

*DR. GREGORY ON THE CANON AND TEXT OF
THE NEW TESTAMENT.*¹

THE present treatise contains the results of a life-long devotion to the study of the text of the New Testament and to the associated problem of the Canon; it gathers up in a connected form what Dr. Gregory has been accumulating from personal researches in all the great libraries of Europe and of the East; probably there is no one now living who has spent so much time in the direct examination of the manuscripts of the New Testament, and in the increase of our knowledge of them, both as to the places where they lie, and as to their contents: and for that reason, if for no other, the book is sure to become one of the standards of reference in the library of a Biblical student.

Tischendorf, whose mantle Dr. Gregory wears, died with his work unfinished on December 7, 1874; the Prolegomena to the eighth edition of his New Testament were left to his successors to write; ten years after Tischendorf's death the first part of the Prolegomena appeared, and much of the information that was there contained will be found translated in the present volume, sometimes, as we shall see, without sufficient care to bring the treatment of the subject from the position it occupied in 1884 to that which it ought to occupy in 1907. For the progress that has been made in recent years both with the study of the Text and of the Canon is not slight, and although many famous workers in the field have been removed, their places have been occupied by an increasing number of explorers, some of whom seem likely to rank with the greatest names in the roll of New Testament scholarship.

The book before us is written in English of a type that

¹ Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1907.

is displeasing and often obscure : Dr. Gregory's long residence in Germany has affected his English ; his American origin shows itself, also, in many turns of speech which are not exactly Victorian English, and certainly cannot always be justified as Elizabethan. But it is the obscurity that is the worst feature of the style of the book : often a sentence has to be read several times over before one can tell what the writer means, and sometimes the fog is impenetrable. For instance, what is the meaning of such sentences as these ?—

P. 83. "He is one of the organizers of the renewal of the Old Testament, and of the law in the old Catholic Church that is beginning to knit together."

Or p. 84. "For those Christians, little as they overcast the whole sphere to reach such a conclusion, the new form of Christianity was not one of the retrograde steps."

Or p. 94. "The thought that Justin did not know our Gospels, but used apocryphal ones, finds a very good blocking-off in a single passage."

And what kind of English is contained in the following sentences ?

P. 122 (he is speaking of Hegesippus). "A certain ripeness of experience might be looked for from a man who set out to take a general account of stock in the Christian Church."

Or p. 154. "Irenaeus has done well by us."

Or p. 234. "Still further is to be observed, that the happy-go-luckiness with which, the reckless way in which we have seen that the writers of the early literature, which we have had to examine, etc."

P. 278. "He quotes Jude four times close together, and that fourteen verses out of Jude's twenty-five."

P. 287. "This excited word of Augustine's was all in all a frivolous word."

P. 322. "Such times of reverse served to sieve out the nominal Christians from the real Christians.

P. 355. "North of Kaisarie, in Cappadocia that was.

P 354. "[Purple MSS.] were not practical, but they cost a great deal."

P. 402. "In the 'Nine-mile' Monastery, that far from Alexandria."

P. 404. "The two great translations have been favoured by fortune, at least from the point of view of textual criticism, so little from other points of view as their experiences could be called desirable."

P. 410. "The fact that it does not contain the three heavenly witnesses (1 John v. 7, 8), is the more interesting in connection with its Spanish allures."

P. 425. "All such tasks intercalate."

P. 477. "Given witnesses contain forms that certainly are old, and that do not agree with the spelling of the Attic National Academy."

And what is one to make of this :

P. 74. "A pupil of John, known to Irenaeus, at Rome to discuss with the Bishop Anicetus the Easter question, proclaimed by his Church at his death."

One feels like saying after reading that sentence, "Now, sir! construe!"

Very often the writer goes astray in the desire to be popular ; he coins new words that are misleading to scholars as well as to the non-experts. For example, what will the average man make of this statement about the Codex Zacynthius (p. 361), "It is the oldest manuscript with a *chain*" ? will he not rub his eyes several times, as one expert admits that he did, before he finds out that the writer means that the text is accompanied by a *catena* ? Perhaps the worst instance of this new coinage is when he undertakes to replace the unsatisfactory nomenclature of Dr. Hort, who divides the MSS. of the New Testament (or rather the readings of such MSS.) under the heads of Neutral, Western, Alexandrian and Syrian. Does Dr. Gregory really think that we are likely to accept the substitutes which he proposes, Original Text, Re-wrought Text, Polished Text and Official Text ? For a scholar who does not accept Dr. Hort's theory of the genesis of the various readings in the New Testament, every one of these terms is a *Petitio Principii*. The terms might

serve a student in an examination, who wished to recall theories which he had imperfectly digested, but they are hardly likely to be accepted by scholars of any party; it would be better to distinguish classes of readings by the letters of the alphabet than by Dr. Gregory's fantastic terms.

