

PHILOLOGY.

CONCLUDED.

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DEFINITION.

IN the definition of words, the most important part of lexicography, the defects and inaccuracies of the English dictionaries are too numerous to be specified. Dr. Johnson, indeed, made great improvements in this department of English lexicography; but he also made many mistakes, or left many definitions very imperfect. This is not surprising, considering his infirmities, and the defect of his researches into the origin and affinities of the language.

But it is remarkable, that among all the compilers of dictionaries who have borrowed his vocabulary of words, and abridged his definitions, not one, whose work is yet published, has, to any extent, corrected his mistakes, or supplied his defects. Almost all the errors of Johnson are copied into later dictionaries, both in Great Britain and the United States; and in various abridgments, they find their way into our families and schools.

Observe the different definitions of the following words, in the different books:

FROM JOHNSON.

- SPECULATION.** 1. Examination by the eye; view.
 2. Examiner; spy. This word is found no where else, (except in a passage of Shakspeare) and probably is here misprinted for speculator. (The passage is omitted.)
 3. Mental view; intellectual examination; contemplation.
 4. A train of thoughts formed by meditation.
 5. Mental scheme not reduced to practice.
 6. Power of sight. Not in use.

These are copied without improvement into the dictionaries of Sheridan, Walker, Jones, and Jameson.

In abridgments for schools in this country, we find the following:

Act of speculating; view; spy, examination; contemplation; scheme. — *Worcester*.
 View, mental scheme not reduced to practice. — *Cobb*.

The same in the abridgment of Walker, published in Boston.

The same in Maunder, with the addition of *contemplation*.

FROM WEBSTER'S AMERICAN DICTIONARY.

- SPECULATION.** Examination by the eye, view. (*Little used*.)
 2. Mental view of any thing in its various aspects and relations; contemplation: intellectual examination. The events of the day afford matter of serious *speculation* to the friends of Christianity.
 3. Train of thoughts formed by meditation.
 4. Mental scheme; theory; views of subjects not verified by fact or practice.
 This globe, which was round only in *speculation*, has been circumnavigated. The application of steam to navigation is no longer a matter of mere *speculation*.
 5. Power of signs. (*Not in use*.)
 6. In *commerce*, the act or practice of buying land or goods, etc., in expectation of a rise of price and of selling them at an advance; as distinguished from a regular trade, in which the profit expected is the difference, between the retail and wholesale prices, or the difference of price in the place where the goods are purchased, and the place to which they are carried for market. In England, France and America, public stocks are the subject of continual *speculation*. In the United States, a few men have been enriched, but many have been ruined, by *speculation*.

FROM WEBSTER'S SCHOOL DICTIONARIES.

SPECULATION. Mental view; a buying in expectation of a rise in price.

FROM JOHNSON.

- CAN.** To be able to have power.
 2. It expresses the potential mood.
 3. It is distinguished from *may*, as *power* from *permission*. *I can* do it, it is in my power; *I may* do it, it is allowed me; but in poetry they are confounded.
 4. *Can* is used of the person, with the verb active, where *may* is used of the thing, with the verb passive; as, *I can* do it, it may or can be done.

FROM WEBSTER'S AMERICAN DICTIONARY.

- CAN.** To be able; to have sufficient strength or physical power. One man *can* lift a weight which another *can* not.
 2. To have means or instruments, which supply power or ability. A man *can* build a house or fit out a ship, if he has the requisite property.
 3. To be possible. 'Nicodemus said, how *can* these things be?'
 4. To have adequate moral power. A man *can* indulge in pleasure, or he *can* refrain.
 5. To have just or legal competent power; to be free from any restraint of moral, civil, or political obligation. A man *can* hold an office, or he *can* not. The Jews *could* not eat certain kinds of animals which were declared to be unclean.
 6. To have natural strength, or capacity, to be susceptible of; to be able or free to undergo any change, or produce any effect, by the laws and constitution of nature, or by divine appointment. Silver *can* be melted, but *can* not be changed into gold. *Can* the rush grow without mire? *Can* the fig-tree bear olive berries? *Can* faith save him?
 7. To have competent strength, ability, fortitude, patience, etc., in a passive sense. He *can* not bear reproof. *I can* not endure his impertinence. This is a hard saying; who *can* hear it?
 8. To have the requisite knowledge, experience, or skill. An astronomer *can* calculate an eclipse, though he *can* not make a coat.
 9. To have strength or inclination, or motives sufficient to overcome obstacles, impediments, inconvenience, or other objection. *I can* not rise and give thee, etc. *Luke*.
 10. To have sufficient capacity; as a vessel *can* not hold or contain the whole quantity.

