

salvation offered to the human soul. To receive Christ in this twofold character, by the energetic receptivity of faith, is what Jesus calls, in his symbolic way of speaking, "eating his flesh and drinking his blood;" and you all know that it is to these two acts united that He has Himself attached the possession of life.¹

F. GODET

NOTES ON COMMENTARIES.

6.—THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

IN the last number of *THE EXPOSITOR* I promised to give some account of Mr. Lewin's "Life and Epistles of St. Paul," to which I referred as less known, but not less deserving to be known, than Conybeare and Howson's work of the same title. I have pleasure in redeeming that promise, both because the book is one which I have found useful, and because a new, enlarged, and most sumptuous edition of it has recently appeared, with the merits of which all students of the Bible ought to be acquainted. Mr. Lewin commenced his work, I believe, before Messrs. Conybeare and Howson commenced theirs, and issued his book complete when not more than half of theirs had been printed. This simultaneous, or nearly simultaneous, production of two elaborate works on the career and writings of St. Paul was the more singular from the fact that the two works are built on very much the same lines, have a similar aim, and pursue it in a similar method. Any one who has the quarto edition of Conybeare and Howson, but not that of Mr. Lewin,

¹ John vi. 53, 54.

may form a tolerably accurate conception of what the latter work is like, if he imagines what the former would have been had it been written by a learned and religious layman some twenty years later, had it also been still more lavishly illustrated and adorned.

The quarto is not however its earliest form. In the first edition (1851) it consisted of two somewhat dumpy octavos, adorned with no illustrations but a map and a few poorly-drawn plans. It was in this form that it grew familiar to my hands, and that I worked with it some ten or twelve years. In this case familiarity has only bred liking and esteem. Perhaps, indeed, love and long use put me in some danger of overrating it. But a man can only speak of a book, as of all things else, as he finds it; and I have long found this book a most friendly and helpful companion.

I doubt, indeed, whether I shall ever take to the quartos as kindly as to the octavos, for large and handsome quartos are heavy and awkward to use. But I must admit that, in every other respect, the new edition is an immense improvement on the old. For one thing, the whole work has been carefully rewritten, rewritten from the most modern point of view, and with all the advantage not only of the most recent discoveries of criticism and research, but also of Mr. Lewin's studies of Biblical chronology—studies of which he has given us the results in his "Fasti Sacri." It is impossible, indeed, so much as to glance through these noble quartos without perceiving that the author has made his labour "a labour of love," one might almost say his "hobby," during the quarter of a century which has elapsed

since the first edition of it appeared. It is crowded with costly and beautiful illustrations, swept now and then from the most unlikely quarters. Whatever can throw light on the Apostle's career is pressed into the service, and even much that does not relate immediately to him, but helps to body forth the time in which he lived. All that history, literature, criticism, ruins, monuments, inscriptions, pictures, statues, charts, medallions, coins, gems, &c., can do to set forth the man and his time, may be found here. And these abundant, and well-nigh redundant, illustrations, which it must have taken the best part of a lifetime to collect, are used with a certain ease and mastery which shew that the author has studied every branch of his subject.

I have said that, in the new edition, the whole work is recast. And by that I do not mean simply that it has been revised; but that every paragraph has been rewritten, and almost every sentence. Much is added, much amended, a little omitted. By noting the omissions, corrections, additions, of only the first chapter of the work, I may at once mark the great superiority of this recent edition, and give the reader some notion of its quality.

Of omissions, perhaps the most remarkable is that of a very naïve and amusingly absurd piece of exegesis on page 6 of the earlier edition; which, standing so early in the book, may have led some Biblical scholars to underrate its value.

“Saul was, perhaps, the only son, but there was certainly a sister, who afterwards married and settled at Jerusalem, and was the mother of a family. *We should even surmise that there was still another sister,*

for in the First Epistle to the Corinthians we read, 'Have we not power to lead about a sister?' a remark which could scarcely have reference to one then a matron, and whose superintendence of a household would necessarily preclude her from accompanying the wanderings of a homeless brother."

