

IT is the evening that crowns the day, and the last act that commends the whole scene.—J. TRAPP.

Freedom by Truth.—The truth Christ taught, and by which He set men free, was this : that God was their Father and Saviour, that He really loved them, and would make any sacrifice to ransom them from evil. The truth He taught was, that to love God and his neighbour with all his heart was the whole duty of man. The truth He taught men was, that heaven was their home, the home in which they would dwell with God for ever, if only they accepted His salvation, and were diligent to discharge the duty of love.—S. COX.

Two boys see a misshapen, hideous object in the dark. One goes up to the cause of his terror, examines it, learns what it is ; he knows the truth, and the truth has made him free. The other leaves it in mystery and unexplained vagueness, and is a slave for life to superstitious and indefinite terrors.—F. W. ROBERTSON.

IT is quite true that the truth does not make you free all at once. The light very often seems to do nothing but show you your chains. The result of seeing that you are not living as becomes a Christian is not always that you are instantly able to begin a new life. On the contrary, very often this is but the beginning of a new battle.—F. TEMPLE.

It is assumed (in the modern world) that not the believer, but the doubter is free. Does he not call himself a free-thinker ? It would be easy to show that the opposite of this is the lesson of history and experience. All the strongest influences for the emancipation of the human mind from the bondage of error, and of nations from the yoke of despotism, have had their root and inspiration in religious faith, and not

in unbelief. And the true guarantees for freedom, when it has been won, lie in that region of moral strength and stability which always has been in close relation with a pure and sound religion.—D. FRASER.

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St. Luke in the International Critical Commentary.¹

BY THE REV. HENRY A. REDPATH, M.A., QUEEN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD.

We congratulate the editors and publishers very sincerely on the appearance of another volume of *The International Critical Commentary*. The volumes, with one exception perhaps, reach a very high order of excellence, and this volume will bear comparison with the best of those that have gone before. It is the bulkiest of all the volumes that have as yet appeared, but no space seems wasted.

¹ *The International Critical Commentary. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Luke.* By the Rev. Alfred Plummer, M.A., D.D., Master of University College, Durham, formerly Fellow and Senior Tutor of Trinity College, Oxford. (Edinburgh : T. & T. Clark, 1896.)

In the treatment of his subject, Dr. Plummer's aim evidently is to be, as far as he can, absolutely impartial, and to represent divergent views as fairly as possible before giving his judgment. A notable instance of this is the way in which he discusses the date of the Gospel. Whilst finally adhering with Dr. Sanday, Professor Ramsay, and others to the date, A.D. 75-80, in his Introduction, he shows how much may be said for the earlier date of about A.D. 63, especially on the ground that the destruction of Jerusalem could not have taken place when the Gospel was compiled.

The way in which the writer treats this subject illustrates the painstaking and thorough way in which the arguments *pro* and *con* have been con-

sidered. He has evidently read an immense amount of literature bearing on his subject, and many will have an opportunity of reading in this volume the results arrived at by many German critics, with which perhaps they have hitherto been unfamiliar.

In turning over the pages of the volume for the purpose of this review, we have noticed many points, some of which we may now proceed to notice.

It is not often that we see it so carefully insisted upon as it is in this volume that the Christian Faith rests on a historical basis. We are given the Old Roman Creed (Pref., p. vii), and shown how every article of it is founded upon statements such as are made in this Gospel. These are the things, he says, in which St. Luke must 'have been instructed.'

We think that Dr. Plummer has effectually disposed (not only in his Introduction, but in many remarks scattered throughout the pages of his commentary) of the arguments that have been used to prove that there is an Ebionite tendency to be found in St. Luke's Gospel—a view that was particularly brought into notice in the second part of Colin Campbell's *Critical Studies in St. Luke's Gospel*, published some years ago. He shows that in many of the passages common to St. Luke with other Gospels the language of the other evangelists is, if anything, more Ebionite than St. Luke's.

One of the strongest points in this commentary, and no doubt one of the most valuable, is his treatment of the language of St. Luke, not only in the Gospel, but also in the Acts, especially as compared with the rest of what may be called biblical Greek. It seems a pity that Dr. Plummer did not find space to add references to, at any rate, some of the lists of words and expressions on pages lii, liii, and Table 3 on p. lix. Such Tables as 1 and 2 are of inestimable value for the study of the relation of the language of St. Luke to that of St. Paul.