AVERMENT. Establishment of any thing by evidence. — *Bacon*.

2. An offer of the *defendant* to justify an exception, and the act as well as the offer. *Johnson* from *Blount*.

The establishment of any thing by evidence. *Sheridan*, *Walker*, *Jameson*, *Cobb*, *Boston Abridgment of Walker*, *Worcester*.

FROM WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY.

AVERMENT. Affirmation; positive assertion; the act of averring.

2. Verification, establishment by evidence. *Bacon*.

3. In *pleading*, an offer of *either party* to justify or prove what he alleges. In any stage of pleadings, when either party advances new matter, he avers it to be true, and concludes with these words, 'and this he is ready to verify.' This is called an averment.

EFFERVESCE. To generate heat by intestine motion. *Johnson*, *Sheridan*, *Walker*, *Jones*, *Jameson*, *Maunder*, *Cobb*, *Boston Abridgment of Walker*, *Philadelphia*, ditto, *Grimshaw*: *Worcester adds*, to bubble, to work.

EFFERVESCE. To be in natural commotion, like liquor when gently boiling; to bubble and hiss, as fermenting liquors or any fluid when some part escapes in an elastic form; to work as new wine. *Webster*.

EMIGRATE. To remove from one place to another. *Johnson*, *Sheridan*, *Walker*, *Jones*, *Maunder*, *Cobb*, *Boston and Philadelphia abridgments of Walker*, *Grimshaw*. (Then the removal of a family from one part of a city to another, is to emigrate.)

EMIGRATE. To quit one's country, state, or region, and settle in another; to remove from one country or state to another, for the purpose of residence. Germans, Swiss, Irish, Scots, *emigrate* to America. *Webster*: *Quarto*.

COUNTRY-DANCE. A well known dance. *Jameson*, *Maunder*, *Worcester*, *Grimshaw*. (There is no such legitimate word in the language.)

CONTRA-DANCE. A dance in which the partners are arranged in opposition or in opposite lines. *Webster*.

CROSS-EXAMINE. To examine witnesses by putting to them unexpected questions. *Maunder*.

CROSS-EXAMINATION. The act of examining, by questions apparently captious, the faith of evidence in a court of justice. *Maunder.* (All wrong.)

CROSS-EXAMINE. To examine a witness by the opposite party, or his counsel, as the plaintiff's witness by the defendant, and *vice versa.* *Webster.*

The reader will understand, by the foregoing examples, the great care which has been bestowed on this important part of lexicography, in the execution of the American Dictionary. The British dictionaries abound with errors and defects, from beginning to end; and such is the fact with the abridgments of them made and published in this country.

GRAMMAR.

THE British grammars, and such American compilations as contain the same principles, stand in need of many corrections, and great improvements. Wallis and Lowth were eminent scholars, and have done much for reducing our language to order, and explaining its principles and idioms. But they overlooked some important particulars; and since the date of their publications, some very valuable discoveries have been made, which require a grammar to be constructed with some new rules and principles.

Lindley Murray undertook to digest the principles of Lowth into a more convenient form than any which had preceded his work. But Murray, being a Quaker, and of course not having the benefit of a college education, was destitute of the classical attainments which are necessary for the execution of a complete grammar: and what was a still greater defect, he had no knowledge of the Saxon, the parent of the English language, without which no man is competent to explain some of the idioms of the language. He made no pretensions to *authorship*; he considered his book as a *compilation* of rules and principles from former writers, which he has mentioned as his authorities. But not hazarding any new principles, or any important departure from his authorities, he has copied their errors, and left his work nearly as imperfect as those which he has cited.

