

THE PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

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I.

THE PLAN OF THE NEW BIBLE REVISION.

WITHIN a few weeks past there has appeared a volume which has for some time been looked for with great and growing interest. This is the New Testament as revised by a number of British and American scholars, which is now given to the world without waiting for the Old Testament, the completion of which is not expected for two or three years to come. In the next number of this REVIEW there will be a careful critical estimate of the characteristic features of this interesting and important volume. What is now proposed is to give some account of the origin and progress of the whole movement for revision, and to consider the plan upon which it has been and is to be conducted.

In regard to the authorized version there has been for a long time a substantial agreement among all the learned upon two points: first, that in point of fidelity and elegance, the English Bible, as a whole, is equal if not superior to any other version, ancient or modern; but, secondly, that in particular places it is defective, owing to the progress made in grammar, lexicography, exegesis, criticism, and archæology since the days of King James, and also to the inevitable changes in the meaning and use of many English words and phrases. Attempts, therefore, at a new version in whole or in

- LUKE: GOSPEL HISTORY AND ACTS OF THE APOSTLES. With Notes Critical, Explanatory, and Practical. Designed for both Pastors and People. By Rev. HENRY COWLES, D.D. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1881. 12mo, pp. 493. Price, \$2.
- MATTHEW AND MARK. With Notes Critical, Explanatory, and Practical. Designed for both Pastors and People. By HENRY COWLES, D.D. Published by D. Appleton & Co., New York. 1881. 12mo, pp. 391.

The last of these two volumes closes the series of these well-known notes on the Bible. Their peculiarity lies in their keeping in prominent view the course of thought, and in their terse and pertinent illustration. A treatise on inspiration closes the work, classifying the Books of the Bible in relation to their degrees of inspiration, and although giving up the claim of absolute accuracy, maintaining the essential truth of divine revelation and superintendence. C. W. HODGE.

- THE EVIDENTIAL VALUE OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES (the Bohlen Lectures, 1880). By the Very Rev. J. S. HOWSON, D.D., Dean of Chester. 16mo, pp. 186. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1880.

This readable little book has been marred somewhat by the carelessness of the proof-reader. Judging from appearances, we would think that the sheets can hardly have received the revision of the author. Hence, such forms as *Paulinae*, for *Pauline* (p. 131), *Sanhedrim*, *Collossoe*, etc., and the repeated "Acts and *Epistles*" (e. g., p. 65), where "Acts and *Gospels*" is meant. There are evidences also that the lectures were prepared in as great haste as they were printed. Small as the book is, there is a considerable amount of padding in it. And although the great familiarity with the subject which Dean Howson almost of necessity by this time possesses, and considerable tact in the choice of illustrations, the various points made are continually showing themselves, the book will add nothing to the author's reputation, and will not prove of permanent value. Considered as a popular tract meant for present reading, it is a welcome comer.

The title is somewhat of a misnomer. These four lectures constitute a popular exposition much more of the internal evidences for Acts, than of the evidential value of Acts. The first lecture argues the genuineness of the book from the evident need of some such narrative to fill the chasm between the Gospels and Epistles, and the mere fact that this book does fully fill it. The contrast is then drawn with the apocryphal acts. Then, turning to the positive side, the transparent honesty and truthfulness of its narratives and the noble generosity of its tone are noted, and excellently illustrated. The second lecture deals with the relation of Acts to the Gospel history, and especially with the testimony of Acts to the Ascension, Resurrection, and certain of the works and words of Christ, again with full illustration. Of course, such points bear equal testimony to both documents compared, but the feeling cannot be escaped that the author has in mind more the proofs for than from Acts. The third lecture is entitled, "The Acts in connection with the Apostolic Epistles." It opens with an application of the method of Paley's "*Horæ Paulinae*" to the repeated narratives in Acts—first to the two of Cornelius' conversion, and then to the three of Paul's conversion. This fills about half the lecture. Then the proper subject is taken up, and it is shown that the Acts and Epistles bear harmonious witness to the Resurrection of Christ and the conversion and character of Paul. The lecture closes with a very brief comparison of the four undisputed Epistles of Paul with the others, showing their harmony; and then a further comparison of Acts with each class, resulting again, in each case, in a harmony which adds a new bond to their union under one man's name. The fourth lecture is headed, "The usefulness of the book for instruction and edification." But a great part of it is taken up in additional evidences for Acts, drawn from the minute accord of its historical and geographical notices with the facts as known to us otherwise. The subject of the usefulness of the book having been thus compressed into thirty pages, is next treated under the heads of usefulness for general education, as a

