

FIFTY-FIFTH YEAR.

THE
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

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as well as the reputation for accuracy enjoyed by the general editor, gave us a right to expect in every respect a masterpiece. Unfortunately, this does not turn out to be the case. Use of this book in the class-room has shown that it does not form an entirely satisfactory basis for good work. The chief fault of the book is a lack of clear-cut, precise, and accurate statements of the facts in the case. Often in very important parts it is almost impossible to make out what the author desires to state. While nothing can be said against the general plan of work, except that it is not as practical as might be, we must regret that the obscurity of so many statements confuses the learner and constantly requires the correcting hand of the teacher. We think, however, that this lamentable feature is not the fault of the author, but of the translators. Indeed, whenever these obscure statements are translated back into German, they are generally quite clear and intelligible. The two translators, who are pupils of the author but are entirely unknown to fame, may be good Arabic scholars, but they are remarkably poor English scholars. Were they otherwise, they would not have been guilty of a misspelling on the title-page. It is to be regretted that what might otherwise have been an elementary grammar without a peer has in this manner been seriously crippled.

We do not wish to be understood as pronouncing this work a failure and useless. But it is only fair that those who think of introducing the book into their class-rooms should know its faults as well as its virtues.

A COMMENTARY ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS. By Thomas Charles Edwards, M.A., Principal of the University College of Wales, Abergeburgh. London: Hamilton, Adams and Company. 1885. (pp. xxxix. 491. 8vo.)

It is always a pleasure to welcome a really first-rate commentary on a book of Scripture: and the pleasure is doubled when, as in the present case, it comes from a new quarter, and thus introduces to us not only a new commentary of value but also a new commentator of ability. The intellectual and spiritual genealogy of this new teacher is easily traced. Born among the Presbyterians of Wales, he was bred among the scholars of Oxford, and, as his college was Lincoln, can scarcely have wholly escaped the influence of its late distinguished rector, the learned if somewhat morose Mark Pattison. The two streams of influence meet on the page where he dedicates his book to two revered teachers,—his father, the honored Lewis Edwards, D.D., Principal of the Welsh Presbyterian College at Bala, and the Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford, the Rev. Benjamin Jowett. These diverse influences may be detected on every page of the volume: the Calvinism of Bala and the Neo-Platonism of Oxford,—the religion of the one, the culture of the other, the scholarship of both,—run together into a casting that is everywhere worthy of our attention, and not infrequently of our highest admiration. We have frequent occasions for differing with Principal Edwards in the details of his exegesis. But we wish to guard against misunderstanding by clearly declaring at the outset that we esteem his com-

mentary to be perhaps the best English exposition of this Epistle with the one exception of the brilliant work of Canon Evans.

The most distinguishing characteristic of the work is that freshness of linguistic remark which can come only of first-hand acquaintance with the Greek of the epistle and of the times. Principal Edwards appears to have read the earliest Fathers for himself,—to have read the Greek Testament with his own eyes,—and to have some familiarity at first hand with general Greek literature in recent editions. The reader of his book is constantly bothered by fresh examples or fresh references for the establishment of usages. He may even come across names new to him in commentaries: Viger, and Hartung, and Hermann, and Kthner, and Volkmaer,—but who are these: Shilleto, and Rutherford, and Goodwin, and Verrall? The Philistines are certainly upon us: we can no longer go to sleep over the references and spell them out in our dreams. The consequence is that the linguistic part of Principal Edwards' book is the best part; he is never so happy as when he is settling a usage or determining the grammatical sense of a passage; and scattered through his book there are scores of places where his touch has bettered our understanding of the words.

