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ARTICLE I.—*Antiquities of the Christian Church.*

1. *Denkwürdigkeiten aus der Christlichen Archæologie.* Bde I.—XII. 8vo. Leipzig, 1817–31. Von D. Johann Christian Wilhelm Augusti.
2. *Handbuch der Christlichen Archæologie.* Bde I.—III. Leipzig, 1836–7. Von D. Johann Christian Wilhelm Augusti.
3. *Die Kirchliche Archæologie.* Dargestellt von F. H. Rheinwald. 8vo. S. 569. Berlin, 1830.
4. *Handbuch der christlich-kirchlichen Alterthümer in alphabetischer Ordnung mit steter Beziehung auf das, was davon noch jetzt im christlichen Cultus übrig geblieben ist.* Von M. Carl Christian Friedrich Siegel. Bde I.—IV. Leipzig, 1835–38.
5. *Lehrbuch der christlich-kirchlichen Archæologie.* Verfasst von Dr. Joh. Nep. Locherer. 8vo. S. 194. Frankfort am Main, 1832.
6. *Die christlich-kirchliche Alterthumswissenschaft, theologisch-critisch bearbeitet.* Von Dr. Wilhelm Böhmer. Bde I.—II. 8vo. Breslau, 1836–9.
7. *Lehrbuch der christlich-kirchlichen Archæologie.* Von Heinrich Ernst Ferdinand Guericke. 8vo. S. 345. Leipzig, 1847.

THIS formidable array of authors comprises only those who, in Germany, have within the last thirty years, written on the
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Howard V. Colver.
ART. IV.—*The Bards of the Bible*, by George Gilfillan. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1851.

ANY work which tends to recommend and endear the Scripture, to produce a veneration for its doctrines and a keen sense of its beauties, should be welcomed with pleasure. When among other excellencies, we consider its sublime and beautiful poetry, we wonder not that men of the most refined taste, and the most correct judgment should discern higher attractives in the volume of inspiration than in all the celebrated writers of antiquity.

Bishop Lowth seems to be the first that discovered and developed the true nature and genuine source of Hebrew poetry, and that illustrated its beauties and sublimities by comparing it with the productions of Greece and Rome. Afterwards Herder undertook the subject with still more enthusiasm. He readily entered into all the thoughts and feelings of the Hebrew poets, caught the spirit which they breathed, chaunted the songs of Zion as they did, and seemed so much of an Israelite, that in reading his writings, he appears as a spirit that lived in their days, and who was sent to teach us how men then thought, and felt, and acted. And, in the work before us, another attempt is made to illustrate the literature of the Bible; not to present an elaborate and learned criticism, but to exhibit its beauty as uttered in the language of poetry. Its author, the Rev. Mr. Gilfillan, is a member of the "United Presbyterian Church in Scotland." He has attained eminence by his various contributions to periodicals, and by his "Gallery of Literary Portraits," which has been widely circulated; and is every where acknowledged a man of genius and imagination, capable of dazzling by his brilliancy, and of making an impression by his descriptions. In this work there are many instances of beauty, many strong flights of fancy, many interesting sketches of character, and several expositions of Scripture that are novel and ingenious.

But it is not our intention to analyze or minutely to criticise the work. If it were, we might speak of the general manner in which it is written, as implying a deficiency in that gravity and seriousness which become such a subject. We might com-

plain of the intermixture of so many other themes with the sacred subject before him; of the frequent digressions into the fields of general literature; of the constant mingling of the modern poets with the sacred penmen. We might also refer to the Millenarianism which is scattered through the work, and which is, at the close, so prominently brought forward. Overlooking these and other things, we confine our attention to the style in which it is written.

Style is the peculiar manner in which one expresses his conceptions by means of language—a picture of the ideas which arise in his mind, and of the order in which they are there produced. It has a free and spontaneous origin, and a living connection with the thought. Just in proportion as it is good, it is characterized by the simplicity and freedom of nature—it is clear, and as a medium, shows the object distinctly; when somewhat elevated, it is warm and glowing, like the rays of the sun; in its highest state, it is rich and beautiful, like the works of creation. And like those works, it is variegated according to the different classes of subjects, the different ages of the world, and the different periods of life. A sense of congruity or propriety teaches us that a literary performance intended only for amusement is susceptible of ornament. But on the other hand, a serious and important subject admits of less decoration; a subject which in itself fills the mind with loftiness and grandeur appears best in a simple dress; it

“Needs not the foreign aid of ornament.”

But whatever the style be, whether (according to the division made by the ancients) plain, or temperate, or sublime, it must, if good, be the true and genuine manner of expression that is suited to the mind of the individual; formed by nature and flaming spontaneously.