In Murray's grammar, therefore, as in those of his predecessors, we stumble in the threshold. Copying from Lowth and others, the compiler writes: 'In English there are but two articles, *a* and *the*: *a* becomes *an* before a vowel and before a silent *h*.' This is a mistake; the fact is the reverse; *an* is the original word, and loses the *n* before a consonant. He proceeds, copying from Lowth;

'*A* or *an* is styled the *indefinite* article; it is used in a vague sense to point out one single thing of the kind, in other respects *indeterminate*: as give me *a* book, that is, *any book*!

Now this rule has been repeated age after age, and writers seem never to have recollected that *all words expressing numbers* are constantly used in a precisely similar manner. Give me *two* apples, that is, *any two*. Bring me *three* oranges from the basket, that is, *any three*. From a company of soldiers, detach *four* men, that is, *any four*. In this way, we show that every word expressing number is as truly an indefinite article as *an* or *a*. Let us attend to the following sentences:

'The Jewish revelation was *a* preparation for the Christian!' That is, according to the foregoing rule, *any preparation, indeterminate*!

'Joseph wrapped the body of Christ in linen, and laid it in *a* sepulcher!' That is, *any sepulcher, indeterminate!*

'The Lord God planted *a* garden eastward in Eden!' That is, *any garden, indeterminate!*

'And Abram said to his wife, I know thou art *a* fair woman!' That is, *any fair woman, indeterminate!*

'The king of Ai went out to battle, at *a* time appointed!' That is, *any time, indeterminate!*

'And Moses said, I have been *a* stranger in *a* strange land!' That is, *any stranger in any strange land!*

'Behold, if *the* witness is *a* false witness and hath testified falsely against his brother!' *Deut. xix. 18.* Now according to Murray, *the* witness is *definite*, but he immediately becomes *a* witness, which is *indefinite*; that is a *certain* witness becomes *any* witness whatever.

Now the cause of this error, which occurs in all the grammars of languages on the continent, of which I have any knowledge, has been this; an ignorance of the simple fact that *an* is the adjective expressing *one*, and is neither more nor less than the Saxon spelling of the Latin *un-us*, the first syllable of which *un* is the Saxon *an*. Neither in English or in any other language is this word, and that which corresponds to it in other languages, any more an *article*, as a distinct part of speech, than *two, three, four*, and every adjective of number in the language. *An* or *a* is an adjective used before any noun, definite or indefinite, at the pleasure of the writer or speaker.

Hence the impropriety of the use of *a* or *an* before *one*; such *a one*. In this use, the same original word occurs twice; such *one one*. The true phrase is *such one*.

The British grammars and dictionaries tell us, that *if* is a conjunction; *though* is a conjunction: *notwithstanding* is a conjunction; *provided* is a conjunction, or an adverb; *that*, in some of its uses, is a conjunction; *during* is a preposition; *save* is sometimes an adverb; *saving* is sometimes an adverb; *except* is sometimes a preposition; *excepted* and *excepting* are sometimes prepositions.

These definitions are copied into our grammars and dictionaries, and constantly taught in our schools; although they contain not one word of truth. Johnson indeed informs us, that *during, provided, excepted, excepting, saving*, are participles; but not understanding the construction of such words, when applied to sentences, he classes them with prepositions or adverbs.

Let us attend to the consequences of this wrong classification. From not understanding the true construction of the language, and the proper character of the word *provided*, when applied to sentences, that elegant writer, Robert Hall, has fallen into a mistake which is almost ludicrous. He has used *providing* for *provided*, in the following sentences:

'They are willing to retain the Christian religion, *providing* it continue inefficient.'