We wonder that, in the discussion of the characteristics of the Third Gospel, no mention is made of the fact that this Gospel is the Gospel of the Angels. The author gives us somewhere in this commentary a short note on the fact that St. Luke is fond of drawing attention to the ministry of angels, but it surely might have found a place in his discussion upon the characteristics of the Gospel.

There is a very careful discussion on the use of medical terms by St. Luke. The subject is treated with great caution, and it is made clear that whilst many have found in St. Luke an immense number of terms which they trace to his medical training, a great number of these cannot reasonably be assigned to this source, whilst others indubitably do point to 'the beloved physician.' The Introduction also contains a short account of Marcion's *St. Luke*, and pronounces it unhesitatingly to be an abbreviation of our Gospel as it stands. Other interesting sections follow—a short one on the MSS. and Versions, a longer one on the Early Literary History of the Gospel, and another on the Commentaries already existing. It is interesting to note that Dr. Plummer makes considerable use, as is made in the commentary in this series on the Romans of the commentary of Euthymius Zigabenus, a famous Byzantine theologian who flourished about 1118, of whose work a high estimate is given.

A full discussion of the Synoptic problem is, no doubt, held over for the forthcoming volume in this series by Dr. Sanday and the Rev. W. C. Allen. Dr. Plummer occasionally discusses special points, but in such a fragmentary and detached manner that his statements have given us no definite idea of any general theory that he may hold. It does not fall within his purview to discuss inspiration, but it seems a far cry from the use by St. Luke in his Preface of the word ἀκριβῶς and the fact that he asserts that he is giving us the results of careful research to assert: 'From this it seems to follow that an inspired historian may fail in accuracy if his investigation is defective.' We are not concerned for the moment with the truth or not of the statement that he may or that he may not fail.

Dr. Plummer, to speak generally, accepts the miraculous element in the Gospels.¹ He lays considerable emphasis on the fact that it is never asserted of John the Baptist that he performed a miracle, and that after his death none were claimed as having been done by him.

We admire the candid way in which Dr. Plummer states and brushes away difficulties that have been sometimes raised. For instance, in a

¹ We do not understand how, from his point of view, with the miraculous feeding of the multitude before him, he can say (p. 44): 'In no miracle before the Resurrection does Jesus create.'

note on ii. 5, about the presence of the Virgin Mary at Bethlehem, he says: 'It is futile to argue that a woman in her condition would not have gone unless she was compelled; therefore Luke represents her as being compelled; therefore he has made a mistake. She would be anxious, at all risks, not to be separated from Joseph. Luke does not even imply that her presence was obligatory, and, if he had said that it was, we do not know enough about the matter to say whether he would have been wrong. Had there been a law which required her to remain at home, then Luke might be suspected of an error.'

Among the many questions which have been raised with reference to the Synoptic Gospels, that of an anterior Aramaic Gospel is one of the most interesting. Dr. Plummer points out from time to time passages in which it is possible that there may be an Aramaic original underlying the Greek; but he evidently does not attach very great importance to this evidence.¹

For an instance of a short but excellent general treatment of a most difficult subject, we would refer to the introduction to the comments upon the Temptation of our Lord (pp. 105, 106). In fact, the whole of the commentary upon the narrative of the Temptation is most excellent; but surely a negative has fallen out from the first sentence, in which the words *οὐκ ἔφαγεν οὐδέποτε* are commented upon: 'This does agree well with the supposition that Jesus partook of the scanty food which might be found in the wilderness.'

In discussing points where he differs from the more generally accepted ideas, Dr. Plummer arrives at his point very directly and very clearly. Thus, in discussing the *διὰ μέσου* of iv. 30, he says: 'The addition of *διὰ μέσου* is for emphasis, and seems to imply that there was something miraculous in His passing through the very midst of those who were intending to slay Him, and seemed to have Him entirely in their power. They had asked for a miracle, and this was the miracle granted to them. Those who think that it was His determined look or personal majesty which saved Him have to explain why this did not prevent them from casting Him out of the synagogue.'

