

ARTICLE IV.

HEINRICH AUGUST WILHELM MEYER.

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THE year 1822 marks the beginning of a new era in Germany in the history of the interpretation of the New Testament scriptures. Previously, even on the part of the best exegetical scholars, there had been in their study of the sacred word almost a total disregard of grammatical details. The few exceptions are worthy of mention. The first to call attention to the peculiarities of the New Testament diction was the philologist Sal. Glassius of Jena († 1656) in his *Philologia Sacra*, the third book of which is entitled *Grammatica Sacra*, and the fourth *Grammaticae Sacrae Appendix*; a work, however, since regarded as of little value. In 1650 appeared the *Dialectologia Sacra* by Casper Wyss († 1659), Professor in the Gymnasium in Zurich, in which was presented a more exact treatment of the idioms of the New Testament, with an estimate of grammatical Hebraisms very moderate for that time. George Pasor, Professor of Greek at Franeker († 1637), author of a small lexicon of the New Testament, prepared a New Testament Grammar, which, in 1655, after his death, was published by his son, Matthias Pasor, Professor of Theology at Gröningen († 1658), who added to the work improvements of his own.

These, for many years, were the standard text-books with the few who were interested in the study of New Testament Greek. At length, in 1815, Ph. H. Haab, pastor at Schweigern in Würtemberg († 1833), published at Tübingen a Hebrew-Greek Grammar, of which Bengel said, "The work has been elaborated with so much industry, judgment, and accuracy, and evinces so minute and extensive a scholarship, as must obtain for it the most favorable reception among all

friends to sound New Testament interpretation." By others, however, a less favorable judgment was pronounced. One critic, supposed to be De Wette, concluded a review of Haab's Grammar with these words: "Seldom have we met a work which we were obliged to declare so complete a failure as this, and regarding the character of which the public should be so emphatically warned." And this seems to have been the general verdict of the best scholars into whose hands Haab's Grammar came.

There was one even then, however, who, better qualified for this task, had devoted himself to grammatical studies, especially with reference to the Greek of the New Testament, and was soon to present to the world the results of his investigations. We refer, of course, to George Benedict Winer of Leipzig, who, in 1822, published the first edition of his Grammar of the New Testament Diction. It was his object, he tells us,¹ "to put some check on the unbridled license with which the diction of the New Testament was still handled in commentaries and exegetical dissertations; and to apply, if possible, the results of an enlightened philology, as deduced and taught by Hermann and his school, to the critical study of the Greek scriptures." Imperfect as the work was, as Winer himself acknowledged, it was greatly in advance of its predecessors. By subsequent study, favored also by the suggestions of friendly and unfriendly critics, he was enabled in the second edition, which was published in 1828, to enlarge and improve his work. Others entered the same field of study, by whose labors his own investigations were greatly facilitated. A third, fourth, and fifth edition followed, each presenting yet added materials for a critical examination of the sacred word. In 1855 the sixth and last edition, prepared by Winer himself, appeared. He was at that time, on account of a nervous affection of the eyes, almost blind. But by the aid of friends, of whose services he makes grateful mention in the preface to his work, he was enabled to complete the task he had allotted to himself;

¹ Preface to the Sixth Edition.

and not long after, in 1858, full of years and full of honors, he passed from his work to his reward.

It would be impossible to overstate the influence of this Grammar, in its several editions, upon the minds of the many who, during the half century which has elapsed since the publication of the first edition, have devoted themselves to the interpretation of the New Testament, either as a whole, or in part. Commencing with Tholuck's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, which appeared in 1824, and which, as Baur says, marks an epoch in the interpretation of that Epistle, we have an array of exegetical works on single passages, single sections, single books of the New Testament, and even on the entire New Testament writings, which makes the fifty years now gone, as compared with any previous half century since the days of Christ, the golden age of biblical interpretation. Turning to the commentaries of this period we find the names of Meyer, DeWette, Neander, Tholuck, Fritsche, Lücke, Ewald, Olshausen, Bleek, Rückert, Philippi, Usteri, Baumgarten-Crusius, Huther, Hilgenfeld, Luthardt, Lange, Lechler, Lünemann, Glöckler, Stengel, Düsterdieck, Umbreit, Steinhof, Flatt, Bilroth, Hermann, Wieseler, Harless, Stier, Hölemann, Yunker, Bähr, Böhmer, Steiger, Dolmer, Meyerhoff, Koch, Mack, Klee, Stern, Thiersch, Sander, Arnaud, Driffel, Volkmar, and many others less widely known. Not all of these, as their writings bear witness, were willing to accept the philological views presented in the Grammar of the New Testament Diction, or to give up methods of interpretation which had had the sanction of good men in other days. Very few, however, can say less than Bishop Ellicott has said of what he calls "the admirable work of Winer," — we quote from the preface to the first edition of his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, — "It is a volume that I have studied with the closest attention, and to which I am under profound obligations."