WORKS, VOL. II. 273.
'Conquests achieved or objects attained are equally instructive, *providing* the reader is informed by what steps virtuous or vicious habits were superinduced.'—p. 410.

The first of these sentences should run thus: 'They are willing to retain the Christian religion, *provided* it shall continue inefficient; that is, *provided that fact*, (which is expressed in what follows, viz.) *the*

religion, shall continue inefficient. That being provided, is the clause independent. And this resolution of the sentence shows the impropriety of using *it continue*, as if in the subjunctive mode ; when in fact the words should be in the future, *it shall continue*.

Observe, also, the consequence of classifying *if* and *though* with conjunctions. In our version of the Scriptures there is this passage: 'If that I may apprehend.' — *Phil.* III., 12. In the old version, there is the following passage: 'But *though that* we or an angel from heaven preach to you any other gospel.' *Gal.* I., 8.

In the latter passage, *that* is now omitted ; yet both passages are genuine English. But *if* and *though* being considered conjunctions, the word *that* stands without any governing word, or it is governed by a conjunction !

Among all the errors of grammars, none has had more mischievous effects in practice, than the mistake of classing with conjunctions, *that* in English, and the corresponding words in Greek and Latin, *quod* and $\phi\omega\tau\iota$, instead of considering them to be what they are, pronouns referring to a sentence. The mistake is as old as the early translation of the Scriptures.

Take the following examples from the version of Jerome, called the *Vulgate*, which is the authorized copy of the Scriptures among the Romanists. The passages are given in literal English :

'For I say to you, *because* unless your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.' *Math.* v. 20.

'Ye have heard, *because* it was said by them of old time.' v. 21.

'And then I will profess to them, *because* I never knew you.' VII. 23.

'Believe ye, *because* I am able to do this.' IX. 28.

'He that cometh to God must believe, *because* he is and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' *Heb.* XI. 6.

'To whom it was said, *because* in Isaac shall thy seed be called.' *Heb.* XI. 18.

'But that ye may know, *because* the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins.' *Math.* IX. 6.

'But I say to you, *because* whoever is angry with his brother without a cause.' *Math.* v. 22.

Montanus, another translator, has made the same mistake in a multitude of passages.

There are two or three passages, at least, in our version, mistranslated in consequence of the same mistake of the character of the Greek $\phi\omega\tau\iota$. *Luke* I. 45: 'Blessed is she that believed, *for* there shall be a performance of those things which have been told her from the Lord.' *For*, in this passage, should be *that*, as it is rendered by McKnight and Mosenmüller.

In *Romans* VIII. 20, 21, this mistake obscures the sense, so as to render the passage almost unintelligible.

'For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, *because* the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.' *Because*, here, should be *that*, and no pause should be inserted immediately after *hope*. A like mistake occurs in *Luke* II. 10, 11.

Because, too, is classed with the conjunctions. Then see the consequence. 'They kindled a fire and received us every one, *because of the present rain, and because of the cold.*' *Acts* XXVIII. 2. Here the

conjunction *because* governs the following noun. What sort of grammar is this?*

In no modern language are the mistakes in classifying words more numerous than in the French grammars and dictionaries. Among these are the following :

A cause de are called a preposition ; *a cause que*, a conjunction ; *a cause de quoi*, an adverb ; *ce pendant*, a conjunction or an adverb ; *que* answering to the English *that*, referring to a sentence, is called a conjunction or an adverb ; *pendant*, is called a preposition, and *pendant que*, a conjunction ; *par se que*, is a conjunction ; *pourvu que*, a conjunction ; *peut être*, an adverb ; *soit* a conjunction, or an adverb.

In all this there is not a particle of truth ; and the fact that such a classification of words has existed for ages, in this and in other modern languages, is a striking proof of the superficial manner in which the structure of languages has been analyzed.

For want of a more thorough understanding of the structure of languages, and the consequent want of a correct grammar to serve as a guide to learners, mistakes and improprieties of speech occur in the compositions of most of our best authors. Some of these are so wrought into our current oral language, that it may be impracticable to banish them from popular use.