Happily all this is banished from the new edition, and the reader no longer trips over this stone of offence at the very outset of his journey. The corrections and amendments of this Chapter are mostly chronological, and shew that Mr. Lewin's "Fasti Sacri" studies have borne fruit. Whenever a date is needed, it is given, and thus the whole narrative is, as it were, hooped together. Not only so; but, on reconsideration, he has seriously changed his chronology of the Apostle's whole life. Thus, for example, in the earlier edition we were told that Saul commenced his studies in Jerusalem "at an early age, *perhaps at about twelve or thirteen,*" and "passed *the next seventeen years* of his life at the Jewish capital;" whereas, in the new edition, we are told that he probably commenced his studies in the schools of Jerusalem "*at about ten,*" and "passed *the next quarter of a century* at the Jewish capital."

These corrections are valuable, and shew that the author has reconsidered every minute point in his subject, as well as rewritten his book. But it is in the many, and sometimes large, additions he has made to it that the great value of the new edition consists. We have a specimen of them so early as on page 4, where, in the discussion on the probable modes in which the father of Saul obtained the Roman franchise, even "the most feasible hypothesis" is new.

“Perhaps the most feasible of all hypotheses is, that the Roman franchise was conferred on the father, or some ancestor, of Saul as a reward for distinguished services to the Roman state; not indeed for military prowess in the field, as a rigid Jew could not conscientiously enlist in the Roman army, but for some exertion of his personal influence in favour of Octavius and Anthony, in their struggle against Brutus and Cassius. No city was more deeply involved in the intrigues of the day, or saw greater vicissitudes in consequence, than Tarsus; and the father, or ancestor, of Saul, as a wealthy burgess, may have been fortunate enough to side with the faction which eventually triumphed, and may then have reaped the reward of his zeal, and perhaps also of his sufferings, by receiving the diploma¹ of the Roman citizenship.”

On page 6 we have at once a correction and an addition. In the first edition Mr. Lewin fixed the date of St. Paul's birth at A.D. 6; now he fixes it at A.D. 2, and he justifies his preference of the new date in a long and valuable note (too long to quote), full of erudition, a piece of work such as a workman loves, in which much thought and labour are disguised under an animated and flowing style.

On pages 10 and 11 we have an instructive passage on the traces of Rabbinical culture in the style of the Apostle, followed by a paragraph on his knowledge of Roman law which appears only in the later edition. After conducting Saul to the school of Gamaliel, where he was a fellow-student of Bar-

¹ See THE EXPOSITOR, vol. i. p. 294, *et seq.*

nabas, whom he had before encountered at Tarsus, Mr. Lewin continues:—

“Saul now rapidly advanced in the study of the Law—that is, of the Jewish Scriptures and Traditions—or (as he expresses it himself), he was ‘taught according to the perfect manner of the Law of the fathers.’¹ That he was intimately conversant with Holy Writ is attested by the readiness of his quotations and the felicity of their application. We may also trace in his writings the peculiar system adopted in the schools of Jerusalem for the instruction of the students. Questions were propounded, and then debated by the disputants, in the form of dialogue; arguments were urged, and objections were suddenly interposed and answered. This will account for the abrupt style so familiar to the reader: ‘What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?’² ‘What then? are we better than they?’³ ‘What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?’⁴ ‘What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?’⁵ ‘What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?’⁶ ‘What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God?’⁷ and examples of the like kind might be multiplied without end. We also discover in his writings occasional allusions to the traditions of the Fathers, to which the learned doctors of the school of Hillel attached so much importance. Thus, we are startled by the mention of Jannes and Jambres, the names of the Egyptian sorcerers who

¹ Acts xxii. 3.

² Rom. iii. 1.

³ *Ibid.* iii. 9.

⁴ *Ibid.* iv. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.* vi. 1.

⁶ *Ibid.* vi. 15.