The publication of Winer's Grammar marks, therefore, as has been said, a new epoch in the history of the interpretation of the New Testament scriptures. The Grammar, how-

ever, had its faults. Too great precision in the use of language on the part of the inspired writers was at times insisted upon. Moreover, Winer was not free from the charge of allowing, in certain passages, his doctrinal views to influence his grammatical conclusions. But he performed a distinguished service in emancipating "the New Testament writers from the bondage of a perverted philology, which, while it styled itself sacred, showed but scanty respect toward sacred authors and their maturely meditated phraseology."

Winer called his Grammar "the sure foundation of New Testament exegesis."¹ Already, when the first edition appeared with this confident claim, there were those who by careful classical culture, and by a hearty sympathy with the principles of interpretation announced by Winer, were prepared to build upon this foundation.

Prominent among these was the commentator, Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, whose unrivalled grammatical skill and precision, combined with rare exegetical tact, made him, by his writings, the teacher of biblical scholars in all lands, and whose labors, extending over almost the entire period embraced by the successive editions of Winer's Grammar, terminated only with his life. President Woolsey, in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for April 1874, speaks of Meyer as *ὁ μακαρίτης*. He died June 21, 1873. Nobly he had wrought. How nobly we purpose briefly to show, noticing some of the more prominent facts in his life, and then the characteristic features of his work.

He was born January 10, 1800, in Gotha, the capital of the duchy of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, where his father was shoemaker to the court. His early childhood was passed amid stirring events. Napoleon, at that time, was moving his armies from one battle-field to another, bringing the German states under his mighty sway. One of Meyer's earliest recollections was of the prisoners who, in the autumn of 1806, after the battle of Jena, were brought to Gotha, and

¹ *Sichere Grundlage der neutestamentlichen Exegese.*" Title-page of First Edition.

confined in the churches of the city. Later, in October 1813, after the battle of Leipzig, he witnessed the retreat of the French, as, pursued by the Cossacks, they pushed their way through Gotha, hurrying on to the Rhine.

In the gymnasium at Gotha he laid the foundations of a thorough classical culture. His teachers were well known scholars, among them Rost the grammarian, "whose memory I revere," wrote Meyer in 1872, in a note to the preface of the last edition of his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. Under the direction of these instructors Meyer devoted himself to classical studies with such success that in 1817, at the third centennial anniversary of the Reformation, he was selected to deliver the Latin address at the public services in the gymnasium at Gotha.

Six months later, at Easter in 1818, he closed his studies in the gymnasium as *primus omnium*, and entered the University of Jena as a student of theology. His allowance from his father, whose property had been reduced by long-continued wars and various misfortunes, was one hundred and sixty thalers a year, or about one hundred and twelve dollars in gold. "Those were different times from the present," Meyer was wont to say in his later years. "Everything was much more simple and less luxurious than to-day, when a course of study costs twice as much, and yet not twice as much is learned." High hopes of national unity at that time filled the hearts of the Jena students. During the preceding year they had held their celebrated *Wartburgfest*, and strengthened their cherished desires for a restored empire. Meyer at once joined the great *Burschenschaft*, and with spirit entered into the thoughts and purposes of his fellow-students. In March of the following year, however, occurred the assassination of Kotzebue by Karl Sand, a young Jena student,—an event that called down the wrath of the government upon the great *Burschenschaft*, and soon brought about its dissolution. Meyer had by no means neglected his studies hitherto; but as the excitement of political discussion died away in the university, he devoted himself with added interest

to his work. His instructors were Gabler, Schott, Danz, Baumgarten-Crusius, Kosegarten, Eichstädt, Fries, and Luden. Here, as in the gymnasium, philological studies were those that he loved best. The wide and important field of investigation, in which he was to find his life-work, more and more opened to his view; and he devoted himself with rare enthusiasm to the mastery of the ancient languages.

