

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

But anything of this kind cannot but be that than which a greater cannot be conceived. This greatest conceivable being is therefore necessarily whatever it is proper for us to believe concerning the Divine Nature. I tender to you my thanks for the kindness with which you have both censured and approved my little work. For the high commendation which you have bestowed upon those things which appeared to you worthy of reception, are a sufficient proof that in reprehending what you regarded as the weaker points of my argument, you were actuated by no malevolent design.

ARTICLE III.

HARRISON'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE.¹

By Daniel R. Goodwin, Professor in Bowdoin College.

MR. HARRISON seems to have been in the habit of noting down the grammatical errors he encountered in his English reading until he had accumulated such a store, that, arranging them, with desultory remarks, under the several Parts of Speech, and prefixing some "historical" and "philological" dissertations, he ventured to publish a book, with the imposing title of "The Rise, Progress, and Present Structure of the English Language." Such a genesis does not augur all the depth, breadth, thoroughness, and systematic completeness which we might desire and might otherwise have expected under such a title. We must confess that, in our apprehension, the work is in its substance too light, and in its style too "flippant," for the gravity of the subject; besides being guilty of committing many gross errors in the very act of assuming to correct the alleged errors of others. Had it not been thought worthy of special notice on the other side of the water, and of republication on this, we should not have thought it worth while to disturb its distant repose with any criticisms of ours. But as we have now ventured a charge, we must be allowed to produce at least a few of our witnesses. Not having seen the English

¹ The Rise, Progress, and Present Structure of the English Language. By the Rev. MATTHEW HARRISON, A. M., Rector of Church Oakley, Hants; and late Fellow of Queen's College, Oxford. 12mo. pp. 393. Philadelphia. 1850.

original, we shall refer in our citations to the American reprint, although the latter may exhibit errors for which the author is not responsible.

In the first place, let us look at some of Mr. Harrison's historical and philological facts and theories.

"We have the extraordinary fact," says he, "that whilst not a single fragment of Anglo Saxon Literature existed or even had been called into existence, a Scandinavian Literature had existed for ages in Iceland — the remotest habitation of man."¹

Now according to Bosworth's express statement, — and to his authority Mr. Harrison himself refers in his preface, — Iceland was not so much as known to the Norsemen till A. D. 861, and not settled at all till some years after. But, not to speak of Beowulf or the Saxon Chroniclers, Alfred's works must have been written or compiled about the year 880; and, whatever may have been the precise age of the Poet Caedmon, Alfred's fragmentary versions show that he must have lived many years before, probably some 200; and the laws of Ethelbert cannot be placed much later than the year 600.²

After eulogizing in the strongest terms the ancient Greek for its

¹ Page 35. Here and elsewhere we take the liberty to insert our own Italicizing.

² Grimm's view of the relative antiquity of the Anglo Saxon and the Icelandic literature may be gathered from the following, which is immediately subjoined to a paragraph relating to the Gothic language and literature: "Auf der entgegengesetzten westseite haben andere answanderer, die Angelsachsen, sehr bedeutende freilich um vier und mehr jahrhunderte jüngere denkmäler ihrer sprache, in poesie wie in prosa, hinterlassen, aus welchen ein ausser ordentlicher gewinn gezogen wird: denn wenn auch die gedichte sämtlich schon in christlicher zeit aufgeschrieben oder abgefasst sind, enthalten sie doch anklänge an frühere heidnische darstellung, vorzüglich Beowulf, Caedmon," u. s. w.

"Im Norden dauert der eingeborne volksstamm bis heute fort, der sprachquell hat sich da mächtig und in ungetrübter lauterkeit erhalten: sind die aufzeichnungen noch später als die angelsächsischen erfolgt, so geht die fassung der meisten eddischen lieder der grundlage nach doch unangezweifelt in das heidenthum selbst zurück und zeigt dichtung und rede fast ungestört; die altnordische sprache hat uns also nicht wenige geheimnisse des alterthums zu erschliessen; ihre kraft flüchtete aus Norwegen nach Island.

"Ueber den althochdeutschen sprachquellen hat ein ungünstiges geschick gewaltet: sie stehen hinter der reinheit und dem hohen alter des gothischen denkmals; sie erreichen zwar das alter, aber lange nicht den werth noch die menge der angelsächsischen quellen, und wenn ihre aufzeichnung allerdings um drei oder vier jahrhunderte früher erfolgt ist als die der altnordischen, werden sie durch den inneren gehalt und reichthum dieser weit übertroffen," u. s. w.—Deutsche Grammatik, I. B. S. 2, 3, u. 7.

subtleness and copiousness, its facility and precision, its harmony and perfect grammatical finish, Mr. Harrison yet talks in another place of something's being "humane," — it is not easy to discover what it is. — "when compared with the twisting and turning, the fantastic gyrations, and the indefinite declensions, of the German noun," (pages 74 and 92). But, which exhibits the greater variety and complication of "twistings and turnings, fantastic gyrations, and indefinite declensions," the Greek noun, or the German? Which is the easier for a learner to master? Or, is what was a perfection in the idolized Greek, become an intolerable blemish in a modern tongue?

He declares, in one place, that the Hebrew language dispensed altogether with Case inflections, "each noun remaining invariable, except in the difference between the singular and plural numbers," thus ignoring entirely the construct state of the Hebrew noun, and the modifications it undergoes in connection with different suffixes; yet, in another place, he says that "the Hebrew had four Cases, the Greek five, the Latin six." (pp. 46 and 140.)

The Normans are represented as having dispensed with the Cases of the Anglo-Saxon, in order to avoid trouble, as they supposed; while they were really returning, it is said, to a more ancient philosophical principle. But it is probably nearer the truth to say, that the modifications of the Anglo-Saxon language, were made by the Anglo-Saxons themselves, much more than by the Normans; and that those changes would have been very nearly what they have been, had no Normans ever seen the Island of Great Britain. Moreover, as to the philosophical principles on which the changes proceeded, it is hard to say whether to express Case relations by separate words, by prefixes, or by suffixes, is the most philosophical. The use of separate words is undoubtedly the most ancient. But it is to be noted, that the "Northmen" — we hardly know whether by this term, our author means to designate the "Normans" again, or their predatory predecessors, the Danes, etc; but if the latter, which is the proper use of the word, then the Northmen — had Case inflections in their own languages, and those inflections, notwithstanding all the "trouble" they occasion and all their want of "philosophical principle," have retained a firm footing in those languages or their successors to the present day. (p. 40.)

