she was living at Southampton, as a servant in the R— family. The Methodists had at that time no chapel in that town, but worshipped in a room which they hired for that purpose in Hanover-buildings, and which was supplied once a fortnight by the Travelling Preachers from the Portsmouth Circuit. In the year 1795 the Rev. Messrs. Algar, Devereil, Crabb, Jones, and Brook-

\* Many years previous to the death of the honored author of the account of "the Dairyman's Daughter," he stated to a friend in conversation, that he had received information that the tract had been the means of the conversion of three hundred and fifty persons. Ten years ago, his biographer informed us that "the Dairyman's Daughter" had been translated into nineteen different languages, and that four millions of copies had been put into circulation. Since that time the circulation has not only been increased, but has been multiplied tenfold.

\* From *Armenian*, to interpret.  
† From *engaged*, to explain.