Sometimes he is obscure from sheer want of sympathy with his readers, as when on p. 101 he is trying to show that Papias' lost works could not have contained words of Jesus not found in our Gospels. "How eagerly would Eusebius have told us of the contents of the book had that been its description! How would Anastasius of Sinai in the sixth century have revelled in a book with new words of Jesus!" How many readers will be able to assign the reason for this abrupt introduction of the sixth century Sinaitic monk?

But now we come to a more serious matter, the existence of a number of surprising errors, which seem to have escaped the notice of both the writer and certain of his reviewers.

On p. 239 we are told that the Epistle of Clement of Rome does not appear to have been translated into Latin, so that there is not even a question as to its scriptural authority in the Latin Church!

Apparently the writer is not aware that the Latin translation of Clement's Epistle was published some years since by Dom Morin; it attracted a good deal of attention at the time, and, in particular, met with some very illuminating criticism at the hands of Dr. Sanday, who brought forward reasons for believing that the translation had been used by St. Ambrose. In any case it must have been a very early piece of work. While we are speaking of Clement of Rome, we may point out a curious blunder which Dr. Gregory makes in his account of Wetstein's New Testament. On p. 448 we are told that "it contained also the letter of Clement of Rome, and the homily of

Pseudo-Clement, in Syriac and Latin, at the close of the second volume." Now it is quite true that there are a couple of Syriac epistles ascribed to Clement at the end of the second volume of Wetstein's New Testament, but they are not the pieces described by Gregory, but the two Epistles commonly known as Clement's Epistles to Virgins; as any one can verify who will take the trouble to look up Wetstein's edition. The error has arisen in re-editing from the Prolegomena into the volume before us; the statement in the Prolegomena is "duæ epistolæ S. Clementis Romani [Syr.-Lat.]"

A curious mistake, probably arising from want of close attention to what one is writing, will be found in the description of Julius Africanus: on p. 429 we are told of Africanus that "he probably lived from about 170 to 240," and that "he wrote a letter to Aristides touching the conflicting genealogies of Jesus! And in accordance with this we have the statement on p. 431 that "the third century offers us, in Syria, Julius Africanus, who might have been connected with the close of the second century."

But then, a little higher up the same page, we find the surprising statement that "In Greece two apologists come to meet us, Aristides, to whom Julius Africanus wrote the letter about the genealogies of Jesus, and Athenagoras." If Africanus was not born before 170, it is not easy to see how he wrote to Aristides, the Athenian philosopher, in the early part of the second century.

Another curious error, arising probably out of mere carelessness, will be found in the description of the letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne. On p. 142 we are told that "Vienne is the place to which Herod was sent as an exile with Herodias after the murder of John the Baptist. Josephus the Jewish historian says so." Now, I do not think that Josephus connects the exile of Herod

with the death of John the Baptist, which appears to be a gratuitous addition to the reference to the exile: Herod certainly was not exiled before that event, and it is not clear why the head of St. John has to be introduced. But neither does Josephus say that Vienne was the place of exile; he says Lyons: "he appointed Lyons, a city of Gaul, to be his place of habitation" (*Antiq.* xviii. 7, 2).

On p. 208, in analysing the Biblical quotations in the letter of Polycarp, there is a curious mistake in the name of the avaricious presbyter at Philippi over whom Polycarp laments: "Polycarp quotes directly second Thessalonians in speaking of the erring presbyter *Valentus* and his wife." The name is usually edited as Valens, and in confirmation it may be noted with Lightfoot that Valens was a common name at Philippi. Has Dr. Gregory any special reason for spelling the name *Valentus*, and is Lightfoot's evidence from the inscriptions not to the point?

To carelessness must, I suppose, be assigned a statement made on p. 426 concerning the Diatessaron of Tatian. "We possess it to-day unfortunately neither in Greek nor in Syrian. Wherever it appeared—it also passed over into Armenian and into Arabic—it must have exerted the same confusing and confounded evidence!" Here "Syrian" is Gregory's way of writing "Syriac," I suppose, in order to make the word parallel with Armenian, Georgian and similar forms; in that case why reserve Arabic? But surely there is no evidence as yet that the Diatessaron passed over into Armenian. The most that we have in that direction consists in the fragments embedded in the Armenian translation of Ephrem's comment on the Diatessaron, which is a very different thing from an Armenian Diatessaron.