Meyer remained at the university until the autumn of 1820, when he left Jena, in order to accept a situation as tutor in an educational institution, under the charge of pastor Oppermann, at Grone, near Göttingen. It was not his purpose to give himself permanently to the work of teaching; but then, as now, in Germany a young man could not enter at once upon the duties of the pastoral office. Many must wait long years; Meyer was more fortunate. In 1821, at Easter, just three years accordingly from the time he entered the university at Jena, he passed his examination as a candidate for the ministry; and in December 1822, declining the offer of a position as instructor in the gymnasium at Gotha, he received an appointment as pastor at Osthausen, a small village about twenty-five miles southeast from Gotha. He entered upon his work in January of the following year, being at that time twenty-three years of age. Thither, six months later, he brought his young wife, the daughter of pastor Oppermann of Grone, and there, in the Thuringian forest, he established his home. His parish was not a large one, but it afforded him a field for active labor and quiet study. He soon became attached to his people by the tenderest of ties — ties that remained unbroken to the end of life. When called to higher and more responsible stations he never forgot the simple villagers to whom, at the beginning of his ministry, he preached the glad-tidings.

In his leisure hours he devoted himself to the critical study of the New Testament. As the first result of these studies he published, in 1829, the Greek Text of the New Testament, with a new German Translation. The work was issued by the house of Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht in Göttingen,

the well-known publishers of Meyer's works in all the years that have followed. In 1830 appeared his *Libri Symbolici Ecclesiae Lutheranae*, a timely publication, this being the third centennial year of the Augsburg Confession. His publications attracted attention, and as an acknowledgment of his growing reputation he received, not long after the appearance of the *Libri Symbolici*, an appointment as pastor at Harste, near Göttingen, in the kingdom of Hanover; and on the day after Christmas, 1830, his own tears mingling with the tears of his people, he left his Thuringian for his Hanoverian home.

Here, also, he devoted himself with all earnestness to the duties of his office. At the same time he returned to his exegetical work, having now increased facilities in his study of the sacred word, on account of the nearness of Harste to Göttingen. Early in 1832 appeared the first volume of his *Commentary*, embracing the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, being the second part of his work entitled, "The Greek New Testament, critically edited, with a new German Translation, and a Critical and Exegetical Commentary." In accordance with Meyer's original design this part of his work was to be published in two volumes, one volume comprising the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, the other the remaining books of the New Testament. It was found impossible, however, to include in the first volume more than the Synoptical Gospels, and the original design was abandoned. When at length the entire work was completed, it had sixteen parts.

The first volume of the *Commentary* was received with marked favor. De Wette, who was afterwards to win for himself unfading laurels in the department of New Testament exegesis, — the first part of De Wette's *Handbook* appeared in 1836, — spoke of Meyer as a commentator "distinguished for thoroughness, correct perception, and sure judgment." His aim was one that especially commended the work to all who had adopted the grammatical principles of Winckler. Meyer himself clearly stated that aim in the preface to his first volume, and we find an echo of his words, as then recorded,

in the introduction to his Commentaries for English readers, written just before he died, when speaking of his works, he said: "They aim at exactly ascertaining and establishing on due grounds the purely historical sense of scripture. This aim, so clear and lofty, that all the produce of one's own thoughts and subjective speculation must fall entirely into the background, and must not be allowed to mix up anything of its own with what objectively stands forth in the revelation of the New Testament, simply seeks to be understood just as it so stands. For exegesis is a historical science, because the sense of scripture, the investigation of which is its only task, can only be regarded and treated as a historical fact; as positively given it can only be known, proved, established, and set forth so as to be clearly and surely understood, by the positive method of studying the grammar, the *usus loquendi*, and the connection in detail as well as in its wider and widest sense." It was a difficult task which the young exegete undertook, but it was nobly accomplished, as all who have studied his Commentaries will readily acknowledge. The results of his studies not unfrequently led him to set aside interpretations cherished by the Lutheran church from the time of the great Reformer; but he would know the truth, and with mind singularly unprejudiced, and ever with the confession on his lips, "not as though I had already attained," he sought for it as for hid treasure.

