

BRIEF NOTICE.

LIFE AND LETTERS OF ST. PAUL, *By Alfred Dewes, LL.D., D.D.* (London: Longmans.) To this very curious and able book the space at our command will not permit us to do justice; we can but briefly indicate its excellences and defects.

Dissatisfied with the Revised Version as a translation, though he admits its excellence as a literal version of the Greek, Dr. Dewes—well known to a few of us by his “Plea for a new Translation of the Scriptures” published fifteen years ago—set himself to produce a translation of St. Paul’s Epistles which, in addition to being accurate, should be idiomatic, forcible, and, above all, intelligible to every thoughtful reader, however unlearned. He has followed the text of Drs. Westcott and Hort. He has taken the Epistles in their chronological order. He has prefixed to every Epistle a brief yet sufficient introduction; while, as introduction to the whole work, he has written a short life of St. Paul, which, brief as it is, contains all the facts necessary to a right understanding of his character and works. And all this he has accomplished in an octavo volume of some 270 pages, 40 of which are occupied by a Preface in which he acquaints us with the aim he has set before him and the motives by which he has been inspired!

His chief aim is, as we have said, to give a readable and intelligible translation of St. Paul’s Epistles, to render them in clear and forcible words, and so to bring out the force of mood, tense, and particle, that all men, if they will, may grasp and follow the Apostle’s arguments. This most worthy aim he seems to us to have in large measure attained. With due allowance for certain oddities or peculiarities of punctuation and in the use of capital letters, which are a little trying at first, and granting him certain dubious substitutions—as “outward mark” for “circumcision”—prompted by motives of delicacy, however little they may subserve them, we have to say that, in our judgment, any thoughtful man may read this translation with interest and with profit, and may by a wise use of it come much nearer to the Apostle’s real meaning than he can do by perusing either the Authorised or the Revised Version.

At times no doubt Dr. Dewes yields to the baneful temptation which besets all translators, and makes changes for the mere sake of change, changes which add nothing to the meaning of a phrase, while yet they spoil its beautiful or familiar rhythm; *e.g.* 2 Corin-

thians ii. 11, where "his devices are not unknown to us" is substituted for "we are not ignorant of his devices"; and Chapter v. 15, where the rendering, "He died for all, that they who *live no longer* should live for themselves," is not only no improvement on that of the Revised Version, "should *no longer live* for themselves," but absolutely beclouds the meaning of the Apostle, and puts the reader in imminent danger of reducing it to mere nonsense.

But, on the whole and in the main, it must be confessed that the renderings of Dr. Dewes give clearness and force to these inspired Letters, while they often bring out some latent metaphor or some subtle link of thought. As an instance of more terse and telling translation, we may take the final clause of Chapter vii. 5 in the Epistle we have already cited (2 Corinthians), and from which all our illustrations will be selected: "On every side afflictions beset us; *fightings without, fears within,*" where by a defter turn of the sentence he gets rid of the italicised words employed both in the Authorised and in the Revised Versions,—"*without were* fightings, *within were* fears." As an illustration of more clear and forcible rendering, a rendering too which brings out implied and additional details, we may cite at least the latter part of his translation of Chapter x. 3-5: "For though we live in the flesh we do not follow the guidance of the flesh in our warfare. The weapons of our warfare are not such as the flesh uses; but mighty before God for the casting down of strongholds. We cast down reasonings, and *every high place* that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; and we lead captive every intent of the mind, till we bring it *where* Christ is obeyed." Here no doubt Verse 3 is, at least in its second clause, given in better form in our Authorised Version, "For though we *walk* in the flesh we do not *war* after the flesh"—a clear and sharp antithesis which grows very faint in the cumbrous and clumsy phrase which Dr. Dewes puts in its place. But by getting rid of the parenthesis in Verse 4, by commencing a new sentence with Verse 5, and, above all, by inserting the indications of structure and place in this Verse, he gives both simplicity and animation to his rendering of a difficult passage: while if, as the best commentators assert, St. Paul here regards Corinth as a citadel of truth from which he and his followers were to sally forth against the high structures of error which their adversaries had raised against them, and to which, after conquering them, they were to lead them back, now subdued and made obedient down to

the very thoughts and intents of their hearts, he has obviously done much to suggest the Apostle's meaning. For a slighter, yet characteristic and valuable example, we may turn to Chapter xii. 15, where he reads, "I however very gladly will *spend*, and be myself *utterly spent* for your souls"; but where the Revised Version somewhat tamely reads, in the text, "And I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls," although in the margin it suggests that "spent" should be "spent out." Various attempts have been made to give the force of the Greek verb which St. Paul here employs, using in the second instance the strengthened and re-inforced form of it (*δαπανήσω* and *ἐκδαπανηθήσομαι*), as "spend and be spent to the uttermost," or "spend and *expend* myself," or "spend and even *beggar* myself"; but whatever form may be preferred, it cannot be denied that Dr. Dewes has seized upon the Apostle's thought and happily expressed it.

As an illustration of his habit of drawing out a latent metaphor we may quote his rendering of Chapter xii. 9: "Most gladly will I rather boast of my weaknesses, that the might of Christ *like a tent* may protect me." Here both the Authorised and Revised Versions give in the final clause the comparatively inexpressive verb, "may rest upon me," though the latter puts in the margin, "or cover me: Gr. *spread a tabernacle over me*," while Mr. Waite renders the clause "that the power of Christ may *tabernacle* upon me."

It would be easy to add to these illustrations; but perhaps enough have been cited to suggest the interest and worth which Dr. Dewes's book will have for all readers and students of the New Testament.

EDITOR.