When we come to examine the evidence produced for the circulation and acceptance of the various books of

the New Testament, we find a number of errors which ought to have been avoided, as well as a reactionary treatment of the whole subject. Take, for example, the following judgment upon a passage of Theophilus of Antioch (p. 169): "The following points doubtless to Matthew: And all things whatsoever a man does not wish to be done to himself, that he should neither do to another." One would have supposed that by this time enough had been written on the Golden Rule and its negative form, to make it impossible for a critic hastily to assign such a passage to Matthew: why not to the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, or to Hillel or Tobit, or to the Western text of the Acts in the letter from Jerusalem? for observe that the fact of its parallelism with the positive precept from Matthew does not prove anything: it might be the complementary part of a complete saying of Jesus, and in any case the negative form, in view of the multitude of similar passages, proves its independence: Matthew *plus* some one else is not likely to be Matthew.

In the same way when he is trying to demonstrate that the Gospel of Matthew is quoted in the Epistle of Barnabas, he says (p. 164) as follows:

"When he writes (c. 19) 'Thou shalt not approach unto prayer with an evil conscience,' he may have the words of Jesus in Matthew in his mind, but it is not necessary that he should. His words (c. 19) 'Thou shalt not hesitate to give, nor when thou givest shalt thou murmur; but thou shalt know who is the good payer-back of the reward,' looks very like a reference to the sixth chapter of Matthew."

Is it possible that Dr. Gregory does not know that the whole of the section of Barnabas from which he is quoting is an extract from the Teaching of the Apostles or, at all events, from a Jewish document underlying the teaching? What confidence can be placed in his reconstruction of

the sub-apostolic Canon, when the materials are arranged so loosely as in the foregoing identifications ?

On p. 171, in searching for traces of the Gospel of Luke amongst the Ophites, we find the following extract from Hippolytus given and commented on : "The blessed nature of things past and things present and things to come, which is at one and the same time concealed and revealed, which he says is the kingdom of heavens sought within a man. Then they quote the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas. The words in Luke are : For behold the kingdom of God is within you. We know how readily the kingdom of heaven or the heavens is written for the kingdom of God. That is one of the instances of the influence of the Gospel according to Matthew." Has Dr. Gregory examined the fragments of the sayings of Jesus published by Grenfell and Hunt, and in particular has he noted the sentence, "and the kingdom of the heavens is within you," and the ascription of the whole collection to the Apostle Thomas ? Is it necessary to say that the Ophites have quoted Luke modified by Matthew ?

Still more unfortunate is the treatment of another Ophite text, which immediately follows the preceding :

"One passage that they use looks a little like the seven times sinning of the brother as given by Luke : 'And this is that which is spoken, they say, in the Scripture, Seven times the righteous will fall and will rise again. If they have not this place in view, it is hard to say what had induced the form of the sentence.'"

Would it not be sufficient to put Proverbs xxiv. 16 on the margin, and delete the reference to Luke altogether ?

While we are referring to the Ophites and to the Biblical text involved in their curious writings, it is interesting to refer to a passage which they quote from the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Dr. Gregory points out that they "play upon the word for 'ends' in 1 Corinthians x. 11, using it also in the sense of 'customs' : 'For tax-gatherers,

they say, are those taking the customs of all things, and we, they say, are the tax-gatherers: upon whom the customs (taxes, instead of ends) of the ages have fallen.' And they go on to discuss the word."

It was Dr. J. H. Moulton who first pointed out, from the language of the papyri, that the word here used by St. Paul, *κατήντηκεν*, was the proper word for the devolution of an inheritance. To which I added the remark that, in that case, the word *τέλη* could be taken in the sense of revenues, so that we could get rid of the reference to the "coming of the ends of the world," and say that these things happened for our education, "upon whom have devolved the revenues of the ages." This strikingly modern language about the "heirs of all the ages" is involved in the passage quoted from the Ophites, who have clearly anticipated Dr. Moulton and myself in the explanation of the passage. There is no play upon words, as Dr. Gregory suggests, at this point: the play upon the word *τέλος* begins when the Ophite teacher turns from the correct exegesis of the passage in 1 Corinthians to find the same word *τέλος* in another sense in the *συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος*. And the Ophite passage would have been clearer, if it had been rendered as follows: "For the revenue-officers are those who receive the revenues of all things; and we, says he, are the revenue-officers, to whom have devolved the revenues of the ages."