In 1837 Meyer was appointed Superintendent at Hoya, where he remained four years. He then received a yet more distinguished recognition of his services as an exegete in his transfer to Hanover as Consistorialrath, Superintendent, and Pastor Primarius of the Neustädter St. Johanniskirche. Here was his future home, and here the chief part of his life-work was done. His official duties were by no means light. He preached every Sunday forenoon. Yet, by rising early and devoting the morning hours to work, he was enabled to resume his favorite studies, and with the hope of yet greater success. The library at Hanover now offered him its treasures. The most voluminous commentaries in Latin and Greek were

diligently studied; also commentaries in French, English, and Dutch. Every new work of especial value in the department of theology he examined in so far as it possessed exegetical interest. Monographs and review articles did not escape his notice. The richest stores of biblical knowledge were searched for materials with which to carry forward his great enterprise. Let one compare, for example, the first with the last edition of any of his commentaries, and the great amount of labor which was bestowed upon successive issues, in his review of contemporary literature, in his re-statement of old views, or in giving his reasons for new views, will at once be apparent.

In 1845, four years after his removal to Hanover, the university of Göttingen bestowed upon Meyer the degree of Doctor of Theology "propter eximiam eruditionem artemque theologicam eamque præcipue editis excellentissimis doctissimisque in libros Novi Testamenti commentariis, quibus consensu omnium de ornanda et amplificanda hermeneutica sacra præclarissime meruit, comprobata."

Hitherto, with unimpaired vigor of body and of mind, he had devoted himself to his work. But at this time, and especially while in attendance at the church conference in Berlin, in 1846, burdens unusually heavy rested upon him. Near the close of February, in that year, he was seized with a violent abdominal affection, which for a long while it was thought would prove fatal. But at length the worst was over, and health gradually returned. The strength of other days, however, was gone. Not only was the physical energy wanting with which to perform his usual amount of labor, but he was daily obliged — something unknown before in his busy life — to take time for exercise from his study hours. Henceforth, between seven and eight o'clock, after having devoted the early morning to exegesis, he might be seen, in storm and in sunshine, renewing his strength under the open skies.

The years that followed were years of untiring devotion to his work, though his task was continued with difficulty. In 1848 finding his official labors too oppressive he relinquished

the pastoral oversight of the Neustädterkirche, retaining only his place in the consistory, receiving in 1861 the title of Oberconsistorialrath.

These were years also of bereavement. In 1847 death entered his family circle, and a son, seven years of age, was removed. In 1851 his aged mother, who with just pride had watched his upward way, and seen him crowned with distinguished honors, passed on to her rest. In 1858 another son, who as an instructor in the institution for the deaf and dumb at Hildesheim, gave promise of useful and honorable service, was suddenly cut off at the early age of twenty-three. And finally, in 1864, the loving wife, who had blessed his household in all the years which he had passed after entering upon his life-work, was stricken down at his side. He was then preparing for the press the fifth edition of his Commentary on Matthew. When he sent it forth to the world the preface contained this tender allusion to the departed: "During the preparation of this fifth edition severe trials were allotted to me. On account of broken health, attended with much pain, my task could be performed only slowly and with many interruptions; and at last, having sought relief from the healing waters at Homburg, where, strengthened in a measure, I was looking for a more complete restoration, the hand of the Lord appeared, and took from me my dear companion, who for forty years has shared with me the joys and the sorrows of life in a truly Christian fellowship. I bow myself to the counsel of the Almighty. My day, also, is far spent. The guardian care of my God, however, is over me, and the word of his promise to the sorrowing will not fail." His home from that time on to the end of life, was with his son, Dr. Gustav Meyer, who also resided in Hanover.

Meanwhile he had found it impossible to extend his work to the entire New Testament. Able scholars accordingly, were invited to assist him. Meyer's work closed with the ninth part of the Commentary, embracing the Epistles to the Philippians, the Colossians, and to Philemon. Dr. Lünemann prepared the Commentaries on the Epistles to the Thessalo-

nians and to the Hebrews ; Dr. Huther on the Pastoral and Catholic Epistles ; and Dr. Düsterdieck on the Apocalypse. The work of these assistants was performed on the same general plan as that of the other volumes ; but though marked by ability and exegetical skill, is regarded as inferior in value to that of Meyer.