Applying these remarks to the work before us, we cannot but condemn its style as faulty and vicious.

It is *too inverted and transposed*—we say, too inverted; for there is an inversion in sentences which may sometimes be used with advantage, and which gives liveliness and force. Campbell, in his *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, presents two or three instances from our version of the Scriptures—“Silver and gold

have I none'—“Great is Diana of the Ephesians.” For blank verse, such inversion is peculiarly fitted for its loftiness and elevation, harmony and cadence may be regarded necessary. But in a prose work, to indulge in it to such a degree as to make it its characteristic style, is an evidence of affectation and conceit.

Such is the style of the work before us. It is constructed (for it evidently could not flow spontaneously) upon the Latin order and arrangement, without sufficient regard to the difference of the two languages—an imitation of those writers in the Elizabethan and succeeding age, who freely employed the liberty of inversion, and often sacrificed perspicuity and ease. Such a style is now regarded obsolete, and he who attempts to revive what was laid aside at the time of Dryden justly incurs censure. From the time of this writer, who did so much to form our language into its present state, his arrangement has been generally adopted as the best and most natural for expressing our sentiments. After having existed for nearly two centuries, can it be easily laid aside? After the most valuable treatises in every art and science have employed it, shall men arise and say that it is too mean a vehicle for the loftiness and fervour of their conceptions? A Carlyle, with all his originality and richness of thought cannot succeed; the attempt will issue in producing only a dialect in which the beauties of the English language will be sacrificed to quaintness and obscurity.

Another serious fault in the style of the work before us, is that it is *too florid*.

A writer may make ornament an object of regard, and if he have thought to sustain it, attend not only to the choice of words and the arrangement of his sentences, but also to that figurative language which his fancy suggests, and his subject admits. In the use of figures consists much of the beauty of language; they enrich and dignify it, bestow upon a sentiment a graceful dress, and make it eminently conspicuous. They also throw light upon a subject, and present the object in a clearer and stronger view than when simply expressed. They give a body to spiritual objects, and make them seen and heard by the sensible images which they delineate.

But care must be taken lest these ornaments occur too fré-

quently or be applied unseasonably. They raise the style, cause us to depart from the ordinary way of speaking, and prevent the distaste occasioned by a tiresome uniformity; but they must be used sparingly and with discretion, or they lose the grace of variety, in which much of their merit consists. Care too must be taken that they arise naturally from the subject; that they flow of their own accord; that they be always suggested by a sprightly imagination or an awakened passion. Without this they have a bad effect; they are seen to be unnatural and far fetched; to have been carefully sought after, and designedly introduced.

To cautions like these, founded in nature, the author of the work before us pays but little attention. He aims at expressing every thing in a high-wrought, brilliant and splendid style. We are continually meeting with rich and gaudy ornaments; perpetually dazzled with the splendor and glitter of expression. Not that we would intimate that this splendor is a substitute for sentiment; that manner is intended to supply the deficiency of matter. There is a body of lively and ingenious thoughts under the figured language, calculated to entertain and instruct. But these thoughts the author seems willing to sacrifice to the ill-timed ornaments which occur to his fancy, and which detract from the weight and dignity of the matter. Such florid diction will impair the usefulness of the work, and prevent it from pleasing long, and from being read a second time. It may transport and excite the reader when it is first read, but at length occasions a kind of surfeit which will forbid a second perusal; like highly seasoned food, which gives the liveliest pleasure when first tasted, but which frequently disgusts on repetition. However pure and sweet the honeycomb, who would wish to make a frequent meal upon it?

Nor to the expression alone is this glitter confined; there are many thoughts bright and sparkling, but there are too many—their very numbers hurt and suppress one another, as Quintilian somewhere says, like trees planted too near together. Like too many figures in a picture, they occasion confusion, and being luminous and sparkling, they brighten its dark parts too much, so that there is a want of contrast and relief.

All this extravagance has the effect of drawing off our atten-

tion from the subject to the style; of giving us the impression that the author is more anxious about his manner of saying things, than about the things themselves; while he is perpetually pointing out and forcing upon our attention what is remarkable and striking, we become wearied at his constant and studied efforts. It is not disagreeable to the mind to be occasionally roused by a powerful stroke, but it suffers a smart when the blows are continually repeated.

It is the more remarkable, that with the pure simplicity of the Scriptures continually before him, the author should have so profusely indulged in florid diction and pompous declamation. It is like Nero's gilding the statue of Lysippus.