In his theory of the formation of language, Mr. Harrison seems to have quite confounded the original or primeval language with the languages of savages, barbarians, nomadic tribes, pastoral people, etc. "All languages must originally have been scanty; in the first place,

simply expressive of visible objects. [No verbs — no sense but sight?] Grammatical inflections, philosophical principles and subtle distinctions must have been unknown." "As mankind advanced in civilization, convenience would dictate abbreviation and the adoption of arbitrary forms of speech; and language would thus gradually become more artificial. As new objects and new combinations of ideas presented themselves, new terms would be invented; and the language would thus become more copious and more connected." (pp. 67, 68.)

All this may sound very well as a "philosophical" theory; although his idea of a "philosophical principle" seems here to be quite different from that on which he just now represented the Normans as having acted. But it is a fact founded on the most irrefragable testimony, that the dialects of savages — as many of the American and African dialects, for example — are often distinguished by a most poetic-copiousness, a most elastic power of expansion, and a most artificial grammatical structure.

Mr. Harrison holds that our language has lost in euphony by the change of the *th* of the third person singular of the verb into *s*. This *th* he declares to be "the gentlest and most pleasing of all sounds." "Change the *th* of *loveth*," says he, "into *loves*, [he means, change *loveth* into *loves*] and we at once pass from the note of the dove to the hiss of the serpent." We will only stop to ask how much better the last statement would sound, if pronounced thus: "we at onth path from the note of the dove to the hith of the therpent"? (p. 50.)

Mr. Harrison throws down the gauntlet boldly to all authority in points of grammar. He aims at principles. "A principle is a landmark to which we can always look forward, in doubt and perplexity. It is a pedestal on which we can take our stand, prepared to climb higher and higher, but never to descend." "That which is right is right, without any authority at all; and that which is wrong cannot be made right by any authority." (p. 125.) Now we take the liberty to think, despite Mr. Harrison's authority, that in language there is no *right* but *fact*. There are no *à priori* principles which can be set against facts to judge or condemn them; without some authority of usage nothing right could exist; the right is founded upon the authority of actual use and nothing else. The business of the grammarian, like that of the true philosopher of nature, is to *interpret* facts, not to *prescribe* them. That is the right language for each age, place, rank, class, or profession, which is the established usage of that age, place, rank, class or profession. To seek after an absolute, universal, un-

changeable rule of good usage is bootless and meaningless. If a man would know what is the right language among the common country people, or sailors, he has simply to ascertain the actual usage of those classes; and if, presenting himself as one of their number, he should depart widely from that usage, he would be likely to be laughed at as an ignorant or a pedant. If he would know what is the right language among the higher and more cultivated classes of society, he must learn the actual usage of those classes. This may be called good usage—the best usage, if you please. It is still only usage, only a *fact*. If a man would know what is the best society, and who are the best authors, no rules of grammar can help him; he cannot determine either the one or the other by deduction from any abstract, *à priori* principles; but must find out both as best he may, by a common sense induction and inference from observed facts, or by the authority of those whom he may choose to trust. Principles are unchangeable; but right language is constantly fluctuating. Certainly the language of Chaucer or of Wicliffe is not the right English in contradistinction from that which is spoken at the present day. Still less can it claim to be the right language absolutely in preference to that of more modern times; for, on the very same principles on which such a claim should be made, it would instantly be forfeited. The right language, in this sense, will never be found, until we get some record of that which was spoken in Paradise. Our author himself is subsequently constrained, with sundry grimaces, to bow to the tyranny of custom, and with Horace, acknowledge it the

“Jus et norma loquendi.”

In his grammatical developments, Mr. Harrison seems to us almost as unfortunate, as in his general philology.

He undertakes to develop the parts of speech *genetically*; and, in so doing, declares that names were the first words used, and expressed the “*being of a thing only*,” not being drawn from, or attached to any observed property in the object; and that adjectives originated from the demand for terms expressive of the *state and condition* of things (129).

To illustrate the participle, he uses the phrase, “the mother loving her child”; and, having shown that *loving* possesses the nature of a verb, he adds, “but it expresses also an *attribute*, a capability of loving, and so far it partakes of the nature of an adjective.” As though the phrase, “the mother loves (or *loveth*) her child,” did not express the same attribute quite as fully; as he himself says, a page or two

further on, in regard to the phrase, "man thinks" — "here we have a subject, *man*, to whom we *attribute*, or assign, the *faculty of thinking*." These statements occur in fundamental definitions, where, if anywhere, strictness of speech should be required. We refer to them simply as specimens of the looseness of expression, if not confusion of ideas, which characterizes by far too much of the book.

In explaining the idea of an *object*, he uses the phrase, "vice produces misery," and says, "the term, misery, is the *object on which the action of the verb, produces, falls*." In this phrase, he only copies the current language of technical grammarians, by which they have contrived to confuse a very plain matter. How can the action of *produces*, fall on *misery*, unless *misery* already exists for it to fall upon; and how can *misery* be there for *produces* to fall upon, until it has been produced, and thus the action of producing, has already fallen upon it?

He says, "the nominative case is the noun in its primary and simple form," and this in reference to language in general, though every tyro knows the contrary to be true in Latin and Greek in innumerable instances; and in English the *form* of the objective case is as primitive and simple as that of the nominative.

He declares most zealously against certain incongruous grammatical genders in the German, as though in the classical languages, the genders of nouns were always determined by some *à priori* rational principle, without any caprice or inconsistency. "The German," says he, "running counter to the authority of antiquity,¹ and to our very innate feelings, makes the sun feminine and the moon masculine — the sun a *she*, and the moon a *he* — an act of violence and profanation against the majesty of the one and the loveliness of the other. It is probable that the genders of the sun and moon, and other arbitrary and incongruous genders, were fixed in German, and in many other languages, (the Anglo-Saxon included,) at a time when they were the languages of barbarous hordes," (p. 162). How, then, do they run counter to the authority of "antiquity?" Are "our very innate feelings," and "antiquity," too, the result of civilization? And is it not "probable" that the Greek genders were fixed at a time when the Greeks were equally barbarous hordes? And finally, if loveliness should determine the feminine gender, what should be the gender of *love* itself? In German, it is feminine, while by classical authority, it is masculine.