EXAMPLES.

'Nothing but the expectation of this, *could have engaged* him to *have undertaken* this voyage.' *Jefferson's Works*, Vol. I., Letter 74.

In this sentence, *could have engaged* expresses the past time, the *time of engaging*, and the words *to have undertaken* express time past, *anterior to engaging*. The last verb should have been *to undertake*.

'The merchants *were* certainly disposed *to have consented* (to consent) to accommodation, as to the article of debts.' Vol. II., Let. 15.

'I *expected to have sent* (to send) also a coin of copper.' Vol II., Let. 45.

Here the *sending* is expressed at time *past* of the time of *expecting*.

'I *did fully intend* writing a line on Wednesday, to *have told* you of the glorious opening of the great cause of abolition.' *Memoirs of H. More* : Vol. I., p. 309.

Here the *telling* is represented as past *before it was intended*.

'I *had intended to have said* more in answer to your letter.' *H. More* : Vol. II. 136.

'It *was* not my intencion to *have said* so much.' *Benington. Mem. of H. More* : Vol. II. 150.

'If I had known that Dr. Woodward still remained in the neighborhood, I *would have found* him out, in order to *have set* (to set) his mind completely at rest.' Vol. II. 121.

'I *could* not so long *have forborne to have troubled* (to trouble) you with a letter.' *Mrs. Montague : Mem. of H. More* : Vol. I. 371.

'It furnished us with a great laugh at the catastrophe, when it *would have been* decent to *have been* (to be) a little sorrowful.' *Ibidem*, p. 53.

'And truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came, they *might have had* opportunity to *have returned*,' (to return.) xi. 15.

'It *would* not do to say that our constitution *was* (is) only a league.' *President's Proclamation*.

So in common discourse: 'By his taciturnity I should think he *was* diffident. (I should think he *is* diffident — or what is preferable, I should think him *to be* diffident.) See my *Improved Grammar*, p. 50.

* In early life, I was instructed in all the errors of the English books ; and they are so familiar, that they sometimes escape me, both in speaking and writing.

'He would show what Romanism had been, and prove it *was* the same now.' (Prove it *is* or *to be*.)

'What day of the month is it?' 'The third.' 'I thought it *was* the fourth.' (I thought it *to be*.)

'Is it as warm as it was yesterday?' 'I should think it *was*.' Better thus: I should think it *is*, or I should think it *to be*.

'He commenced with asserting, that youth *was* probably the most favorable period of life.' (That youth *is*, or asserting youth *to be*.)

'It *is* not so late as I thought it *was*.' (Thought it *to be*.)

'He said he was glad it *was* Sunday *to-morrow*.' (It *will be*.)

'Jesus knowing that he *was* come from God and *went* to God.' (That he *had* come, or that he came, from God, and *was going* to God.) *John XIII., 3.*

'I *should* be sorry you *saw* my resemblance at *present*.' *H. More: Mem. Vol. i., 87.**
'I should no longer think that wearing a nosegay *was* (is) a venial delight unblamed.' *Ibidem*, p. 309.

'Workmen *were arrived* to assist them.' *Milford*, v., 111.

'A body of Athenian horse *was just arrived*.' *Ibidem* v. 226.

'The time limited for the reception of the Cardinal *was expired*.' *Roscoe*, i., 84.

This conversion of intransitive verbs into the passive form is highly improper. So also in such examples as these: He *was perished* — he *is escaped* — they *were retired* from company. Many examples of this improper phraseology occur in the Bible.

The following are examples of the use of a wrong tense:

'Homer *has been* (was) more conversant with military matters than Hesiod.' *Milford*, i., 140.

'The conduct of Pelonidas towards Arcadia and its minister, at the Persian court, has scarcely *been* (*was* scarcely) the result of mere caprice or resentment.' *Ibidem*, v., 148.

'I *would be* (should be) lost to every honorable *correct* feeling, were I not profoundly affected by the cordial manner in which I have *been* received.' *Letter from a gentleman*.