We make another remark, and it is applicable to all who adopt this mode of writing. Throughout the work there is a seeming *disregard of all rules and directions*. Such directions, we know, have been multiplied to such a degree, and so insisted on, as to cramp genius and make the style frigid. We should never forget that nature, and not rules, is the basis of all good writing. But surely, precepts founded on good sense and reason may be useful in bringing to perfection the advantages received from nature in the art of writing, as in music, architecture, painting, or sculpture. The author of the work before us, like some in private life, who despise all regulations in manners and good breeding, sets at naught all such rules, and seems to regard the application of them as needless and injurious. His imagination, strong and lively, hurries him forward with impetuosity, without the appearance of reason to guide and govern it. All things appear to be said that first offer themselves to his mind, and said just in the way that he pleases. Hence multiplied instances of several metaphors meeting on a single object, the mingling together of metaphorical and simple language, the heaping up of figures one upon another, so as to produce confusion, the admission of figures of passion where there is no warmth. Hence the introduction of several new-coined words, which are not found even in Webster's Dictionary. Hence the continual use of antiquated, obsolete, and new-compounded words, tending to produce a barbarous dialect. All this savours of affectation, and shows the perpetual effort and struggle that are made to produce a style that will surprise and startle.

We know that we are condemning a mode of writing which has been exceedingly admired and commended—the *fine style*, which, leaving the old beaten track, has high claims to originality. There are those who will be satisfied with nothing else; who will be pleased with nothing but what strikes by its novelty, and dazzles by its glare. But we hesitate not to say that it cannot obtain the approbation of the judicious and discerning; that it is opposed to all classical purity. He has not a correct taste who is pleased with exuberance of finery and excess of ornament. True taste makes use of the imagination, but instead of submitting, always keeps it in subjection. It invariably consults nature, follows it step by step, and deviates not from its path. In the midst of abundant riches, it is sparing in dispensing beauties and graces, and acts with wisdom and discretion. It knows precisely how far to go, and where to stop; what to add, and what to retrench. In a word, it invariably inclines to noble simplicity, natural beauties, and a judicious choice of ornaments.

Let young men who are receiving a liberal education, and preparing for public action, ever remember that simplicity of thought and expression is the true mark of elegance; that nothing accords with correct taste but what is easy and natural; that the best style is that which is opposed to the affectation of ornament and the appearance of labour. Let them practise the precept which the oracle of Delphos gave to Cicero, “follow nature;” let them, if they have imagination, be rich in figures; but let all flow from them without effort; let the mode of expression clearly intimate the manner in which the sentiment was conceived in the mind. Let them read the writings, and become familiarly acquainted with the style of the best authors. But let them not confine themselves to the purest models in their own language. Let them study the classics of ancient Greece and Rome, and from them learn how to write. Their customs and laws have changed; their actions gone, never to return; their states and empires have comparatively but little of our concern, but good taste, which is grounded upon immutable principles, is always the same; and among these ancient authors it is found in perfection; they are its depositaries and guardians. Their works have stood the test of time, have lived

through the revolutions of the world, have continued to please in every climate, under every species of government, through every stage of civilization; and therefore present the purest models of taste. Let them study the sacred Scriptures, the sublimest book that was ever written, and yet the most simple in thought and expression. Thus acting, they may acquire that ease and natural manner which is so distinguishing an excellency in writing; which shows the author in his own character, without art or disguise. There is an advantage which friends derive from the works of such a writer, when he is taken from them by death; he lives not only in their affectionate hearts, but also in that rich legacy which marks his character. The friends of Dr. Dwight still read his writings, distinguished for graceful familiarity and ease, and can hear him conversing with them, as he once did, in the parlour, and in the recitation room. And the pupils and friends of the Patriarch of our church who has lately been taken from us, have the privilege of conversing with him, in the writings he has left us, so peculiar for simplicity, bearing his own "image and superscription." We find the same unaffected manner of instruction, the same gentleness and tenderness which so feelingly impressed us, and we exclaim, "he being dead, yet speaketh."

L. Hengstenberg

ART. V.—*The Book of Revelation, expounded for the use of those who search the Scriptures.* By E. W. Hengstenberg, D.D., Professor of Theology at Berlin. Vol. I. Berlin, 1849. 8vo. pp. 632.* Vol. II., Part 1, 1850, pp. 405; Part 2, 1851, pp. 230.

A foreign work on the Apocalypse, from almost any pen whatever, would be welcome, just at present, as a grateful relief from the monotonous confusion of vernacular expounders. There are some subjects which the Germans have worn thread-

* Die Offenbarung des heiligen Johannes für solche die in der Schrift forschen erläutert von E. W. Hengstenberg, Dr. und Professor der Theologie zu Berlin. Erster Band.