It is very seldom, indeed, that we meet with anything which really offends against good taste in this

¹ The fourth reference '223' under Aramaic in Index i. seems to be a misprint for '222.'

book, but we feel bound to protest against Dr. Plummer's paraphrase of the words *πῶς δύνασαι λέγειν* (vi. 42): 'With what face can you adopt this tone of smug patronage?' And, in quite another way, we think the treatment of vi. 29, 30 is rather dangerous. To say that Christ gave precepts which are impossible to keep is to use an expression which can scarcely be commended, even with the limitations which are afterwards put upon the statement. But such faults as these are rare in this volume; we would rather turn to such careful instances of the statement of the various views that have been held as to the meaning of a passage, as that in the note on vii. 19, on the meaning of the question sent to Christ by John the Baptist from his prison, or that on the games of the children in the market place, in vii. 32.² At the same time, where a discrepancy exists between one Gospel and another, there is no attempt made to disguise the fact, even though it cannot be explained. It is surely better to acknowledge the difficulty bravely than to write as if all were plain. This mode of treatment gives rise, perhaps, to a little disappointment at times, but it is the better way. But the shrewdness of the author also finds its expression sometimes, e.g. in his note on ix. 17, in which he says: 'These exact details would scarcely have been maintained so consistently in a deliberate fiction or in a myth. Still less would either fiction or myth have represented one who could multiply food at will as giving directions that the fragments should not be wasted (John vi. 12). The possessor of an inexhaustible purse is never represented as being watchful against extravagance.'

We might pursue the subject much further, selecting particular points for praise, such as the constant reference to the Latin versions, the notices of the frequent appearance of amphibolous phrases in the text, the point he makes of the statements of the Fourth Gospel being implied in the Synoptic Gospels, the careful note about Ps. cx. (pp. 472, 473), and the excellent indexes at the end of the work; or the reverse, in that he fails us, but only very occasionally, at arriving at definite views on some difficult point, and occasion-

² We scarcely ever find Dr. Plummer at variance with himself; but his two statements about the use of *βαστάζειν* in the Septuagint on p. 199 and p. 364 do not quite agree.

ally gives a reference to some other book, when the reader might reasonably expect information.

But when all is said, it is clear that this is a most valuable volume, absolutely necessary for the critical student of the Gospels, and, at the same time, containing, in its devout treatment of

critical subjects, many suggestive remarks capable of being made excellent use of by the preacher in his study.¹

¹ We hope that a second edition may be soon called for, and, if so, that the Greek throughout the volume may be carefully revised.

The Homelessness of Christ.

(ST. MATTHEW viii. 19, 20.)

I.

BY THE REV. JOHN ROBSON, D.D., ABERDEEN.

'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.'
—MATT. viii. 20.

I QUITE agree with the opinion of Professor Bruce, commented on in the December EXPOSITORY TIMES, that the current interpretation of this text is unsatisfactory. But I cannot accept the Professor's parabolic interpretation as wholly satisfactory either. Nor can I agree with the editor that the current interpretation is the literal one, or, at all events, the only literal one. It necessitates exaggeration, while there is an interpretation quite in conformity with the ordinary laws of human expression, which requires neither exaggeration nor parable, and conveys a much more pointed lesson than either of the others.

Whoever the scribe was that said, 'Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest,' he gave expression to the sentiment of every true believer in Christ, and to everyone who has this sentiment Christ speaks as He did to the scribe. It was not the poverty of the Son of Man, but the boundless resources at His command, that prevented Him finding where to lay His head. The lesson for every one who will be a true disciple is that the greater his wealth, his resources, his opportunities, the less possible will it be for him to find where to lay his head.

The words are spoken of 'The Son of Man,' and so contain a truth applicable to all men. What is the difference between man and the foxes or birds of the heaven? The latter have no responsibility beyond themselves. Having secured food for themselves and for their young ones, they can retire to rest without feeling responsibility for

others, or fearing that others will come to rouse them with claims that they should discharge it. So it is not with man. He is responsible for his brethren, as far as his power extends. When he has finished his day's work, and got enough for himself and his family, he may retire to rest at home; but he does not thus escape the responsibility resting on him for others; and if he wishes to do so, these others may come rousing him from his rest with claims for help. The man who said, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' was a murderer. It is true that this sentiment of responsibility is very much deadened in man, because man is depraved; but his true nature only requires to assert itself for it to awaken in full force.

Now, Jesus was *the* Son of Man, and this responsibility He felt supremely. He felt the call to help His brethren of mankind with all the resources at His command. There were then only two possible limits to the help He was called to give them—the limit of His own resources or the limit of their claims. The former He knew were boundless. He had resources for curing the ills of life, for healing disease, for feeding the hungry, for helping the poor, absolutely boundless, besides all spiritual riches that were at His command. So that on this side there could be no limit to His work. On the other side, men were beginning to discover His wisdom and His power, to press on Him for teaching, for the healing of disease, for help in all their wants. So that on that side, too, there seemed to be no limit; and the prospect of getting a resting-place seemed hopeless.

This comes out very markedly in the setting in which Matthew has put the saying. Jesus had