In 1865, by reason of continued ill-health, Meyer was compelled to withdraw from the consistory, though for a while he attended the theological examinations, from a desire to retain his connection with associates loved and honored, to whom he was united in the service of a common Lord. But even the little he had hoped to do overtaxed his strength, and at length he was obliged to forego the pleasure which was afforded by even this slight participation in labors in which he had taken so deep an interest during so many years.

In his exegetical labors, moreover, he could not work with the rapidity of other days. Yet he did not relinquish the great task he had undertaken. When, in 1869, he wrote the preface to the fifth edition of his Commentary on the Gospel of John, — “That wonderful Gospel of John,” as he says, “with its fulness of grace, truth, peace, light, and life,” — he made this declaration : “So long as God shall preserve to me, in my old age, the necessary measure of strength, I shall continue my quiet labor, little as it is, in the service of biblical exegesis.” And so he toiled on, if with less strength, with all the ardor of earlier years.

The principles he had adopted at the outset of his exegetical career he still firmly maintained. In a note to the preface of the fifth edition of the Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans he says : “We theologians are far too much given to neglect a comprehensive and precise knowledge of Greek grammar. If the exegete of the present day supposes himself adequately furnished with such a grammar as that of Rost’s he is mistaken ; it is no longer sufficient. We ought not to overlook the progress of philology in the field of the classics, but should be diligent in turning to account for the

New Testament whatever the contributions of the present day furnish; otherwise we neglect an important part of our duty. I cannot but here recommend very urgently to the theologian, in the interest of pure exegesis, the second edition of Kühner's Large Grammar (in two parts, 1869-72) — to which my citations will always henceforth refer — as the most complete and most solid work on the structure of the Greek language, regarded from the present stand-point of science. This entirely remodelled edition is a glorious monument of thorough and comprehensive erudition, and of clear and ripe familiarity with the genius of the language of classic Hellenism."

In 1866 occurred the war between Prussia and Austria. The king of Hanover, it will be remembered, chose to unite his fortunes with the latter power. It was an ill-advised step for king George; and the result was that he lost his crown. Meyer, with every other loyal Hanoverian, could not but deeply sympathize with the unfortunate monarch; yet in the events of that eventful year he caught a glimpse, he thought, of the dawning of a new day for the fatherland. And in 1870, when the yet greater war with France opened, when all Germany, with unbounded enthusiasm, rose up and hurried to the Rhine to repel invasion and to strike a blow for German unity, he was sure that that day had at length come. The fervid, patriotic feelings of his student days returned; and with a thrill of joy, which stirred his soul in its lowest depths, he hailed the tidings which were brought from one battle-field after another. In his youth he had seen Germany in her humiliation; he now saw her in her exaltation; and with devout thankfulness of heart, he who had been born under the last emperor, a member of the house of Hapsburg, hailed the election of a new emperor, when, at Versailles, on the eighteenth of January 1871, the imperial government was re-organized, and the crown placed on the head of the grey-haired king of the house of Brandenburg.

About this time preparations were made for an English translation of Meyer's Commentary. Many copies of the

several German editions had found their way into England and America. But these were the prized possession of German readers. It was now thought that the numerous requests of English readers for a translation should be granted. The Messrs. Clark of Edinburgh, Scotland, undertook the publication. The translation, with Meyer's consent, was assigned to Dr. William P. Dickson, Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow. The Epistle to the Galatians appeared early in 1873. The first volume of the Epistle to the Romans appeared in the autumn of the same year. It was a translation of the fifth edition. In connection with this volume a general preface to the English edition was given, written by Meyer himself. "I earnestly wish," he said, "that the version thus undertaken may not fail to receive, in the new field of the English language, and of the science which it represents, an indulgent and kindly reception, such as, during a long series of years, has been accorded to the German work by the German theological public." And he closed the preface with these words: "May the gracious God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ accompany my humble labors on his word, as they are now going forth in the dress of another language to far distant brethren, with the blessing on which all success depends, that they may conduce to the knowledge of his truth, to the service of his church, and to the glory of his holy name,"