⁷ *Ibid.* ix. 14.

witstood Moses.¹ In other places we are reminded of the mystical and hidden meanings to which the Jewish divines had recourse in their interpretation of Scripture. For instance, Hagar and Sarah, the bondwoman and the freewoman, are, in an allegory, to signify the servitude of the Law and the liberty of the Gospel.² We must remark, however, that the strength of Saul's mind enabled him to avoid the puerile conceits and idle fancies by which the Jewish commentaries were disfigured and rendered ridiculous.

“Saul, both as a scribe and a Roman citizen, would necessarily devote some portion of his time to the study of *foreign* law, and more particularly that of Rome. It excites no surprise that, at Philippi, he should extort from the Roman Duumviri, or Prætors, a confession that they had broken the law under which they lived ;³ or that he should have cautioned the officer about to put him to the torture, that, as a Roman citizen, he was exempt from the rack ;⁴ or that he should have pleaded his own cause before Felix and Festus, and, as a Roman citizen, have exercised the right of appeal to the Emperor, and then have made his own defence before the highest tribunals at Rome.”⁵

Another valuable addition is made, on pages 12 and 13, to the proofs given in the previous edition of St. Paul's familiarity with the literatures and philosophies of Greece and Rome. After noting his keen relish for the beauties of the Greek poets and dramatists, our author proceeds to urge :—

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 8.

² Gal. iv. 21.

³ Acts xvi. 37.

⁴ Ibid xxii. 25.

⁵ 2 Tim. iv. 16.

“That Saul had an intimate acquaintance with the Greek writings of his countryman Philo, is manifest from the close proximity of the language of the Apostle to that of the Alexandrian philosopher. The thoughts and phrases, more particularly in the Epistle to the Hebrews,¹ are identical. Indeed, the contemplative turn of Saul's mind would lead him naturally to study the philosophy of the Greeks generally. At Athens he encountered the Stoics and Epicureans, and they would hardly have condescended to discuss such high matters with him, had he not been capable of doing battle with them on their own ground. He must, therefore, have been familiar with the doctrines of both schools, and his religious cast of thought would incline him to the Stoics rather than the Epicureans. Thus, in his address to the Areopagus, we find him echoing the noblest sentiments of the Stoic philosophy. We can also thus account for the great resemblance between the language of Saul and that of Seneca, a Stoic philosopher. The explanation commonly offered is that Saul became acquainted with Gallio, the brother of Seneca, and, as a prisoner, was confided to the care of Burrhus, the captain of the prætorians, and the friend of Seneca; and that he thus became intimate with Seneca himself, and that each borrowed the thoughts of the other. But the truer solution is, that both had studied the learning of the same school of philosophy, and that the minds of both were deeply tinged with the colour of their early lucubrations.”

¹ This attribution of the Epistle to the Hebrews to the Apostle Paul shews that Mr. Lewin is not quite sound in the critical faith. But it must not be assumed that he has not weighed the arguments on the other side. Proof to the contrary is to be found in vol. ii. chap. 7.

The discussion of St. Paul's Hebrew culture is expanded in the same way. In the original edition Mr. Lewin assumed as a matter of course—and the assumption is probable almost to certainty—that Saul had taken the degree of Rab in the Jewish schools, “the first step to honour amongst his countrymen,” and had then proceeded to the higher grades of Rabbi, “the second step.” Now he adds:—

“The diploma of Rabbi, conferred by the university of Jerusalem, was of the greatest service to Saul in his subsequent labours; for it enabled him to address his countrymen in the synagogues abroad, and to command, from his rank, their respectful attention. The grade of Rabbi was, it has been thought, denoted by some external badge, and, according to Lightfoot, by the breadth of the phylacteries;¹ and if so, it would account for the readiness with which Saul was everywhere received among his countrymen, until the peculiarity of his doctrines provoked antagonism.”²

I have only to add that the Chapter closes with two pedigrees, not contained in the former edition, one of the family of the Cæsars, and the other of the family of the Herods; and that this first Chapter may be taken as a fair specimen, both of the whole of this erudite and valuable work, and of the immense superiority of the recent over the original edition of it.

EDITOR.

¹ See Biscoe on the Acts, c. 7.

² *Ibid.*