missionary manual, as lessons in special providences, as a teaching of the duty of judicious compromise in religion, and as a text-book in apostolic doctrine, especially with reference to the work of the Spirit.

B. B. WARFIELD.

CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT. By H. A. W. MEYER, Th.D. Epistles to the Ephesians and to Philemon, translated by Rev. MAURICE J. EVANS. B.A. The Epistles to the Thessalonians (in the same series), by Professor GOTTLIEB LÜNEMANN, translated by Rev. PATON J. GLOAG, D.D. T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh. 1880.

The Messrs. Clark have done a great service to the English-reading public in publishing a translation of Meyer's unsurpassed Commentary. Meyer's wide knowledge, his critical acumen, his calm and judicial mind, and his spiritual instinct, have made his work a *κτῆμα ἐς αἰὲν*. The student finds an unspeakable pleasure in following his clear reasoning and reaching his wise decisions. Meyer's faults are his purism, which presses a classical exactness on Hellenistic Greek, and his low view of inspiration, which permits him to see irreconcilable differences between the accounts of the Evangelists. We think that these erroneous principles sometimes suggest a decision with him, where all the other elements of the case are against him, so much so that one would think they ought to lead to a revision of the principles. For example, we find recorded in Matt. xviii. 1, and in Mark ix. 34, the question, "who should be greatest," and our Lord's comment. Meyer says that in Matthew it is suggested *by the consideration of the circumstances*, but in Mark otherwise. In this there are two assumptions; first, that the records are of the same event; and, secondly, that the question in Matthew is the result of Peter's honor in catching the fish for the tribute money. Only a readiness to see discrepancies would have suggested these assumptions. But, after all, these are but a few blemishes in a commentary of wonderful excellence. In the Epistles Meyer is especially sound and forcible, only now and then departing from his usual impartiality for a labored defence of a questionable case, as in his treatment of *πίσει* in Eph. ii. 4, where he tries to make the *πίσις* and the *ὁργή* not necessarily synchronous, the wrath only coming when the sin-principle has triumphed. He brushes away a great deal of false commentary that has clustered around particular texts, and refreshes the reader with his clear tracing of the connections of thought.

Lünemann has taken up Meyer's work and carried it on in Meyer's style, yet not, perhaps, with his brilliancy. His treatment of *ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἁμαρτίας* is interesting, but his reasoning in favor of the nearness of the fulfilment of that prophecy does not appear convincing. Lünemann, like Huther, has proved himself a worthy exegete to succeed to Meyer's task, and their names, with that of Dusterdieck, will be indissolubly united to Meyer's in the history of exegesis, and this is no mean honor. The translators of these volumes deserve great praise for their patient and admirable work.

HOWARD CRUSBY.

THE CHALDEAN ACCOUNT OF GENESIS. By GEORGE SMITH. Revised by A. H. SAYCE. [Charles Scribner's Sons]. 1881.

Mr. Smith's report of the noteworthy tablets discovered by him, which at once linked the earliest Hebrew records with a civilization far older than the Hebrew, served an admirable purpose in its time, though it could not, from the nature of the case, be final. It may be questioned, however, whether a revision of the kind before us is wise. Professor Sayce has doubtless a far broader scholarship than Mr. Smith, with all his unique genius, was possessed of; the materials are now more abundant; the knowledge of the inscriptions and their contents has been greatly advanced. But the revision is, like the original edition, only a popular work, and, in its turn, as Professor Sayce freely acknowledges, it is not final. The point in question then is, whether close, thorough study of the documents, with definite results, scientifically stated, is not at present worth more for securing an eventual appreciation of