These words were written in March 1873. Meyer was then engaged in the preparation of a new edition of the ninth part of his Commentary, comprising the Epistles to the Philippians, the Colossians, and Philemon. One half of this revision he had sent to the press, and the other half lay on his desk marked, "ready for the press," when early in the morning of Monday, the sixteenth of June, he was suddenly taken ill. Devoutly recognizing the hand of the Lord, he declared his readiness to depart, desiring only a speedy and not too painful an end. On Thursday, the nineteenth, he seemed to revive, and for a short time there was a glimmer of hope that he might yet recover. "Gladly would I remain with you,"

he said to his children; "gladly would I depart if God calls me." God had called. Soon he knew it, and those who stood at his bedside knew it. For a while he remained in a half slumber, and as he thus lay, bright visions flitted across his mind. At first he saw a large page of the New Testament, and himself seated before it, as during so many years, in the early morning, when the light in his study was the only one in the neighborhood. The scene changed, and there lay spread out before him his dear fatherland; and he exclaimed: "Germany, Germany, above all else!" Again the scene changed, and the cross appeared, the central object in that scene which is presented in the New Testament scriptures, to the interpretation of which he had devoted his long and laborious life; and there the eye of faith rested, until the bright vision dissolved.

On the following day the end of life seemed near. Weaker and weaker he became; but night darkened the quiet chamber leaving him still among the loved ones who tenderly watched at his bedside. So passed the following day, Saturday the twenty-first, until shortly before ten o'clock in the evening, when, welcoming the divine messenger, he quietly folded his hands upon his breast and entered into rest. His prayer was answered.

On the twenty-fourth of June he was buried in the cemetery of the Neustädterkirche, where, in the days of his ministry, he had spoken words of consolation and hope at many an open grave. A simple memorial marks the spot, on which are inscribed the words of Rom. xiv. 8: "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

The most permanent memorial of the great exegete, however, is that which he himself reared in his critical, exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. It is not a theological Commentary like that of Hodge on Romans. It is not an exegetical, doctrinal, and homiletical Commentary like that of Lange, introduced to American readers by Dr. Philip

Schaff. Indeed, those who look into the volumes of Meyer for sermons, or for skeletons of sermons, are sure to be disappointed. As we have already seen they aim to secure other results, and are designed only for those who seek to know what the word of God really teaches. "We have always to receive what the scripture gives to us," said Meyer, "and never to give to it aught of our own."

In opening one of Meyer's Commentaries, after the preface, which no one should fail to read, we find an extended introduction. Thus, in the last edition of his Commentary on the Gospel of John there is first a biographical sketch of the apostle, then follows a discussion of the genuineness of the Gospel with especial reference to the views of Baur and his successors; the object of the Gospel is next presented; and the introduction closes with an account of the sources, time, and place of the composition of the Gospel. The introduction to John's Gospel, in the edition referred to above, occupies fifty-four pages.

Turning to the Commentary proper, we find at the commencement of each chapter a brief critical examination of the text. The different readings, with their manuscript authority, are presented, and their value discussed. To this part of his work Meyer gave very careful attention, and his remarks give evidence not only of independent study, but of great critical skill and sound judgment.

Preceding the notes in the Epistles we find at the beginning of each chapter, a condensed summary of the course of thought. Perhaps a better illustration of this part of Meyer's work cannot be given than that which introduces the notes on the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.

"Contents.—Paul has hitherto described the *δικαιοσύνη ἐκ πίστεως* in respect of its necessity (i. 18; iii. 21): of its nature (iii. 21–30): and of its relation to the law (iii. 31–iv. 25). *He now discusses the blessed assurance of salvation secured for the present and the future to the δικαιοθίντες ἐκ πίστεως* (ver. 1–11): and then—in order clearly to exhibit the greatness and certainty of salvation in Christ, more

especially in its *divine, world-wide* significance as the blissful epoch-forming counterpart of the Adamite ruin — he presents us with a detailed *parallel between this salvation and the misery which once came through Adam* (ver. 12–19), and *was necessarily augmented through the law* (ver. 20, 21).”¹

In the Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles, the course of thought, when necessary, is given in connection with the notes.