¹ But see Turner's Anglo-Saxons, Vol. I. pp. 207, 208.

Perhaps the strangest principle of all, is that which is laid down in regard to the gender of the article and adjective in English. "The English article is masculine when applied to a masculine noun, feminine when applied to a feminine noun, and neuter when applied to a neuter noun." The same is said to be true of the adjective. This point the author labors and develops with great zeal and fulness. But we confess it still remains clear to us, that neither article nor adjective could ever have gender in any language, in any other than a *merely formal sense*. If, therefore, the distinction of form is taken away, no distinction of gender can possibly be left. Yet, upon this *principle* of his, the author would determine practically, in English as in German or Greek, the propriety of repeating or omitting the article before the latter nouns of a series. "The question is," says he, "can that which is masculine, define that which is feminine and that which is neuter, at the same time; or that which is singular, and that which is plural, at the same time? Logically and grammatically it cannot, whatever custom, or negligence, or ignorance, may sanction to the contrary." May not the "masculine" "*logically*" perform such offices, as well as the *feminine* or *neuter*? But, let that pass. He then goes on, with the most interesting naïveté, to give the following illustrations: "Who would think of saying, 'I met a man and crocodile,' or 'a woman and ornithorhynchus paradoxus!'" Scarcely anybody, we think. "Our innate feelings," or something else, would forbid it; and they would equally forbid it, though the "crocodile" should be distinctly understood to be masculine, and a "hen" were substituted for the ornithorhynchus. We cannot see that *gender* has anything at all to do with the matter, except so far as it may be one circumstance tending to dissociate the objects in view, (pp. 218-220.)

The stale formula is carefully repeated, that "the absence of the article before *man* denotes the species at large." And this is proposed apparently as an illustration of a general rule; at all events it is not stated as an exception. The *generic* use of the definite article is ignored altogether; although *man* is almost the only name of any *species* in the animal or vegetable kingdom before which the article can be omitted when the noun in the singular number denotes the species at large — provided that noun be susceptible of a plural form — thus, the lion, the bee, the ant, the oak, the violet, the thistle; we may even add *the article* and *the adjective*, as used in the preceding sentences. It is quite amusing to see one grammarian after another devoutly repeat the prescribed phrase, "*The* is called *the* definite article, because it defines or points out some particular person or thing referred to, as 'the horse is a noble animal.'" (p. 213.)

Mr. Harrison copied from Dr. Andrews a list of forty-four adjectives, which, it is alleged, do not admit of comparison. The same list is copied by Prof. Fowler and others. Yet nothing is more certain than that nearly half of these adjectives are used and properly used in the comparative or superlative form, as often, in proportion to their whole use, as any other adjectives in the language. And of *two thirds* of them those forms may be found in the best authorities. The truth is when we say one course is *safer* than another, we do not mean that either is absolutely *safe*; just as one man may be said to be *better* than another, when neither is absolutely *good*. Indeed when we say of one thing "it is safer or better" than another, we mean, not that the other is *safe* or *good*, but rather that it is somewhat dangerous or deficient in goodness. It is quite as natural to say "this is bad, but that is better," as to say, "this is good, and that is better." If, on inquiry after a person's health, it were answered, "he is better;" a bystander would certainly feel authorized to infer that such a person had lately been *ill* rather than *well*. A man would prefer a basket full of peaches to the fullest of these baskets, or a truly wise man to the wisest of a hundred taken at a venture. Such is usage.

Under the head of the *proper* use of the participle, we find *sweaten, sown, grown, foughten*, (why not add *boughten* and *broughten*?) with only five others by way of illustrations. Indeed our author quite overflows with zeal for the good old forms of our perfect participle. He is clearly not a man of progress. He brooks no change in the king's (or queen's) English, although he scarcely writes a sentence himself which would not be convicted of treason, or at least of some high misdemeanor, if tried by a jury of Edward Third's time. "There is not one iota of difference," says he, between "I had *drank* and I had *knew*, (!) I had *rode* and I had *blew*, I have *sat*, and I have *gave*, (!) a web was *wove*, and a stone was *threw*. In such cases as these the error may be more palpable than in ordinary cases; but there is not the slightest difference of degree."! If anything can equal the strangeness of the *apparent* meaning of those two sentences, it is the slovenly looseness, the utter want of logical precision, which characterizes their construction.

Mr. Harrison has transcribed from Bosworth one stanza of the Danish song "Kong Christian," with Professor Longfellow's English version; but with such changes both in the original and in the translation as show conclusively — if the printers are not in fault — that he has no knowledge of metres and no ear for music. Perhaps he

thought that a Danish as well as an American poet could not fail to be improved by the retouching of an Englishman. (p. 38.)

He says that if "learned" were used without reference to a "tacit standard," it might be applied to the "luminous Hottentot." (p. 250.)

He expresses a holy horror of "the mawkish and insipid conventionalism" of employing *you* for *ye* and *thou*, in certain cases. (182.) He complains that "particular authors presume too much upon their own authority and make use of strange and unauthorized terms;" under which category he includes *exhaustive*, enumerating with it four others. (109). Yet, after such an authoritative statement as that, having found in a sentence of three or four lines, from an "eminent divine," the terms, *works*, *towards*, *working*, in immediate succession, with *which*, *we*, *were*, *would*, distributed through the remainder of the sentence, he is "shocked at the hideous cacophony," and declares that, "such sounds and such a construction would have carried death into an Athenian mob." (315). In his opinion the sentence — "Is there a God to swear by, and is there none to believe in, none to trust to?" — exhibits "a license carried to the extreme point of endurance." "The Translators of the Bible," says he, "have not put this *flippant phraseology* into the mouth of Joseph, but made him to express himself in more dignified and respectful language — 'Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake?'" Yes, but if they have not put this "flippant phraseology" (a phraseology, by the way, which we should rather characterize as *sometimes* exceedingly *nervous*) into the mouth of Joseph, they have not hesitated to put it into the mouth of God, whom they have made "to" express himself thus — "on one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Gen. 22: 2. See also other similar cases innumerable. (196) But though these criticisms should be acknowledged to be in the main correct, "the dignified and respectful language" in which they are expressed is characteristic.