'I desire to throw out a few positions which I, for one, *will* (shall) feel it my duty to assume and maintain.'

'I hope and trust that on this momentous question, we *will* (shall) suppress every unworthy emotion.' *Debates in Congress*.

'We *will* not be mistaken.' (Shall not.)

Such Scotticisms and Irishisms occur frequently in the language of many gentlemen of distinction. But they are not English, and ought never to be printed. Blair's Lectures, and many other books written by Scottish authors, ought, before they are published, to be carefully examined and purified from the peculiar Scottish forms of speech, by some person with whom the English language is *vernacular*.

And here it may be remarked, that in the use of the Scottish forms of the English verbs, the common version of the Bible is very objectionable. Thus in the use of *shall*, the following phrases are incorrect. 'God *shall* give Pharaoh an answer of peace.' *Gen. xli. 16.* 'Our God *shall* fight for us.' *Neh. iv., 20.* 'One of you *shall* betray me.'

* Let the use of the verbs in the examples given, be compared with the following: 'And I *knew* that thou *hearest* me always.' *John xii., 42.* This is according to the original, and correct. The verb *knew* expresses time past; but *hearest* expresses time in general, a permanent fact, or one always existing. So in the following: 'Then said Paul I *knew* not, brethren, that he *is* the High Priest.' *Acts, xxiii., 5.* A modern writer would have here used *was*; I knew not that he *was* the High Priest.

Matth. xxvi., 21. 'The brother *shall* betray the brother to death.' *Mark* xiii., 12. 'Ye *shall* be hated by all men.' *Matth.* x., 22.

Shall, in such phrases, imports a promise, command, threatening, or determination, implying a right to command. But such phraseology applied to the Supreme Being, in these and similar phrases, is very improper and irreverent, according to good English usage. No child would say to a parent, 'You *shall* do this or that;' nor in the third person, 'My father *shall* do this or that.' The phrases are not good English. This use of *shall* in the Bible was noticed by Dr. Lowth twenty years ago.

In like manner, *should* is sometimes used for *would*; as in the following passages: 'O that ye would altogether hold your peace, and it *should* be your wisdom.' *Job* xiii., 5. 'Jesus knew who *should* betray him.' *John* vi., 64. 'This man was taken of the Jews, and *should* have been killed of them.' *Acts* xxiii. 27.

Should, in these passages, should be *would*. *Should*, in the English use, is here equivalent to *ought*; but this is a perversion of the true meaning. And in the last passage, from *Acts*, *of* should be *by*.

This improper use of *shall* and *should* occurs in many passages of our version of the Scriptures; probably in more than a thousand, and this use is corrupting the language of the pulpit, at this day.

And here may be noticed a few instances of erroneous translation in the scriptures.

The translators, in the title-page of the Bible, inform their readers, that they have translated the scriptures from the *original tongues*. But in rendering the word *Cush* of the original, they have deviated from this practice, I believe, in every instance in which it occurs. Instead of following the Hebrew, they have followed the Greek copy, which is itself a translation, and have rendered *Cush* by the Greek or Latin word *Ethiopia*. In *Genesis* ii., 13, the river of Gihon, one of the four rivers which issued from Eden, is said to encompass the whole land of *Ethiopia*. (*Cush*.) Now Eden was in Asia, but by this translation the Bible is made to say that the river Gihon encompasses Ethiopia, a country in Africa, at least three thousand miles from the sources of the other rivers of Eden, and of course from Eden itself.

If it should be said that there were several countries mentioned in Scripture by the name Ethiopia, the answer is that as far as historical records exist, there was never a country in *Asia* called *Ethiopia* by the Jews or other Asiatics. It is a Greek name, and was wholly unknown to the Jews, till they became acquainted with the Greeks. The rendering of the word *Cush* by *Ethiopia*, which occurs in several passages, is wrong; it is a departure from the original; a departure from the older versions; and it tends to mislead or perplex the English reader.

