

*SURVEY OF RECENT ENGLISH LITERATURE
ON THE NEW TESTAMENT.*

INTRODUCTION.—In this department of literature there has recently appeared a work of quite exceptional value. Its full title is *The Historical New Testament, being the Literature of the New Testament arranged in the order of its Literary Growth and according to the Dates of the Documents. A new translation, edited with Prolegomena, Historical Tables, Critical Notes, and an Appendix*, by James Moffatt, B.D. (T. & T. Clark). This title shows us that the author considers his chronological arrangement of the literature to be the characteristic feature of his volume. He even goes so far as to say that it is “unique.” But not only does every scholar nowadays read his New Testament with an eye to the dates of the various books, but in at least one instance an attempt has been made to induce the public to use the Bible in this fashion. And if such attempts have not been common, this arises from the conviction that as yet they can only be tentative. Mr. Moffatt has assurance, and the advantages and disadvantages attaching to this quality are apparent in his volume.

It is not the idea of the book that is novel, but the extraordinary erudition and ability with which it is carried out. With scarcely any exaggeration it may be said that Mr. Moffatt has not only made a minutely careful study of the New Testament itself, but has mastered the entire mass of modern critical literature. The mere accumulation of material suggests a rare expenditure of industry; but the material is not merely swept together into an indiscriminate heap, but is sifted, weighed and utilized with a critical acumen and sagacity which are truly astonishing. Inquiries which in this age of dictionaries would naturally have been allotted to several men are here undertaken by one and carried with ease to a successful issue. Even as a complete presentation of the present state of opinion the book is of the highest value; but it is much more than that.

The “New Translation” is an excellent piece of work. Mr. Moffatt offers this part of his work to the public “with extreme diffidence” as a “difficult and audacious attempt,” which has “proved itself beyond his powers.” We are persuaded that many who are in a position to judge will pronounce it the best yet made. There

is at any rate evidence throughout that it has been made with a full knowledge of all suggested meanings, with a firm grasp of sound principles of translation and with a faculty for writing intelligible and accurate English. He has not hampered himself with adaptation to any previous versions, but has rendered direct from the original text.

The "Prolegomena" aim at ascertaining the proper attitude of mind which must be assumed towards the New Testament writings when their origin and early history are kept in view. They are an able survey of the influences at work in the formation of the Gospels, and form a commentary on the text: "To become legible these books need the context of the religious situation." "The conception of Jesus in the Gospels represents not only the historical likeness so far as its traits were preserved in the primitive evangelic tradition, but also the religious interests of the age in which and for which these narratives were originally drawn up. It is in the balance and adjustment of these two elements that one real problem of New Testament criticism will always lie." With Mr. Moffatt's statement of the general principles governing historical criticism, few will be disposed to disagree.

It is when we come to the application of these principles as exhibited in the introductory notes to the individual books that dissent will be provoked. His conclusions regarding authorship and date are in general those which have been promulgated by Jülicher. Traditional dates are in almost every case where difference of opinion is possible pronounced too early—although here and there Mr. Moffatt seems a little mixed in his own chronology—the Pastoral Epistles have only a minute Pauline nucleus, 2 Peter is pseudonymous, and so on. With Mr. Moffatt's method little fault can be found, except that he does not sufficiently appreciate the weight of evidence against his own opinion. Thus in considering the authorship of the Pastorals he does not even allude to the ablest defence of the traditional view, that by Prof. Findlay; and while he affirms that the weightiest argument against the Pauline authorship is the difficulty of finding a place for them in the life of the Apostle, he gives no account of the evidence in favour of a second imprisonment. Indeed his whole treatment of the Pastorals is one-sided. He has actually persuaded himself that such sayings as "sinners of whom I am chief" were the invention of a forger. This unknown person must at any rate have

been a humourist and smiled to himself as he advised a supposititious Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake. The main argument is that the Epistles are ecclesiastical, therefore not by a theologically inclined and devout spirit such as Paul—which is rather hard on men like Bishop Westcott and Principal Rainy, who are large enough to include both the devout mystic and the hard-headed statesman.