In the notes themselves Meyer has ever in view the end he seeks to accomplish, “the elucidation of the true sense of scripture.” Especial attention is given to the particles, and the grammatical construction. Difficulties are not overlooked, as is too often the case on the part of commentators. Numerous references are made to parallel and other passages which aid in determining the interpretation of the passage in hand. The views of commentators, ancient and modern, and of writers on New Testament themes, are noticed in case they are thought to be erroneous; and though these must have less interest to the English than to the German reader, yet they are of value as indicating other interpretations which eminent scholars hold, or have held. A good illustration of Meyer’s method is afforded by his note on Romans i. 8. “*Πρῶτον μὲν*] To that, which Paul desires *first of all* to write, there was meant to be subjoined *something further*, possibly by *ἔπειτα δέ*. But, amidst the ideas that now crowd upon him, he abandons this design, and thus the *μὲν* remains alone. Comp. iii. 2; and on Acts i. 1; 1 Cor. xi. 18; Schaefer, ad Dem. iv. p. 142; Hartung, Partikell ii. p. 410. — *τῷ Θεῷ μου*] *οὐ εἰμί, φ καὶ λατρεύω*, Acts xxvii. 23; comp. 1 Cor. i. 4; Phil. i. 3; iv. 19; Philem. 4. — *διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*] These words — to be connected with *εὐχαριστῶ*, not with *μου*, as Koppe and Glöckler think, against which vii. 25 and Col. iii. 17 are clearly decisive — contain the *mediation, through which* the *εὐχαριστῶ* takes place. The apostle gives thanks not on his own part and independently of Christ, not *δι’ ἑαυτοῦ*, but is conscious of his thanksgiving *being conveyed*

¹ English Translation of the Fifth Edition, pp. 221, 222.

through Jesus Christ, as one who is present to his grateful thoughts ; in so far, namely, as that for which he thanks God is vividly perceived and felt by him to have been brought about through Christ. Comp. on Col. iii. 17 ; Eph. v. 20. Thus Christ is the mediating, *causal agent* of the thanksgiving. To regard him as its mediating *presenter* (Origen, Theophylact, Bengel, and others, including Hoffmann) cannot be justified from Paul's other writings, nor even by Heb. xiii. 15. Theodore of Mopsuestia well observes : τοῦ Χριστοῦ ταύτης ἡμῖν τῆς εὐχαριστίας τὴν αἰτίαν παρασχομένου. — ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν] quite simply : *your faith* (on Christ) ; the praiseworthy character of the πίστις is only set forth by the *context* (καταγγέλλ. ἐν ὄλφ τ. κ.) afterwards : Everywhere one hears your faith openly spoken of. Comp. xvi. 19. Observe how this flattering expression of the apostle, and the *thanksgiving* coupled with it, as also the στηριχθῆναι κ.τ.λ. in vs. 11, 12, point to the church not as Jewish-Christian, but as *Pauline*. Mangold's reference to Phil. i. 15–18 in opposition to this inference, leaves out of view the quite different *personal situation* under which the latter was written. Comp. on Phil. i. 18, *note*. — ἐν ὄλφ τ. κόσμῳ] a popular hyperbole, but how accordant with the position of the church in *that* city, towards which the eyes of the whole world were turned ! Comp. 1 Thess. i. 8. It is, moreover, obvious of itself, that the subjects of the καταγγέλλειν are the *believers*. As to the unbelievers, see Acts xxviii. 22." ¹

While, however, it was the aim of Meyer in his Commentaries to give simply the historical sense of the scriptures, brief remarks will be found here and there, which are exceedingly suggestive, and remind one of the pithy sentences of Bengel, of whom Meyer was a great admirer, and whom he frequently quotes. Thus, in his note on John v. 35 (5th ed., p. 238) we find the following : “ ὑμεῖς δὲ, etc., a striking characterization of fickle worldly-mindedness, which for a short time would find its delight in this new, noble appearance [of John the Baptist], instead of deriving therefrom instruc-

¹ English Translation of the Fifth Edition, pp. 56, 57.

tion unto salvation, and permitting the working upon itself of the entire moral force of the prophet. So the Jews flocked in great crowds to the Baptist (Matt. iii. 5; xi. 7 sq.) as to the harbinger of the near, glorious Messianic kingdom; yet instead of what they desired (*ἠθελησ.*) they found a preacher of repentance with the spirit of Elijah; and how soon the throng disappeared! In like manner the Athenians, on the appearance of Paul, desired to find a new and temporary diversion."