In the first verse of Deuteronomy, the Israelites are said to be *over against the Red Sea*. This is another mistake, for the Israelites were in the land of Moab, far north of the Red Sea, and as Calmet remarks, they could in no sense be said to be opposite to that Sea. This is another error, proceeding from the like cause; the translators following the Greek copy instead of the Hebrew.

In *Acts* xii., 4, the translators have erred in rendering the original Greek *Pascha* by the word *Easter*. Here they have deviated from the old version, for in the Bishop's Bible the word is correctly rendered *Passover*. It was the Jewish passover, which was celebrated in the

days of the apostles; and not *Easter*, which is a very different thing. As the passage now stands, it is not true.

There is an error in the present version of Matth. xxiii., 24., which may have been a misprint, but the retaining of it to this day exhibits in a strong light the force of that reverence which is entertained, not merely for the *Scriptures*, but for the *opinions* and *decisions of fallible men*. The phrase, 'to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel' gives the sense of a great *effort* to swallow a gnat, by persons who could easily swallow a camel. So far is this from being the sense, that the original phrase of the evangelists declares that the gnat is *strained out* of the liquor drank, and, of course there is no gnat to be swallowed, and of course no effort to swallow one. Now it is remarkable that this passage is correct in the old version; and still more remarkable that such an obvious mistake, which any tyro in Greek may detect, should remain in our copies of the *Scriptures*, for more than two hundred years, *uncorrected*.

These facts being known and admitted by all the learned who have any knowledge of the original languages, how can we be justified in publishing copies of the Bible, and distributing them among all classes of people without correction? Expositors, indeed, have noticed some of these mistakes, particularly the last mentioned; but others are passed by them with a slight notice, or with no notice at all.

Now by far the greatest part of readers of the Bible have no access to commentaries; and those who have not the means of correction, mistake the meaning of the passages in which such errors occur. This truth I have known from my own experience, as well as from the acknowledgment of others.

There is another class of words used in the common version, which mislead the reader, or confound him; these are the words whose signification, in popular use, is different *now* from that in which it was used by the translators. Of this class there are about one hundred examples. Some of these words render the passages in which they occur quite unintelligible to an ordinary reader. And what shall be said of *God speed*, a mistake and a phrase in which the sacred name of the Supreme Being is used, though the phrase is neither grammar nor sense.

When to these considerations we add the numerous passages in which words are used which are so offensive to delicacy and to propriety, that they cannot be uttered in company, how can the friends of Christianity object to a revision of the language of this version? It is said that if we admit any alteration, by one person, this will encourage others to make alterations. This is doubtless a mistake. So far from this, the adoption of one copy, revised with care and judgment, would certainly prevent the multiplication of altered copies.

Very few people are aware what immense evils religion has sustained from the *mere reverence of the moderns for antiquity*. It is this overweening reverence for the opinions and writings of the ancient fathers which has continued in the Christian Churches, most of the corruptions which now deform and debase the religion of Christ. And these corruptions are not confined to Romanism.

The same reverence attaches men to the language of old writers, and begets a reluctance to dismiss from use not only in accurate terms, but also language too foul to be uttered in decent society.

Innovations should not be made for slight causes. But neither the fear of innovation, nor respect for ancient opinions, systems, or language,

can justify us in adhering to obvious errors. The great object of learning is the knowledge of *truth*. When error is detected, it should be immediately abandoned; and when truth is ascertained, not only *experience*, but *morality* demands that it should be revived and defended.

The preceding remarks and statements will illustrate the principles and rules by which I have attempted to construct my Dictionary and Grammar, and to amend the common version of the Scriptures. These principles and rules, even when pursued without mistake, do not correct all the anomalies of the language; but they reduce the number very much, and thus contribute to its regularity and to the facility of learning it. An attempt, at this period, to render the English language *perfectly regular*, would undoubtedly be fruitless.

The English language is the depository of vast treasures of science; the study of it is engaging the attention of the literati in all parts of Europe; and it is probably destined to be spoken and written by greater numbers of the human race than any other language. This view of the subject should repress objections at the few alterations made or proposed in my books. The object is of vast extent, and the small labor of introducing a few improvements is not of the comparative value of a straw.