Mr. Harrison makes *it* stand for "a person or thing personified." (166). He thinks it probable that *itself* is a contraction of *its self*. (204). Whereas the fact that the Translators of the Bible never used *its*, but that they have often used *itself*, as in 1 Cor. 13: 5, is proof positive that *itself* is no such contraction at all. He doubts whether on "principle," absolutely to condemn and banish such phrases as, *the worse*, *the better*, *the best*, used adverbially, or to submit to them as "stiff-necked vulgarisms rendered intractable," (218); he says *be* as a principal verb means exists, as 'honesty is the best policy,' (261); in his zeal for restoring *so* in those cases where *such*, in colloquial usage, so often usurps its place, he lays down the

broad "principle" that "*such* denotes quality, *so* degree;" from which it will certainly seem to follow that not only is "such a high tree," for "so high a tree," a faulty expression, but "such high trees" is equally faulty; and we should be bound on "principle" always to say, "so high trees," "so lofty mountains," "so odd criticisms," however strangely or stiffly it may sound. (379). In the sentence, "See where thou hast been *lien* with;" "*lien* with," says he, "is a passive verb, *effected* by the *conjoint efficacy* of the preposition *with*." He has plainly forgotten "the Athenian mob."

We pass by his curious theories; that "mathematical propositions are not *demonstrated* by human reason," because "they are true or false in themselves," (318); and that "we speak *hypothetically* of that which is contingent as a fact, but not of that which is contingent in the speaker's mind," which furnishes his "principle" for the subjunctive mood. (292).

He has undertaken to give us a thorough and thoroughly "grammatical disquisition" on the proper distinctive uses of *shall* and *will*, *should* and *would*. (268—274). He says "the phrase 'I shall go to-morrow,' expresses simply the *intention* or *fixed purpose* of doing a certain thing;" [This may be true in some cases; but is not such a phrase more commonly the simple *prediction* of a certain fact?] "and 'he will go,' expresses the belief that it is the intention or will of the third person to do this or that." From which it *will* seem to follow that when we say "it will rain to-morrow," we express the belief that it is the *intention* or *will* of it [a "personified thing" ?] to rain to-morrow; and do not merely predict the future event. "I should have been more mild." "*Would* in this case," says Mr. Harrison, "*would* express *resolution*; *should*, on the other hand, *would* express a simple intention,"—*intention* again, not a mere *conditional fact*. "*Would* expresses *volition*, and has reference either to time past or present. 'I would do it were I in your place,' expresses a present inclination with reference to a future action." And, on the same broad *principle*, and for aught that appears in this grammar to the contrary, 'he would do it were he in your place,' *would* also express his present *volition* or *inclination*, and the phrase, "were he to re-examine his whole disquisition he would find it 'lamentably deficient in accuracy of expression,'" expresses his present *volition* or *inclination* so to find it. But he adds, "'I would do it,' with the emphasis on '*would*' expresses a *present feeling* and *determination* to have done a thing with reference to a particular time passed; i. e. 'I would at that time do it — I *was* determined to do it.'"! Had the Translators

of the English Bible possessed some such clever grammatical *principles* — such distinct notions of the relations of *tenses* — they might have been saved from “the intense nonsense” of saying, “If one went unto them from the dead they will repent.”

To our mind, this whole disquisition on *shall* and *will*, *should* and *would*, belongs to that class of discourses which, so far from developing or settling either plain *principles* or certain facts, “darken counsel by words without knowledge.”

Mr. Harrison appeals to classical authority as if it were final in matters of grammar (320—322); but if as great diversities of dialect and usage were held allowable in good English as were exemplified in Greek and Latin, even in so-called classical times, he would have been saved by far the greater part of the trouble of making his collection of grammatical errors. If the English really betrays a greater tendency to such errors than the classical languages, the cause is probably to be sought in what Mr. Harrison regards as its grand advantage — its comparative destitution of inflectional forms; in consequence of which there arises in them who use it a comparative inaptitude to employ with constant and strict appropriateness the few which it still retains.

But we hasten to direct attention to Mr. Harrison's *forte* — his collection of grammatical errors and criticisms. And here, to simplify matters, we shall confine ourselves, for the most part, to those drawn from the Received Version of the Bible. These will serve as fair specimens of the critic's taste and judgment; and will answer our purpose the better from being so perfectly familiar to all parties.

“In Scripture,” says he, “the Deity is sometimes represented under the neuter gender, — ‘Art thou not *it* that hath cut Rahab and wounded the dragon?’ etc. There is a peculiar fitness in thus speaking of Deity as an abstraction, apart from all human distinctions. So, again, ‘Our Father which,’ not who, ‘art in heaven,’ avoiding human personality and paternity.”

“The Americans have changed *which* into *who*, as being more consonant to the rules of Grammar. ‘This (justly observes the author of *Men and Manners in America*) is poor criticism, for it will scarcely be denied that the use of the neuter pronoun carried with it a certain vagueness and sublimity not inappropriate in reminding us that our worship is addressed to a Being infinite and superior to all distinctions applicable to material objects.’”

“Just criticism”! Our Father in heaven is in English of the neuter gender!!

Now we confess we remember no case in which "the Deity" is represented in Scripture "under the neuter gender." And, until Mr. Harrison can suggest some plainer one than these, we shall beg leave to think that the peculiar "vagueness and sublimity" of such an idea and of its corresponding expression were utterly foreign to the minds as well as to the style both of the original writers and of the English translators of the Holy Scriptures; but are an invention of heathen or of modern philosophy. It is the glory of the Scriptures that they reveal to us a living God, not an *abstract* "Deity," a personal God, not a mere first cause or universal law; a *Father* in heaven watching over his (*its!*?) children with *paternal* care and more than *paternal* love. In such views we see nothing degrading to God, but everything elevating, ennobling, comforting to man. — But after all, this may be an Americanism.