The next most marked characteristic of the book is not so happy a one: a tendency to abstract philosophising, and a consequent inability in the author to read himself into the simple stand-point of the epistle. His philosophy is not that of Paul, and his theology, if laid over his, would scarcely touch at all points. He makes far more of the incarnation than Paul, and far less of the sacrificial death,—far more of the mystical union with Christ and far less of His federal representativeship. At one point the tendency to abstract and philosophising statement comes out with rather curious effect. Paul, at 1 xvii. 18, is condemning the habit of philosophising over the gospel, and declaring that it must be rather presented in its bare facts,—that to proclaim it with "wisdom of word" deprives the cross of its power, because the cross itself in all its nakedness is its own great argument, and has only to be seen to be accepted by those whose eyes are not holden. The expositor, however, here, just where Paul is plainest and falls back explicitly on the bare fact of the cross, waxes vague and shadowy,—ceases to be Pauline to become Apolline,—and tells us, "That to regard the gospel as a mere philosophy [what Paul said was to philosophise over the gospel] deprives it of its cosmical power, is proved from the condition of those that perish and of those that are being saved"! Where this habit, however, most seriously interferes with the exposition is in tracing the train of thought: an inability here to yield oneself implicitly to the guidance of the writer results not only in a failure to grasp his argument but also inevitably in mistakes in catching his individual thoughts. A very large proportion of the passages in which Principal Edwards appears to us to have seriously missed the apostle's meaning seem to be due to error in tracing the contextual argument, which again has come from reading into the apostle more abstract forms of statement,—more philosophical or logical methods of proceeding,—than he has actually followed. The detailed

analysis which is presented at the opening of the exposition (and to which, by the way, a curious accident has happened) is sometimes much darkened by its abstract form of statement.

A word as to his analysis may not be out of place. Principal Edwards seems to us to have failed to notice the significance of the great break which divides the epistle into two parts at the opening of chapter vii. That the apostle postpones his reply to the questions actually asked him by his readers until after he has scourged them for those outbreking sins treated in chapters i.-vi., is vocal with the comparative importance in Paul's view of the matters treated in the two sections,—of course with reference to the immediate needs of that particular church. The party spirit that had arisen among them is thus seen to be the most dangerous of the evil tendencies adverted to in the letter, and that it was so, is proved by the echoes of the first section that linger long after the apostle has proceeded to other matters (c. *g.*, v. 2; vi. 4; viii. 1-3, etc.). It is a more fruitful failure, still, not to have noticed that the whole section from i. 17 (not from iii. 5 only) has been "shaped with reference to Paul and Apollos" only; for thus the key of the argument is lost, which is that in treating the parties Paul so treats them as to most strongly rebuke the disposition out of which they rose,—*pride*,—for this is the reason he assigns for having so written (iv. 6). As a mere matter of fact, also, the whole discussion falls into an attack on (1) the pride of wisdom and (2) the pride of leadership. The key to the first half of this discussion is the parallelism between ii. 1-5 and iii. 1-4, each being the special application of the more impersonal discussion that had gone before, to the apostle's own conduct at Corinth; and each, therefore opening with the applying *καὶ ἡμεῖς, ἀδελφοί*. We must, therefore, so analyse that i. 1-5 and ii. 6-16 shall lay down general positions which ii. 1-5 and iii. 1-4 shall apply. What these general positions are is plain: first, that the gospel is not a product of human wisdom and is not to be commended by it, and Paul's appropriate method of proclaiming it at Corinth (i. 17-ii. 5), and secondly, that the gospel proclaims indeed a divine wisdom, but only to full-grown Christians, and Paul's appropriate method of preaching at Corinth (ii. 6-iii. 4); the two together making up the treatment of the great theme of the relation of the gospel of God to wisdom; while what comes afterwards concerns itself with the relation of God's gospel to the agents through whom it is propagated. The subdivisions of this second section fall at the points indicated by Principal Edwards (we cannot find a division at iii. 20), but they are all co-ordinate sub-heads, whereas he strangely distributes them among three great heads. Not at iv. 1, nor even at iv. 5, but only at iv. 14 do the concluding remarks begin,—the verses 5-13 being a clinching of the argument by a special rebuke of the pride which lay at the root of the party-spirit, and of much else as well that was evil, in the Corinthian Church.