The airiness with which Mr. Moffatt treats important critical questions sometimes carries him into the cheap method of dismissing the adverse opinions of great scholars with a point of exclamation; sometimes into an apparent oblivion of the consequences of his own opinions. No doubt critical inquiries must be conducted and truth declared regardless of consequences, but a consideration of consequences balances the mind and lends seriousness to the discussion. It may be said that we lose nothing and that the documents remain of equal value whoever was their author. But that is not so. If the Epistle which passes as that of James really belongs to the second century, then we lose, not indeed the strongest proof of our Lord's sinlessness, but certainly the strongest testimony in its favour.

But, such drawbacks notwithstanding, Mr. Moffatt's volume decisively makes good its claim to be called the historical New Testament, for in its perusal we are brought into touch with the ideas and movements of the first century, and are taught to judge the books in connexion with these ideas. What may be termed the critical attitude has no finer illustration in our language, and the volume will be found an admirable discipline for the student.

Two Lectures on the Gospels, by F. Crawford Burkitt, M.A., (Macmillan and Co.) sketch the present position of the criticism of the text and of the origin of the Gospels, and may be useful as an introduction to books in which these subjects are more fully treated. The same firm are issuing a series of New Testament handbooks, edited by Prof. Shailer Mathews, of Chicago, which reach an unusually high level of excellence. They are written in a spirit of liberal and well informed but not extreme criticism. The conservative mind may here and there resent an apparently needless concession to the more revolutionary German critics, but in the main a reasonable moderation prevails.—Prof. Bacon's *Introduction to the New Testament* is not a mere popular compilation such as frequently does duty as a manual, but is the

original production of a strong and highly cultivated mind imbued with the critical spirit and sensitive to critical problems. English readers have access to no such stimulating writing on New Testament introduction. It is necessarily brief, but it is thorough; and even where one dissents from the writer's conclusions it must be recognized that they are based on well considered and lucidly presented argument.—Similar in character, although scarcely so instructive, is Prof. Ezra P. Gould's *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, an extremely clever presentation of the contents of the New Testament books, but often provoking dissent.—Prof. Nash's *History of the Higher Criticism*, and Prof. Shailer Mathews' *New Testament Times* are also well worthy of a place in this most scholarly and useful series.

We offer Dr. Hastings our cordial congratulations on the issue of the third volume of the *Dictionary of the Bible* in course of publication by Messrs. T. & T. Clark. It contains the headings from Kir to Pleiades. The New Testament articles, which strike us as being the most substantial additions to our knowledge, are those by Dr. H. A. A. Kennedy on the Latin versions, Dr. Chase on St. Peter and the Epistles ascribed to him (more than sixty pages), and Prof. Findlay on St. Paul. The erudition and careful unbiassed judgment displayed in these articles cannot fail deeply to impress all who use this eminently helpful dictionary. Many other articles might be specified which, although they may not so distinctly as these advance our knowledge, yet bring before us in a convenient form information which it would be laborious to collect for ourselves. It would be wise policy in every preacher and student to economize by resisting the temptation to purchase second-rate or twentieth-rate books, and invest in so permanently and continually serviceable a work as this.

In textual criticism we are furnished by Dr. Eberhard Nestle with a thoroughly competent guide in his *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament*. This instructive volume, already in a second German edition, has been translated by William Edie, B.D., edited by Prof. Menzies and issued as the thirteenth volume of Messrs. Williams & Norgate's Theological Translation Library. It is intended to be used as a textbook in colleges, and is therefore not so full in its account of MSS. as Gregory's *Prolegomena to Tischendorf*, nor does it give so elaborate an account of the Versions as is to be found in the latest edition

of Scrivener. Dr. Nestle divides his subject into three parts, a history of the Printed Text, Materials of Criticism, and the Theory and Praxis of Criticism, to which is added a useful discussion of many important passages. Under the first head the genealogy of the Printed Text might with advantage have been given with greater detail, and it is unfair to the Plymouth Brethren to rob them of their greatest distinction, our noble English critic Tregelles, and hand him over to the Quakers. On the whole, as a manual of textual criticism, Nestle's book is likely to supersede all others.