As to the first passage which our author gives in proof of his position, we suppose it is from Isaiah 51: 9. If so, the pronoun "it" has for its antecedent, not *Lord*, but *arm* of the Lord. This passage, therefore, can afford him no support against the Americans.

Neither does the "which" in the Lord's prayer, denote the neuter gender, except to those who are ignorant of the "Rise, Progress, and Present State of the English Language." One feels humbled, to be obliged to inform Messrs. Harrison and Hamilton, that at the time when our present translation of the Bible was made, the relative pronoun *which*, was referred indifferently to persons or things, and to any gender, as is its etymological correspondent still in the cognate languages. As to the propriety of changing it to *who*, it is not a question of an abstract, or personal, or paternal Deity — not a question of gender at all — for, if the original Greek is to be followed, (and on this Mr. Harrison elsewhere lays great stress), the relative, i. e. the article, is unquestionably of the masculine gender; and indeed in what language was *father* ever conceived of "under" any other gender? It is not a question of gender at all; but simply a question whether we shall now pray in the English of the present day, or in that of the time of James I.

If one appeals to the devout and solemn associations which cluster around an old familiar form of words, we have not a word to say in reply. But such an appeal, if he made it, would come from Mr. Harrison with an ill grace; for he not only freely criticises, as we shall see, the familiar language of the received version of the Holy Scriptures, but, in one or two cases, openly calls in question expressions in the daily prayers of the English Church.

"Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give, that *both* our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments and *also*," etc.—[Collect. Evening Prayer.]

"The term *both* is ambiguous, for it may signify the hearts of *both* of us. [It might have so signified in Dean Swift's congregation, when, seeing no one present but the sexton, the facetious Dean began the exhortation with, "Dearly beloved brother Roger," etc.] Better, 'give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may *both* be set to obey thy commandments and *also*,' etc."

This might do, if "hearts" were to be the subject of the verb after "also," which it is not. As it is, the proposed amendment manifestly makes a bad matter worse—changes an ambiguity into a solecism; if, indeed, the ambiguity itself is, after all, certainly removed. The author seems not to have been sufficiently familiar with *men and manners in America*, to be aware that the "Americans," in the exercise of their "poor criticism," by simply omitting the word "both," have avoided ambiguity and solecism both together.

Bearing in mind Mr. Harrison's theory of the genders of the English article, let us proceed to note how far his criticisms upon its use are thereby enlightened. We shall see that he finds slight occasion for the application of his own elaborate "principles."

"When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people," etc. Matt. 27: 1.

"In cases of this kind, attention to the original text, in the use of the article, would keep us from error. In the Greek we have of *πρεσβυτεροι*, and in the English we ought to have, *the* elders. The term *elders* in this passage, without having the definite article prefixed, according to the plainest idiom of our language, has a very different meaning from that which it is here intended to convey; for if we say that *elders* of the people took counsel, we mean that *certain* elders, or *some* elders, took counsel, which might be five out of five hundred; but when we say, *the* elders, we mean *the elders* as a body, a class, and this is the meaning required."

Here we have two remarks to add: First, that in this particular case it happens by a sad mischance that the insertion or omission of the definite article before *elders* produces, "according to the plainest idiom of our language," quite a contrary effect to that above alleged; (for neither in our copies of the Greek Testament, nor in the best editions of the English Version, is there any *comma* after "priests," and certainly there is no need of any; and) if we say "all the chief

priests and elders took counsel," ALL the elders will certainly be understood, and not merely *the* elders as a body — not to say "five, out of five hundred" of them; while, if we say *all* the chief priests and *the* elders, etc., it may be understood that perhaps not *all* the elders, but only the elders generally took counsel. Second, the original text is expressly appealed to as a safe standard in this and all similar cases. Now, it is remarkable that only thirty-nine verses before that above criticised, the phrase "from the chief priests and elders of the people" occurs, and forty-one verses further on, again, "with the scribes and elders;" in both of which cases the article is at least as necessary (in English) before elders as in the case under consideration, but in neither of them is it inserted before the Greek *πρεσβύτεροι*. See also Mark 15: 1; Acts 4: 5; John 18: 3; and almost innumerable other passages, where, in such phrases as, "the chief priests and elders," "the elders and scribes," "the chief priests and Pharisees," etc., the article is omitted before the latter noun in the Greek. Indeed its omission or insertion in such cases seems, with the writers of the N. Testament, to have been purely arbitrary.

We follow Mr. Harrison in his next passage, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." Acts 2: 42.

"A strange inaccuracy and carelessness characterize the whole of this passage. In the first place, there is an ambiguity in the *sound* of the apostles' doctrine, which might mean the doctrine of one particular apostle or of all the apostles. Secondly, there is a grammatical error in the phrase, in *breaking* of bread. Thirdly, there is a total perversion of the meaning in the omission of the definite article before *fellowship*, before *breaking*, before *bread*, and before *prayers*; for the definite article is used before each of these terms in the original, and is *absolutely necessary* for a proper understanding of the passage either in Greek or English. The whole passage translated according to the original, would run thus:—'And they continued steadfastly in the doctrine and the fellowship of the apostles, and in the breaking of the bread and in the prayers.'"