Principal Edwards very strangely classes, next, the whole of v. 1-vi. 20 under one head, entitled "Church Discipline," though it is difficult to see how the sixth chapter can be brought under such a caption. On the other hand he calls vii. 18, 19 (better 17-19) a *digression* in the next section, an

error which has arisen from his failure to distinguish between co-ordinate and subordinate points. The analysis that he offers of xv. 1-58 is certainly all wrong: Paul offers no proof of the resurrection except that the Corinthians admitted that it had occurred in one case—that of Christ; and only develops the hideous consequences that flow from denying it, because of the involved denial that Christ had risen. Least of all can proof be found in verses 20 sq., which Principal Edwards calls "*direct proof*." Direct assertion, certainly, but no proof. The fact is, the apostle here feels the revulsion he would beget in his readers, and turns to enunciate the truth in a digression from which he returns at v. 29. The failure to notice this is the more a pity that the same failure has led other commentators also to mistake the meaning of v. 29, thus isolated from its context. As a fact, v. 29 is the third of the evil consequences that flow from the denial of the resurrection, involving as it does the denial of Christ's rising: (1) Christian preaching becomes a lie, v. 15, (2) Christian faith folly, v. 17, and (3) Christian practice a farce, verses 29 sq.—both in its ritual and in its life. Had Principal Edwards seen this connection, he could scarcely have decided for vicarious baptism in v. 29. "The dead" in this verse must mean the same thing as in all the preceding verses from v. 12, as indeed the second clause of the verse ought to have advised us. And the baptism here spoken of is not some peculiar and unusual rite by which one living stands instead of one dead, but the general Christian baptism which in the case of all has a view to the life beyond the grave.

In a different way but with no less serious results, a failure correctly to follow the contextual indications has led our author wrong in a neighboring verse,—xv. 26. That death is the "last enemy" does not take it out of the category of the enemies of v. 25, but only gives it its proper place among them. The reign of Christ, Principal Edwards himself tells us (on v. 55), continues from his ascension to "the end" (v. 24), the arrival of which is announced by the conquest of death as the last of the enemies that must be conquered before Christ lays down his kingship. When he says, therefore, "Death has not, it appears from this, been destroyed at the second coming and at the resurrection of those that are Christ's," he is speaking into the air. Why does it "appear from this" that death, any more than any of the other enemies of v. 24, must be conquered after the Parousia? What Paul says is simply that "the end" comes after all enemies have been conquered,—the last of which is death; he places the conquest of death, therefore, *before* "the end,"—which itself comes *after* the Parousia. Our author's note is not only thus unnecessitated by the text, but it is forbidden by the context: is not the conquest of death in v. 26 to be correlated with the rescue of Christ's children from death in v. 23? Can we exegetically escape this correlation? Why else was this one enemy in such a context singled out for special mention from its fellows of v. 25? But if the correlation is probable, this last enemy, death, is already conquered when Christ comes, and therefore the Parousia brings "the end," and Christ comes only to lay down his kingdom. If this needed further support, v. 54 gives it: there it is openly declared

that death is conquered when the elect arise. But if so, death is already destroyed at the second coming; there is no room in time for a second resurrection; and Principal Edwards' note is entirely astray.