By the way, Dr. Gregory's translations of the Greek passages that he quotes will often set one thinking, and contradicting. My eye is resting at present on the famous saying of Jesus, which Clement of Alexandria quotes from the Gospel according to the Hebrews: (p. 250, "In the Gospel according to the Hebrews it is written, He that admires shall rule, and he that ruled shall cease.")¹

¹ ὁ θαυμάσας βασιλεύσει, καὶ ὁ βασιλεύσας ἀναπαύσεται (!).

The interest of this passage lies in the fact that it is an abbreviation of a longer saying of Jesus found amongst the papyri from Oxyrhyncus. It is the first saying in the book of Sayings of Jesus which have caused so much excitement amongst critics and theologians, and it runs as follows: "Jesus saith: Let not the seeker desist from his quest until he finds; when he finds he shall be astonished; astonished he shall come to the kingdom,¹ and when he has come to the kingdom, he shall rest." It is obvious that a translation like Dr. Gregory's is not applicable, and it is difficult to attach a meaning to it.

The reactionary character of Dr. Gregory's work may be seen by comparing it with that of Westcott, or with the result given in the study of the *New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* published by the Oxford Society of Historical Theology. Take, for example, the case of the letter of Polycarp: Dr. Gregory (p. 75) tells us: "It is plain that he had in his hands the Gospel of Matthew, and he probably had all four Gospels: he had all the Epistles of Paul, he had First Peter and First John, and he had that letter of Clement of Rome. I have no doubt that he refers to Acts in his first chapter." If we compare this with Westcott's tabulated results in the Appendix to the Canon of the New Testament, we shall find that his list of Polycarpian books contains Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians (?), Philippians, 1 Thessalonians (?), 2 Thessalonians (?), 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, 1 Peter, 2 Peter (?), 1 John. Note the difference between Gregory and Westcott in the treatment of the quotations from the Gospels. Then turn to the Oxford volume, and look at their table of results: of the Gospels they only recognize John as possibly quoted, other parallels being referred to a synoptic tradition, which need not be the same as our Gospels; and the certain

¹ So Grenfell and Hunt for βασιλεύσει.

quotations from the Epistles are limited to 1 Corinthians and 1 Peter, though most of the other Pauline Epistles are suggested, and, of course, 1 John. Westcott summed up the question of quotations from the Gospels by the admission that "no evangelic reference in the Apostolic Fathers can be referred certainly to a written record," although, on the other hand, "no quotation contains any element which is not substantially preserved in our Gospels." It will be seen that Gregory goes much farther than this; he evidently holds, with Dr. Ezra Abbot, that there never were any other accepted Gospels in the Church than the conventional four; but while it might have been so argued a quarter of a century ago, the case is altogether changed since the discovery of fragments of early Gospels and of early collections of Sayings of Jesus. The whole argument as to Polycarp's Gospels and Clement's Gospels and the coincident matter in the two is changed by the recognition of the new factor in the so-called Logia books. It pleases Dr. Gregory to ignore all this evidence, but it is vital for the question, and the neglect of it can only be described as reactionary.

For further study take Gregory's examination of the Evangelic elements in what is called the Second Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians. If one thing is clearer than another to an unprejudiced student of the Gospel problem, it is the dependence of 2 Clement on an uncanonical Gospel, and his non-dependence upon the canonical Gospels. Yet Gregory will not admit the latter part of this statement and struggles hard to escape from the former. He suggests that the writer quotes "haphazard from memory, as has been done even in modern sermons." . . . "It is good plain sermon quotation of our Gospels when he says, For the Lord saith, Ye shall be as lambs in the midst of wolves. If any one had called his attention to the words of Jesus,

Behold, I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves, he would have at once replied, 'That is just what I said, Ye shall be as lambs in the midst of wolves.' "

Notice here how completely Gregory ignores the conversation with Peter which follows in the homily, and which certainly was a part of the document from which the supposed Clement was quoting. Notice also, how he ignores the formula of the Logia-book, with which Clement opens. And when he admits that perhaps an extra-canonical Gospel may have been used, he diminishes the value of the concession by saying that "there is not the least reason to suppose that this preacher used any other New Testament than ours, in spite of his quotation from a strange gospel or so." All of which surprises us; one would have supposed that a critic would have felt a thrill of joy at detecting a fragment of a lost Gospel. We always do ourselves; but apparently Dr. Gregory is working from another point of view. Perhaps it is the mantle of Tischendorf that explains it. And this brings us to one other matter of regret in connexion with a really valuable book which is likely, as we stated at the opening of the article, to become a standard of reference for scholars. It is to be regretted that loyalty to Tischendorf's memory should have rendered it necessary, in Dr. Gregory's judgment, to continue his apologetic treatment of the manner in which Tischendorf acquired the famous Codex Sinaiticus for St. Petersburg. It is a mere misrepresentation of those who have put in an ethical objection to the way in which the document was alienated from the convent of St. Katharine, to ask them whether they really supposed Tischendorf carried off the book under his waistband—no one ever suggested anything of the kind. But Dr. Gregory's own documents are in evidence for the fact that for ten long years the monks endeavoured to recover possession of their treasure, and