To this we answer *seriatim*: In the first place, must we then abandon the use of the English genitive in the case of all nouns whose plural ends in *s*? So it would seem; for if the *sound* of the genitive plural may be mistaken for the genitive singular, so may that of the genitive singular be mistaken for the genitive plural; and thus we should be allowed to use neither. It will not do to say that sometimes the connection may make the meaning clear, and then the gen-

itive form may be used; for we beg to think that the connection of the passage cited leaves no reasonable doubt as to the number intended.¹ In the second place, we admit that in our opinion, the phrase "in breaking of bread" is not the most eligible grammatical construction, but in regard to it the usage of the best writers in the language has always been divided, and it can hardly be branded as a grammatical error, (except on *à priori* "principles,") especially when the age of the Translation in which it occurs is considered. Thirdly, there is no more perversion in the omission of the article before *fellowship* than before *doctrine*. Indeed one would suppose this writer to have been ignorant that the article before the English genitive belongs to that genitive and not to the noun with which it is in regimen, that the article cannot stand before such governing noun or nouns, but must always in this construction be left to be understood. It is understood as well before *fellowship* as before *doctrine* by everybody who understands the English language on either side of the Atlantic. As to the article before *bread*, there is a previous question to be settled before the grammatical question in the English can be raised. Every one may not agree with Mr. Harrison's exegesis. The truth is, that, with this exception, if it be one, and allowing the *fellowship* spoken of to be the *apostles'* fellowship, as Mr. Harrison does not doubt, the whole passage, as it stands in our Translation, would be in strict accordance with the sense and order of the original and with the strictest idioms of the English language, if only the repetition of "*in*" were omitted before "breaking of bread" and before "prayers;" which repetition, by the way, Mr. Harrison retains. Yet, says he, "it is obvious that the whole passage (in the received version) is lamentably deficient in accuracy of expression."

"And are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life."
Luke 8: 14.

"*The* cares — the specific cares that belong to this life." So says Mr. Harrison. Would he have "*the* riches" and "*the* pleasures" also? There is no article in the original before either of the nouns. The English therefore is perfectly faithful to the original, which is

¹ We might have added that when Mr. Harrison says, "there is an ambiguity in the *sense* of the apostles' doctrine," — a phrase which we have faithfully copied with all the marks and points which it has in the American edition of his work, — he has himself fallen into an ambiguous expression; for his words might mean that the ambiguity is in the *doctrine* itself, and not in the *phrase* which he probably intends to quote. But we would not follow his example so far as to insist upon such petty criticism.

the more to its credit, as in this case, the current German, French, Spanish, and Italian versions have departed from the strictness of the text. The sense is partitive or general, not definite and universal — “cares,” i. e. “certain of the cares,” different perhaps in different cases; and not “*the* cares,” i. e. “the cares as a whole,” and always the same.

“For as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven shineth unto *the* other part under heaven.” Luke 17: 24.

“If there had been only two parts under heaven, then the definite article would have been required; but as the parts are indefinite, it is improper to limit them to *the* one and *the* other, as if there were but two parts only.”

But it would surely be quite jejune to say that the lightning shines from one part of the sky to *another*, if “another” is taken in its proper sense for *some other*, *any other*, which might be one of the nearest parts. When, however, the lightning is said to shine from the one part to *the* other, of course we understand *the opposite*, *the most distant*. In this sense, be “the parts” as “indefinite” as you please, whatever we assume as a starting point, there can be but one other point to compare with it; and this we think clearly to be the sense of the passage in question.¹ Moreover, the definite article stands in the original words of our Saviour, and is used in the French, Spanish, and Italian translations, as well as in the English — the German employing a different construction.

But nothing seems to content Mr. Harrison. He quarrels with the following, “And they came into the house of Baal, and the house of Baal was full from one end to another.”

“If the house of Baal, like most houses, had only two ends, it might be full from one end to *the other*, *not another*, which implies one end of many.”

We presume that the house of Baal, like most houses, had several ends, extremities, sides, or corners, and that it is meant that it was full, not merely in a single line from one end to the opposite, but from end to end in all directions, into every nook and corner. Luther says, “in allen Enden.” The Hebrew is פִּי הַבַּיִת לְפִי הַבַּיִת, literally “mouth to mouth.” The object manifestly is, not as in the former instance to express great distance, but to indicate great expansion, or rather compact fulness. We really do not see that the text would be improved by Mr. Harrison’s architectural or grammatical emendation.

¹ This seems to be settled beyond dispute, by the parallel passage in Matt. 24: 27, where the East and the West are expressly designated as the two parts.

Ἀληθῶς Θεοῦ Ἰδιὸς ἦν οὐτός. "Truly this was the Son of God." "Here are two errors — the first in the words *the* Son, which expression is definite and emphatic, where it ought to have been indefinite and indifferent; the second in the words "of God," which again, according to our idiom and notion of the Godhead, is definite, when, according to the real words and the meaning of the centurion, (who, it must be remembered, was a heathen,) it ought to have been indefinite, the word *Θεοῦ* never being used in Scripture, without the article *τοῦ*, where God, *the* God, is spoken of."

Here is certainly an astounding statement to come from an *English* clergyman, a fellow of Queen's College, Oxford, and a grammarian! Why, to omit all other Cases of this noun, and to confine ourselves to the genitive, so as to keep within the strict terms of the proposition, the word *Θεοῦ* occurs in the New Testament alone, without the article *τοῦ*, in nearly 200 instances, where there can be no doubt the true God is spoken of. The very same phrase as that here commented upon, occurs no less than three times, when, in each case, *υἰὸς* refers to the same subject, viz.: Christ, and *Θεοῦ* unquestionably means the true God. One of these passages occurs only eleven verses after, Matt. 27: 43: "For he (i. e. Jesus) said, I am the Son of God;" the other two are, one in Luke 1: 35, where the angel Gabriel says to Mary, "that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God," and the other in Rom. 1: 4, "declared to be the Son of God with power," etc. Surely the apostle Paul, the angel Gabriel, and Jesus himself, will hardly be charged with heathenish notions, and, as to their speaking good grammar, Mr. Harrison is here dealing not with the English, but the Greek, and he expressly appeals not to his so-called absolute "principles," but to *facts*. Also the phrase "sons of God," occurs many times where *Θεοῦ* without the article, undoubtedly means the true God. *Θεοῦ* is used without the article, in the phrase "of the living God," at least eight times, 2 Cor. 8: 3 and 6: 16; 1 Tim. 3: 15; Heb. 8: 12 and 11: 31 and 12: 22; 1 Pet. 1: 23; Rev. 7: 2. It is also similarly used in connection with the word Father (and that without being raised to the "peculiar vagueness and sublimity" of the neuter gender) some dozen times; as 2 John 8; 2 Cor. 1: 2 and 14: 18; Eph. 1: 2 and 6: 23; Phil. 1: 2; Col. 1: 2; 2 Tim. 1: 2; etc. etc.