In the frequent revisions of his work Meyer found occasion here and there to modify his views, or to present other views different from those which he had hitherto held. Thus in 1 Cor. xi. 5, according to the note in the fourth and earlier editions of his work, Meyer found a reference to the general assemblies of the church, of the entire *ἐκκλησία*, in which indeed, praying and prophesying on the part of the women were not allowed. The apostle in this passage, he held, left unassailed, for the time, the custom prevailing in Corinth, and censured only the outward appearance of the women, as this only was in place here, reserving the prohibition to chapter xiv. 34. In the fifth edition, however, Meyer takes the view that in xi. 5 Paul has in mind small assemblies of Christians (*Andachtsversammlungen*), limited circles, which are spoken of in the New Testament as house-churches (1 Cor. xvi. 19; Rom. xvi. 5; Col. iv. 15; Philem. 2), and where he thinks praying and prophesying on the part of the women were allowed, while the "taceat mulier in ecclesia" had reference to the general assemblies.

It is also well known to those who have been acquainted with the Commentaries of Meyer that as he advanced in years he became more and more positive, or orthodox, as we are accustomed to say in America. The facts here, as Dr. Dickson has suggested, coincide with the well-known statement of Winer, that "the controversies among interpreters have usually led back to the admission that the old Protestant views of the meaning of scripture are the correct ones." Thus amid the conflicts of opinion by which all his life long

he was surrounded, Meyer clung ever closer to the Christ of the New Testament. With the mythological theorists he had no sympathy. He brought the views they held to the test of the divine word, and proved their worthlessness. In a note to the preface of the fourth edition of his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, he says: "We older men have seen the day when Dr. Paulus and his devices were in vogue; he died without leaving a disciple behind him. We passed through the tempest raised by Strauss some thirty years ago; and with what a sense of solitariness might its author now celebrate his jubilee! We saw the constellation of Tübingen arise, and even before Baur departed hence its lustre had waned. A fresh and firmer basis for the truth which had been assailed, and a more complete apprehension of that truth—these were the blessings which the waves left behind; and so will it be when the present surge has passed away." We may add, that in securing these blessings no one, in the department of exegesis, did more effective service than Meyer.

Such are the Commentaries of Meyer. In their successive editions they have been received with increasing favor in Germany, and among German reading scholars in England and America. Bishop Ellicott, in the preface to the fourth part of his Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul (p. x), says that to Meyer "I am greatly indebted for grammatical and exegetical details." Prof. Lightfoot, in the preface to his Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians (p. ix), says, "Among German writers, I am indebted especially to the tact and scholarship of Meyer." Dr. Schaff, in his Introduction to the Gospel of John in Lange's Commentary, (Am. ed.) calls Meyer "the ablest grammatical exegete of the age." Dr. Hackett said to one of his classes at Newton: "If you would understand the New Testament give your days and nights to Meyer." We would not intimate, in presenting these testimonies to the value of Meyer's Commentary, that the work has no defects. It is not scripture; it is only a help to the interpretation of scripture. As such it is to be

used not slavishly, but with the freedom which belongs to the Christian scholar, assured that its excellences far outnumber its defects.

It is to be hoped that the English edition, now in course of publication by T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, will have a wide circulation in this country, securing for the great exegete, in the hearts of those whom in his introduction he calls "far distant brethren," a place as honored as that he has so long held in the hearts of his countrymen.

NOTE. — For most of the biographical information contained in this Article, the Author is indebted to the *Biographie* which Dr. Gustav Meyer, son of the exegete, published during the past year, as an introduction to the fourth edition of the ninth part of Meyer's Commentary.

ARTICLE V.

THE PHYSICAL VALUE OF PRAYER.

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HAS Prayer a positive physical value? Is it really able under all, or any, circumstances, to invoke effectually a "Power which checks and augments the descent of rain; which changes the force and direction of winds; which affects the growth of corn, and the health of men and cattle?"¹ Is the frail child of earth able thereby to "move the hand that moves the world?" or is he, indeed, notwithstanding all his boasted powers of thought and will, but the creature and the sport of blind, inflexible forces, either self-originated or long since utterly divorced from all control of the Great Intelligence, which, in the mysterious and chaotic foretime of the universe, set them in operation? What other question so momentous, so vitally related to its highest interests, saving alone the one great question of its own immortality, can a human mind propose to itself for solution? Can it be possible that, after the

¹ Prof. Tyndall, in *Contemporary Review*.