St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, a new translation with a brief analysis, by W. G. Rutherford, headmaster of Westminster, (Macmillan & Co.) will be welcomed by the many persons who are conscious that much may yet be done by translation to elucidate the New Testament. The first words of Dr. Rutherford's preface do not inspire us with confidence. "This was," he says, "a plain letter concerned with a theme which plain men might understand." The author of 2 Peter did not think so; and any one who proceeds to translate under the impression that lucidity of expression is all that is needed to make the writings of St. Paul intelligible is mistaken. Dr. Rutherford's criticism of other translations and his indication of the sources of their errors are excellent. And although his own attempt may not accomplish all he expects, it will certainly help to the understanding of the Epistle.

EXPOSITION.—The most important contribution to Exegesis in recent months is the new edition (the ninth) of Prof. Beet's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Hodder & Stoughton). One cannot but admire the love of truth and the patience which have prompted the author to rewrite a book which already was so favourably received by the public. In its present form it deserves to command even increased popularity. Those who have used it will testify to its scholarship, its independence and its sympathy with Pauline teaching.

Of the same Epistle Mr. C. E. Stuart publishes *An Outline* (second edition, Marlborough & Co.). It is rather a paraphrase than an outline. Mr. Stuart explains in his own language and with slight elaboration what he conceives to be the meaning and order of thought of the Epistle. He has views of his own which others will scarcely find in the teaching of St. Paul; but for any student

of the Epistle who has not time to consult larger books this will be found convenient.

Principal Garrod continues his useful series of handbooks, and now publishes (Macmillan & Co.) *The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians*. It is on the same plan as the previous volumes, giving an introduction, a full analysis and notes well selected and conveniently arranged.

The Principal of Midland College, Rev. J. Howard B. Masterman, with a very similar purpose in view, has issued a commentary on *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (Macmillan & Co.). Slightly more ambitious than Principal Garrod's volumes, it contains the Greek text and notes upon it and will be found a serviceable introduction to the study of the Epistle. Principal Masterman does not seem to have used the excellent commentary of Pastor Monnier (*La Première Epître de l'Apôtre Pierre*—Macon, Protat Frères), published last year.

Two books on the Gospels reach us from America. One of these is *The Life of Christ*, by Profs. De Witt Burton and Shailer Mathews, in the series of "Constructive Bible Studies" which they are editing. Like everything else which these scholars have produced, this series of studies is eminently worthy of attention. It is so arranged and so equipped with suitable apparatus of questions and directions for further study as to be available either for private or class work. Any one who works his way through this attractive and rich volume will find himself possessed of a full and accurate knowledge of the life of our Lord.

President Cary, of Meadville, contributes the volume on *The Synoptic Gospels* to the series of "International Handbooks to the New Testament," edited by Dr. Orello Cone. The purpose of this series is to "meet the wants of the general reader, and at the same time present the results of the latest scholarship and of the most thorough critical investigation." This purpose may be said to be fulfilled, although the result cannot be said to be happy for "the general reader." He is presented with extreme views regarding miracle, and with little to counterbalance them. One does not always perceive what Dr. Cary's own view is. He seems, e.g., to favour that explanation of the resurrection which proceeds upon the supposition that Jesus had not died on the cross but was merely in a state of syncope. But one is slow to credit any scholar with so antiquated and imbecile a view.

A volume in which there will be found a large amount of sound, scholarly and enlightening exegesis is the last series of Kerr Lectures published by Messrs. T. & T. Clark, *The Relation of the Apostolic Teaching to the Teaching of Christ*, by the Rev. Robert J. Drummond. The subject is one which called for discussion, and could not have been more satisfactorily handled. Without any distortion of his text Dr. Drummond shows that the teaching of the Apostles, though often very differently worded and in different connexions, is still faithful to that of the Lord. The examination covers a great deal of ground, and is conducted with admirable insight, tact and suggestiveness. The Lectures are a distinct, much needed and valuable addition to our knowledge of the New Testament.

MISCELLANEOUS.—Messrs. Macmillan & Co. have issued in an admirable form the works of Bishop Butler. The two volumes, one containing the *Analogy* and another the *Sermons*, appear as part of the English Theological Library. They are most judiciously edited by Dr. J. H. Bernard, of Dublin, whose notes give precisely the needed information, neither obtruding superfluous remarks nor withholding what a reader ought to know. This edition is pretty sure to supplant even the editions of Fitzgerald, Gladstone, and others.