Indeed our conclusion would be, from our own careful examination — and the conclusion is nothing new in the critical world — that the omission of the article before *Θεοῦ*, is determined by no reference whatever to the proper meaning or application of that word, but in

general simply by the fact that the word with which it is in regimen, is without the article. The article is indeed *sometimes* inserted before *Θεοῦ*, when its governing word has no article. According to the received text, John 19: 7 would, in this connection, be a remarkable instance of this kind, when the Jews tell Pilate, to his exceeding terror, *ὅτι ἠαυτὸν υἱὸν [τοῦ] Θεοῦ ἠρτοίμασται*, that Jesus "made himself the Son of God." But many of the best manuscripts, and almost all of the modern editors, omit the article in this instance. There is also one passage in which the article is omitted before *Θεοῦ*, although it is inserted before the governing word, while *Θεοῦ* again unquestionably means the true God. It is 2 Pet. 1: 21, *οἱ ἅγιοι Θεοῦ ἁρτοίμασται*, "holy men of God." But, as the article is not repeated before *ἁρτοίμασται*, perhaps this does not properly constitute an exception.

Whether, therefore, Mr. H. is right or not, in his interpretation of this passage — for which, it is true, he can claim the authority of Lowth — certain it is he has not given sufficient reasons for it. He has not convicted our English translation of *grammatical* error. In- to other than grammatical considerations, it is not for us at present to enter; but we may be allowed to suggest in passing that, as to the Roman centurion and his presumed heathenish notions, they do not conclude so decisively for Mr. H., as he seems to suppose. How does he know that this centurion had not heard of the claims of Jesus, and of the charges against him in the sanhedrim, as well as the scribes and elders, who, eleven verses further on, use the same phrase which he uses? How does Mr. H. know that the centurion was not present when Pilate was so terror-stricken at the announcement made to him by the Jews, just before the crucifixion, that Jesus claimed to be "the Son of God?" How does he know even that the centurion may not have been a devout man — a believer in the expected Messiah? Before this, we read of a centurion who loved the Jewish nation, and had built them a synagogue, and whose faith exceeded all that was found in Israel. And soon after, we meet with another centurion who, without any subsequent special Christian instruction that we know of, was already in the habit of prayer and almsgiving, accepted with God, and ready with open arms to embrace the religion of Christ.

"If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off and cast them from thee," Matt. 18: 8. Here, "them" is objected to. But in this case again our Translators have only too zealously followed the original, which makes use of the plural number in consequence appar-

ently of the different genders of the antecedents. Ostervald in his French Version, and Diodati in the Italian, have done the same; while the Vulgate, Martin Luther, and the Spanish Version of Father Scio, have substituted for the plural pronoun the masculine singular, thus referring strictly only to "the foot" in each case.

"The Son of man shall be delivered up to [unto] the chief priests and to [unto] the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death and [shall] deliver him to the Gentiles, and *they* shall mock him and [shall] scourge him, and shall spit upon him and shall kill him." Here the ambiguity of "they" is objected to, and the substitution of "who" is proposed as an emendation. But here again the original is literally rendered. And we need only read "they" with an emphasis to make the sense perfectly clear; an advantage of which neither the original nor the Vulgate is susceptible.

The same objection is made to the following: "And they did all eat and were filled, and *they* took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full." Here too the original is scrupulously followed; except that, while, as in the former passage, the pronoun is omitted by the Greek idiom, it is inserted here in English, although it might have been omitted in English too. If it had been omitted, there would indeed have been no ambiguity, but a falsehood; and for that very reason its insertion, not being grammatically required and seeming therefore to stand in contradiction to that falsehood, naturally leads to the true sense; for we learn from John 6: 12, that it was the *disciples* who gathered up the fragments on this occasion.

"Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice, and at mine offering which I have commanded in my [mine] habitation, and honorest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?" 1 Sam. 2: 29. "There is in this sentence a strange confusion of persons, and an extraordinary abruptness of transition." Yet the confusion and abruptness are precisely the same in the original Hebrew, in the Vulgate, and in all the leading modern versions. The Septuagint has given quite a different reading of the whole passage. But if we consider that a part was addressed to Eli and his sons, and a part, in its very nature, to Eli separately, we shall find the whole constructed in the original with great skill and naturalness. At all events, it does not seem the proper office of English Grammar to amend the Hebrew text, or to require it to be mistranslated.

* * * * "were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, *might have hope.*" Rom. 15: 4. "And

when they found not his body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels which said that he *was* alive." Mr. Harrison maintains that "might have" should be "may have"; and that "was" should be "is"; and this in accordance with one of his favorite "principles," on which he very frequently takes occasion to insist. He says that *might* refers to the past, and *may* to the present or future. Whereas the use of *might* for the present or future is almost as familiar as any use it has; as, "he might at any time if he would," "oh that I might know the truth!" etc. Besides, in both cases and others like them, he forgets the *formal* effect of the tense of the preceding verb; thus, "are written that we may have hope," "were written that we might have hope." Such, we contend, is the natural English unencumbered by any *à priori* "principles." And as for the phrase, "said that he was alive," any English (or at least any American) ear will instantly detect how unnatural it is to say, "which said that he *is* alive." Indeed, Mr. H. hardly dares suggest this reading, but would alter the whole construction and read, "saying, he is alive." This, he alleges, is in strict accordance with the Latin and Greek, eum vivere, αὐτὸν ζῆν — and so it might be if there were no difference between the *oratio recta* and the *oratio obliqua*; although, in fact, the Greek text happens to read οἱ λέγουσιν αὐτὸν ζῆν, "which say that he is alive." This last, however, is a point to which Mr. H. does not allude, and which would serve no purpose in illustration of his favorite "principle."

But he objects to the *also* in the latter passage, discoursing in this wise:

"We cannot connect an entity with a nonentity. The sentence amounts to this: they did not do a certain thing, and they did something besides. If we strike out *also*, the passage is clear and consistent. Both the Greek and Latin of this passage, however, require *also* to be in the position in which we find it."