A few points of detailed exegesis, especially in passages which are recognized *crucis* may be adverted to next. In i. 2 the *ὅν κτλ.* is connected with the address with the added remark: "The church in the capital city of the province was perhaps the only visible centre.—But many individual Christians were scattered through Achaia.—The apostle includes them among those to whom his letter is addressed." Surely this is reasonable. He connects *αὐτῶν καὶ ἡμῶν* with *τότῳ*, in the same verse. In i. 5, is it correct to say that "the aorist correctly implies that they had since lost their wealth of grace and fallen into spiritual indigence"? In our view the aorist expresses nothing as to continuance or non-continuance, and the context (cf. v. 8) negatives this note: but Principal Edwards makes use of this notion of covert reproof throughout the introduction. The remarks at i. 10 are interesting, but not thoroughly satisfying: especially is the account of Apollos (cf. p. xiii.) directly in the face of Acts. The opening words of i. 13 are rightly taken as a question. In i. 30, the adjoined terms are understood as explanatory of "wisdom." In ii. 6 the right conclusion is apparently (it is not sharply expressed) reached after an interesting discussion as to the difference between Paul's preaching to the "babes" and the "full-grown:" "The apostle distinguishes not two classes of truth but two aspects of the same truth." The truth is that the apostle says he *proclaimed* the gospel to the babes and *explained* it to the perfect, and thus appealed to the trust of one and the understanding of the other, or presented Christ to the one as the righteousness of God and to the other as the wisdom of God. At ii. 10 the words "us, that is the *πῆλιν*," seem an error: certainly the "we" is the same as in v. 6 and 13: *i. e.* "we teachers." At ii. 11 is a very interesting note. At ii. 13, however, it is unsatisfactory: in the first place, the "we" is certainly the same as at verse 6, where "we" is contrasted with the *πῆλιν*. In the second place, the verse does not lay stress on the *ability* to preach but on the *manner* of preaching (in contrast to the *matter* in the previous context) as Spirit-given. He preached not only *what* but *as* the Spirit determined. No doubt "this verse makes no [direct] reference to the apostles' special inspiration as *writers of the New Testament*;" but it does make reference to their special inspiration as teachers of the gospel by which they received an enlightenment common, not to them and all other adult Christians, but common to Paul and certain other inspired teachers not here more closely described, and a guidance which extended not only to what they said but to how it was expressed. Less than this is short of Paul's statement; though *λόγος* cannot be pressed in this context beyond "mode of expression." Wrongly, as we think, the A. V. translation of the next clause is adopted, as against "adapting or fitting spiritual things to spiritual things," which is required by the context. At ii. 14 sq., the discussion of *ψυχικός* and its fellows is most able, and results in sound conclusions in the main. What is said of *ψυχικός* leaves nothing to be desired;

recognizing, as it does, the height and depth of the term according to its contrast. The gist of the whole matter is reached in these words: "Ψυχὴ must not be limited to mere ἐπιθυμία and θυμός. The word ψυχικός was coined by Aristotle to distinguish the pleasures of the soul, such as ambition and desire for knowledge, from those of the body. In this he is followed by Polybius and Plutarch. The ψυχικός was, therefore, the man who was governed by the higher motives of mind. Contrasted with the ἀκρατής, the ψυχικός is the noblest of men. But to the πνευματικός he is related as the natural to the supernatural." Yet the essential nature of πνευματικός, as derived in its New Testament usage from Πνεῦμα and not πνεῦμα is not so clearly grasped. And the true distinction between σάρκινος and σαρκικός is lost through a misunderstanding of the train of thought in iii. 3, where the apostle does not dryly assert that the Corinthians are σαρκικοί, but leads up to it as a stinging climax. The ἔτι of v. 3 is emphatic; not in contrast to what they ought to have grown to, but as if they were not even yet converted; the immediate explanation of 3b proves that 3a was startling and 3c and 4 explain what that startling thing is. *They were behaving as if they had no Holy Ghost at all!*—as if purely human and humanly led, as if σαρκικοί or ψυχικοί, for the words are so far synonymous. Σάρκινος is the weaker word, and expresses something that all Christians are more or less; σαρκικοί no true Christians can be.

In the exegesis of chapter vii. Principal Edwards does not succeed in saving himself from raising celibacy into the preferable state during the Christian dispensation. The fault is in not catching the flow of thought, and thus leaving the καλόν of v. 1 unlimited (cf. v. 26) and in lugging in Christ's second coming, to which the chapter makes no allusion. The apostle recommends celibacy for the time, on account of the approaching persecutions and trials; but places marriage above celibacy for the life of quieter times. The note on viii. 1 is worth careful reading, but the solution proposed is too artificial. At x. 4 he supposes the apostle alludes to the legend without endorsing it. At xi. 1 sq. he supposes the apostle did not forbid women to speak in public because it had not occurred to him yet! At xii. 10 he explains the gift of tongues as inarticulate, ecstatic utterances called "tongues" only in reference to the tongues *of fire* of Pentecost.