it is idle to put that period of time down to the tardy diplomatics of the East. The Russian Government is the most rapid on earth in acquiring MSS. or similar treasures, as those know who have ever entered into rivalry with them. And they certainly would not have delayed ten years in an Eastern haggle over a book which they knew to be one of the treasures of the world and for which they were prepared to pay any price.

Nor is anything gained by depreciating the calibre of the Sinaitic monks of fifty years ago. For the matter of that, the wandering scholars have also changed for the better. Any one who has worked through Eastern monastic libraries knows that it is something like going over a recent field of battle. The books are torn and bleeding, and one knows that the wounds are fresh. Who is responsible? Dr. Gregory has one reply, Porphyry Uspenski, the bishop of Kieff. No doubt Porphyry enriched himself at the expense of the libraries which he visited, but so did Tischendorf; and the blame must be fairly distributed. Dr. Gregory speaks of Porphyry's performances, p. 381: "The Imperial Library [at St. Petersburg] contains a large number of fine leaves from valuable manuscripts which Porfiri Uspenski of Kiev cut, tore, stole out of all manner of books in the large Eastern libraries. How coarse and brutal he must have been!" *There are some similar collections elsewhere!*

But Dr. Gregory is to be congratulated on the abandonment of one myth, which has had wide circulation. Tischendorf always insisted, in his vivacious accounts of the finding of the Codex Sinaiticus, that he had rescued the book, in part at least, from the flames. "I perceived a large wide basket full of old parchments, and the librarian told me that two heaps like this had already been committed to the flames, etc." (*Discovery of the Sinaitic MS.*, p. 23).

What a run this myth has had, of a convent stove fed with parchment! unhappily for the statement, the basket is still there, a regular part of the library furniture, and not a suggestion can be found that it was ever used to carry vellum books to the kitchen for burning. But any story will be believed against the Sinaitic monks, even that they made fires with parchment.

If there is a direction in which Dr. Gregory has shown himself unduly rigid, where we should have wished that loyalty to Tischendorf might have been brought somewhat nearer to loyalty to the nature of the case, there is one passage that seems to require attention, in which his opinion has exhibited the most violent rebound conceivable. In his discussion (p. 452) of the text and labours of Scholz, he expresses himself as follows :

“This collection of various readings [of Scholz] was, and is still to-day, very important. The habit of decrying Scholz’s carefulness in collation appears to me to be unjustifiable. I have repeatedly compared his collations with the originals and found them to be very good.”

The language does not suggest that of a professor sitting on a stool of repentance : but here is what Dr. Gregory said of Scholz in the Prolegomena to Tischendorf : “*Haec omnia tamen fecit tam incredibili negligentia ut testimonium eius nisi ab aliis corroboratum ubique in dubium vocandum sit.*” There is no doubt about the swing of the pendulum here : who is right, the Professor of 1884 or the Professor of 1897? *Non liquet*. I can answer for Scholz’s descriptions of MSS. : they are very inaccurate. Of the texts I should like some further verification.

If the interval between 1884 and 1907 was long enough for Dr. Gregory to reform his judgment about Scholz, it ought, one would have supposed, to have been long enough to clear up some other points upon which he professes himself to be in perplexity. For instance, in regard to

that very interesting New Testament published by Mace in 1720, which first showed the way of progress to the textual critics in England, we find Dr. Gregory writing as follows :

P. 446. "I have tried in vain to find out something about a Presbyterian clergyman named William or perhaps Daniel Mace, who is said to have been a member of Gresham College in London. In the year 1729 he published, etc."

A reference to the Dictionary of National Biography will inform us that it was Daniel Mace, and not William. He died in 1753. He was Presbyterian minister at Newbury in Berks, where he is buried in the Meeting House. He has nothing to do with William Mace, who was Gresham Lecturer. I have not been able to verify all these points afresh, but the difficulty which Dr. Gregory was trying to clear up appears to be easily unravelled.

But it is time to bring this review to a close ; it ought to have been more appreciative of a really valuable and interesting book, but the path of progress runs through the correction of errors, even of people whom we admire, from whom we have learned much and expect to learn more.

J. RENDEL HARRIS.