And well they may; for, though we do not see what the *Latin* should have to do, more than the English, with *requiring* this; yet surely simple common sense would find no difficulty in understanding the passage as it stands in the original text and in the English Version, *also* and all, — without being frightened by any spectres of entities or nonentities. It is a case of obvious ellipsis; "and when they found not his body, they came saying that they had (not only not found it, but) *also* seen," etc.; i. e. one fact is stated, the not finding or the failure to find, and *also* another fact, the seeing, etc.

"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be

persuaded though one rose from the dead." "Though one *rise* from the dead. Though one *rose* means, though one did rise at some former period." Yes, if you are sure it is in the indicative mood; otherwise it may mean, though one *should rise* at some future time.

"If one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." "That is, if one went at a future time, which is intense nonsense."

This certainly is sharp enough. Yet in the face of such authoritative criticism, we venture to assert that the use of *rose* and *went* with reference to a subjunctive future is good, idiomatic, and often elegant English. And nothing is wanting in either of those passages to make them pure, consistent English, but to change the corresponding *will* to *would*, which any one may see would leave the reference to futurity as distinct as ever. Our Translators retained *will*, probably because the original has the Indicative future, while the verbs translated *rose* and *went* are both in the aorist subjunctive. Luther too has translated these last words by the imperfect subjunctive in German; while, for the *will*, he has in one of the cases followed the Greek with a simple future, and in the other has conformed the phrase to the German idiom, which in this case is the same as the English, and used the conditional form.

"He that pricketh the ear maketh it to show her knowledge."

"We see no reason for *it* in one place and *her* in the other."

This is a borrowed criticism. Its supporters seem either to think that *her* is in the objective Case, or to be ignorant that *its* was not used by the Translators of the English Bible, but *thereof*, *his*, or *her*, instead of *it*. A strict following of the Anglo-Saxon might have led them to use *his* as the genitive of *it* in all cases. But though they did not intend to personify objects of the neuter gender and used *it* for the nominative and accusative Cases, yet, as the genitive *its* was not then in use, they seem to have taken in its stead *his* or *her*, according as they would more naturally have said *he* or *she* in case of personification. *Earth*, for example, would more naturally be personified in the feminine; consequently we find such phrases as the following: "And now art thou cursed from the earth which hath opened *her* mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground *it* shall not henceforth yield to thee *her* strength." Gen. 4: 11, 12. "And the earth shall remove out of *her* place, . . . and *it* shall be as the chased roe," etc. And so in a multitude of instances. Of charity, which Mr. Harrison, by an original metaphor, styles a "maternal virtue," it is said, "deth not behave itself unceasingly, seeketh not *her* own." If therefore that pas-

sage in the Apocrypha must stand corrected, it will not stand alone. The truth is, our Translation of the Bible was made too early for some modern critics, who set down everything which is not actual usage as "nonsense," or at least as solecism.

"But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." Acts 5: 39. "Lest your attempts to put down and silence the disciples of Jesus be of such a nature with reference to his assumed position, as to exhibit you in the character even of fighters against God, and not against man only, *μήποτε καὶ θεομάχοι εὐρηθῆτε*, lest you should prove even *God-fighters*."

"It is evident that, according to the sense of this passage, the term *even* should have followed and not preceded the words *to fight* — 'lest haply ye be found to fight even against God.' And yet he himself has put it before in the version which he has given with the Greek in the preceding paragraph; so dangerous is it for some to play with edged tools.

"Sorrow not as *them* that have no hope." 1 Thess. 4: 13. "This sentence made out would be, sorrow not as *them* sorrow that have no hope. As *they* sorrow, not as *them* sorrow." Yes; or, "even as others which have no hope," might do, as it stands in the text of the English version.

"And the contention was so great among them that they departed asunder one from another." Acts 15: 39. "As Paul and Barnabas only are here spoken of, they departed one from *the* other, not one from *another*; the said Paul went this way and the said Barnabas that. When we say they departed one from *another*, we at once plunge into plurality," — and much more in the same strain and style; all which might have been spared, had the writer condescended to consult the text from which he professes to quote. That reads: "And the contention was so *sharp between* them, that they departed asunder one from *the* other." At least thus it stands in our "American" Bibles. Mr. Harrison assures us, in his Preface, that he has not set up men of straw to contend with, but has subjected to criticism only actually existing errors. Besides, in these cases he puts down the chapter and verse, which he has neglected to do, or has done incorrectly, or his printer for him, in some other cases. Such blunders in citations of Scripture are very common, but are exceedingly disreputable particularly in a clergyman. We are sorry to see this last copied verbatim by Professor Fowler in his work on the English Language.

But our readers are already more than wearied with pursuing this

sort of game. Before taking leave of Mr. Harrison's book, however, we will add, that, if we count aright, it arraigns in all some forty-four passages of Scripture as containing grammatical errors. Of these we have here reviewed seventeen; and our readers can judge of the character of the criticism which has been applied on one side and the other. Of the remaining twenty-seven, we think fifteen or sixteen more equally capable of defence were there a demand and an opportunity for making it. There remain, therefore, only about a dozen cases out of the forty-four, in which, in our judgment, the charge of error has been substantiated. Of course a far greater number of passages containing alleged grammatical errors are drawn together from other quarters, and it may be that, in a greater proportion of those cases, Mr. Harrison's criticisms are correct; — *sed ex pede leonem*.

ARTICLE IV.

GOVERNMENT AND POPULAR EDUCATION.

By Rev. E. C. Wines, East Hampton, L. I.

THE subject of Popular Education, is exciting increased interest among the people of the United States. No subject can more worthily occupy the thoughts, or call into action the energies of our citizens, in their individual or social capacity. The cause of education is eminently the cause of the people. It is the cause of public order and virtue, of public liberty and prosperity.

We propose, in the present article, to inquire into the Relation of Government to Popular Education; and to show, that it is among the most solemn and imperative of obligations resting on a government, to provide by law for the thorough instruction of all the children in the community. In support of this position, we shall adduce three principal considerations. The line of argument and illustration which we intend to pursue, may be indicated by the following propositions: Popular education is necessary, and therefore it is the duty of the State to provide for it — first, because of its influence on national, family, and individual, character and happiness; secondly, because of its connection with the purity and perpetuity of our civil