But other considerations of much interest enter into these views of the subject. From the present state of missionary efforts, it appears to be certain that *Christianity*, and, to a great degree, *civilization*, are to be propagated chiefly through the instrumentality of missionaries who speak the *English language*. This language is taught, to some extent, to converts at every station of the missionaries; and hence it is probable that the *English* is to be, in some degree, the language of Christians in all nations. The great variety of theological works written in this language render its propagation expedient, and an object of importance. But the irregularities of the language, especially in its orthography, present great obstacles to its acquisition by foreigners. To lessen the difficulties of learning the language, is very desirable, and an object which has been kept steadily in view in all the improvements proposed. This object is attempted by correcting a few of the more palpable mistakes in orthography, and bringing under uniform rules all words which are of like origin and formation. Rules, which all writers admit to be just, but which are generally disregarded, are, in my elementary books and dictionary, carried into effect, throughout the classes of words which they embrace. In other cases, rules of uniformity have been adopted, when no weighty-objection has operated to justify exceptions.

These improvements will remove many of the difficulties which perplex learners, and obstruct the acquisition and diffusion of the language.

It is painful to see with what pertinacity men cling to ancient customs, when they acknowledge them to be *useless* and *inconvenient*; with what zeal they apologize for error, when they admit it to be error, and when it would actually cost less labor to *learn* what is *right*, than to *defend* what is *wrong*.

That the language should be reduced to a more regular form, and particularly in its orthography, is the desire of all the lovers of science and truth; but experience proves that this object cannot be effected until the *authority of men* shall submit to the *authority of principles*.

By researches into the history and principles of the language, I have attempted to ascertain what is genuine English, and what is error and

corruption ; and, by moderate reform, to rectify what is clearly wrong, and reduce to narrower limits the disorder which characterizes its orthography and construction. I have also attempted to purify the common translation of the Scriptures from obsolete and ungrammatical words, and from such words and phrases as would exclude from our dwellings any other book than the Bible. If no success shall result from my labors, it is probable that no similar efforts will hereafter be made ; and while other improvements shall honor the enterprise, increase the wealth, and elevate the character of our citizens, while they multiply the enjoyments of society, the LANGUAGE, the instrument of all other improvements, will be left disfigured by its deformities, a standing reproach to the literary reputation and taste of the age.

THE SUN.

'Most glorious orb! — thou wert a worship ere
The mystery of thy making was revealed.'

THE warm spring sun ! through parted clouds
It looks upon the awakening earth :
Spreads on the trees their leafy shrouds,
And brings the hosts of blossoms forth ;
Calls out the young birds' fairy mirth,
Gilds the warm tears of passing showers,
And bids us quit the feverish hearth,
To look on troops of opening flowers.

The summer sun ! how sweet it is,
When the last fragile spring-wreath fades,
To mark how, 'neath his glowing kiss,
Flowers bloom, of e'en more glowing shades !
Then will we seek the forest glades,
And lie beneath their leafy dome,
Until the twilight gloom pervades,
And the young moon's lamp lights us home.

The summer sun ! at eventide,
After a day of tempest stir,
While the dark storm is scattered wide,
What golden smiles does he confer !
How rides he like a conqueror,
Amid his legion of bright clouds ;
While, like a peaceful messenger,
The evening star breaks through their crowds !

The autumn sun ! how rich and bright
It falls upon the dying tree,
Tinges the grape with gem-like light,
And wakes the sound of revelry ;
Laughs down upon the reaper's glee,
And ripens all the golden sheaves,
As if one feast of earth must be,
Ere o'er past days the cold wind grieves.

The winter sun ! how short its stay —
What feeble light its beamings fling !
Yet know we, when it sinks away,
It rises on a land of spring !
And thus to happier climes shall wing
The *spirit* when life's task is done,
And thus a lesson thou canst bring
To weary hearts, thou wintry sun !