The Rev. Henry Latham, Master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, has followed up his original volume, entitled *Pastor Pastorum*, with another on the resurrection of our Lord and His subsequent manifestations. It is published by Messrs. Deighton Bell & Co., and is equally ingenious as the former but not so convincing. As an examination in detail of the record of events in the Christian circle from the Resurrection to Pentecost, however, Mr. Latham's book has great value. It is entitled *The Risen Master*.

It is probably too late to call attention to Dr. John Watson's *The Doctrines of Grace* (Hodder & Stoughton), but it may be said in the interests of those who may not yet have seen the volume that it is full of weighty thought on somewhat perplexed religious problems. It is needless to say that any one who begins the volume is pretty sure to read on till he finishes it; and when he finishes it he will find himself a wiser man.

Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton have also published an extremely able apologetic by the Rev. P. Carnegie Simpson, of Glasgow. It is entitled *The Fact of Christ*, and starting from the historical

figure of Christ Mr. Simpson draws from that one fact a proof of all that is essential in Christianity. It is a very remarkable and thoroughly sound piece of reasoning, and deserves the consideration not only of all who are in doubt, but also of all who have in any way to do with doubters and of all who love a piece of clever and brilliant reasoning.

In *From Apostle to Priest*, by James W. Falconer, M.A., B.D., (T. & T. Clark), we have a very competent study of early church organization. Mr. Falconer presents us with a singularly fair, well informed and compact account of the development which united his two poles, Apostle and Priest, carrying us down from the first century to the days of Cyprian. He is well acquainted with the literature of his subject, and keeps an eye on writers who give an account of the matter different from his own, and draw conclusions adverse to those which seem the inevitable inference from his statements.

Mr. Henry St. John Thackeray has rendered useful service in his *Kaye Essay on The Relation of St. Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought* (Macmillan & Co.) It is a healthy sign of the times that so much labour is being spent on the editing and interpretation of the Jewish literature which forms the background of the New Testament writings. The illustration which these writings thus receive is both abundant and enlightening. Mr. Thackeray has brought together much that has hitherto lain scattered in various volumes; and has thus furnished the student of the Pauline writings with a useful book of reference. His statement of the positions of St. Paul does not always approve itself as strictly accurate; and this seems to be due to his too unquestioning reliance on certain commentators.

The Rev. Cosmo Gordon Lang publishes with Messrs. Isbister & Co., *The Miracles of Jesus as Marks of the Way of Life*, that is to say, as conveying to us some of our Lord's most impressive teaching regarding character and conduct. The volume is valuable. It is not only the point of view which is fresh, but the entire treatment is original, interesting and instructive. To those who desire not so much an exposition of the miracles as some lessons drawn from the character of the persons on whom they were performed Mr. Lang's volume can be cordially recommended.

In *The True Christ and the False Christ* (George Allen) Mr. J. Garnier makes it his aim to expose the errors of Romanism

and spurious Evangelicalism by exhibiting the truth regarding Christ's person and work. There is learning and thought in the two volumes, but few will agree with the author throughout. Messrs. G. P. Putnam's Sons publish *The Divine Pedigree of Man, or the Testimony of Evolution and Psychology to the Fatherhood of God*, by Thomas J. Hudson, LL.D. It is a book for psychologists, in which the author attempts to establish and apply his theory of a double mind in man; an objective mind dependent on the brain, a subjective mind independent of it.—In *After the Spirit* (Drummond's Tract Dépôt) Dr. Elder Cumming furnishes a continuation of his excellent papers on the Eternal Spirit, His person and work.—Mr. Parke P. Flourney publishes through Mr. Thynne *The Searchlight of Hippolytus*, in which he collects the evidence for the New Testament writings and against the Papal claims which is furnished by the writings of that Father.

Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton publish yet another help to the production of sermons, *The Preacher's Dictionary*, by E. F. Cavalier, M.A., rector of Wramplingham. The idea of the book is novel. It consists of a collection of "Subjects," such as Baptism, Bible, Death, Evil, Fear. These are arranged alphabetically and cover a large number of the ordinary themes for sermons. Under each heading a definition is given, then a conspectus of Biblical teaching, and a large collection of thoughts gathered from ancient and modern literature. Mr. Cavalier's reading has been wide and varied, and any one with skill to use such a book has immense material here laid to his hand.

Messrs. Macmillan & Co. wisely issue an abridged edition of the *Life of Edward White Benson, sometime Archbishop of Canterbury*. The abridgement is accomplished not by rewriting, but by the simpler method of omission. Subjects not likely to interest the general public have been subjected to curtailment and many letters have been omitted. In its present form this excellent biography will reach a still wider circle of readers and bring to their more familiar acquaintance a man well worth knowing.—The same firm issue *Sermons on the Books of the Bible* selected from the volumes of "Village Sermons" by the late Dr. Hort. They are printed separately because they have been found "extremely valuable for Indian students." "Indian" might be omitted.

From Mr. Charles H. Kelly we have received two excellent additions to the useful series of "Books for Bible Students." One

of these is *Studies in Eastern Religions*, by Alfred S. Geden, M.A., tutor in the Richmond Wesleyan College and author of a previous volume of this series, *Studies in Comparative Religion*. The present volume, though issued under a different title, is really the second volume of those "Studies," giving a thoroughly competent and compact account of Brahmanism and Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism.—The other addition to the series is Mr. A. W. Cooke's *Palestine in Geography and in History*, which aims at including a general description of the country, its inhabitants and history, together with a detailed description of the principal divisions of the country, with careful geographical and historical sketches of each province and its important sites. The volume is written in an interesting manner and the seven maps are unusually good.—From the same publisher comes Mr. Clapperton's *First Steps in New Testament Greek*, a simple and rudimentary introduction to the accidence of the language with a few syntactic rules. It is to be hoped it will not prevent students from using the same publisher's *Introduction to New Testament Greek*, by Mr. J. H. Moulton.—A more ambitious attempt is Mr. A. T. Robertson's *New Testament Greek Syllabus for Junior Greek Class* (Dearing, Louisville, Kentucky). A great deal may be learned from the hundred small pages of this little manual. Philology and syntax are treated in a scholarly fashion, although occasionally the changes introduced into later Greek are neglected.

From Mr. Andrew Melrose comes an excellently edited issue of *The Heidelberg Catechism*. The editor's name is not given—unless we are to infer that this is from the hand of the general editor of the series of "Books for the Heart"—but our warm thanks are due to him for the German text and translation, and especially for his Introduction, in which he gives a clear account of related catechisms.

Messrs. Eyre & Spottiswoode send us a small (pearl 24mo) illustrated Bible. The illustrations are highly coloured.—They also issue *The Crimson Letter Testament*, so called because all the words of our Lord are printed in bright red colour.—The same firm publishes *The Child's Guide to the Book of Common Prayer*, by Ernest Esdaile. Messrs. Gale & Polden issue *From the Battlefield to a Glorious Resurrection*, by Expectans, in which the theory that the spiritual body exists in embryo in the natural body and is disengaged at death is advocated. Mr. Ellis, editor of the

Tool Basket, issues through Messrs. Simpkin, Marshall & Co. *The Evangelist's Wallet and Christian Worker's Note-Book*. We have received from The Knickerbocker Press Horatio Dresser's *Living by the Spirit*; from Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton, *Bersier's Pulpit*, containing an analysis of all the published sermons of the celebrated French preacher. This analysis is skilfully made by Mr. J. F. B. Tinling; also Dr. J. R. Miller's *The Golden Gate of Prayer*, consisting of doctrinal studies in the Lord's Prayer in the author's well known edifying style; from Messrs. Methuen & Co. a most useful compilation of facts and opinions on *The People of China: their country, history, life, ideas, and relations with the foreigner*, by Mr. J. W. Robertson-Scott.

From Messrs. Melville, Muller & Slade, of Melbourne, comes an "Essay in constructive religious Meliorism," entitled, *I Say unto You*, from the pen of Rev. J. Wellington Owen, B.A. (Oxon.); a learned and able and sincere, but somewhat confused piece of writing.

We have received *The Journal of Theological Studies*, the *Critical Review*, and *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, all of which contain much interesting and profitable matter.

MARCUS DODS.