

no loftiness of Christian position, nor length of Christian profession is a guarantee against falling and apostasy. As we read in another book, for which the Church has to thank a prison cell—the place where so many of its precious possessions have been written—there is a backway to the pit from the gate of the Celestial City. Demas had stood high in the Church, had been admitted to the close intimacy of the Apostle, was evidently no raw novice, and yet the world could drag him back from so eminent a place in which he had long stood. “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

The world that was too strong for Demas will be too strong for us if we front it in our own strength. It is ubiquitous, working on us everywhere and always, like the pressure of the atmosphere on our bodies. Its weight will crush us unless we can climb to and dwell on the heights of communion with God, where pressure is diminished. It acted on Demas through his fears. It acts on us through our ambitions, affections and desires. So, seeing that miserable wreck of Christian constancy, and considering ourselves lest we also be tempted, let us not judge another, but look at home. There is more than enough there to make profound self-distrust our truest wisdom, and to teach us to pray, “Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe.”

ALEXANDER MACLAREN.

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

THE OLDEST PETITION FOR THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY.

M. RENAN has called the Epistle to Philemon a *note*. It is indeed a letter in few words, but this very brevity only enhances the greatness of its contents.

There are other writings in the New Testament which might be described in the same way, as, for example, the second and third Epistles of John.

This group of short letters seems to have been regarded by the primitive Church as scarcely worthy of a place in the canon of sacred writings. Many Churches did not receive the second and third Epistles of John, and Jerome tells us that the Epistle to Philemon was rejected by many writers. From the absence of any approach to doctrinal teaching in this Epistle, they concluded that it was not by St. Paul, or that, if it was his, it did not belong to the canon, since it contained nothing by which the Church might be edified. This decision arose out of a narrow view of the canon, and the primitive Church, as a whole, did not ratify the verdict. Preserved at first as a precious relic in the family of Philemon, this apostolic document was subsequently placed among the archives of the Church at Colosse, in the house of one of its elders. We find the first mention of it, as forming part of the Pauline collection, in the writings of Marcion, son of the Bishop of Sinope in Pontus, who about the year 140 went to Rome from Asia Minor. Soon after this it finds a definite place in the Canon of Muratori, in the fragment found at Milan in the middle of the last century, which dates from about the year 170, and contains a list of the writings received and publicly read at that time in one of the Western Churches, either that of Italy, or more probably that of Africa.

We observe, moreover, that the Epistle to Philemon formed part of the Western canon, included in the old Latin translation, usually called *Itala*, and that in the Church most remote from this, the Church of Syria, it also found a place in the authorised translation of the Scriptures, the *Peshito*, in the latter part of the second century.

It is obvious then that the Church very early learned to appreciate the importance of this brief letter. It differs undoubtedly from the other writings of the Apostle, inasmuch as it refers to a purely personal and private matter. But this private matter came within the scope of the work which Christianity was to accomplish among men. And even if it had not been so, how full of interest for us must be the one opportunity supplied by this letter of studying the character of the Apostle Paul in this private relation which brings him into such close contact with our daily life.

We read in Col. iv. 7 that when the Apostle sent to Colosse the letter intended for the Church of that city, he entrusted it to one of his fellow-helpers named Tychicus, and that Tychicus was accompanied by another brother—Onesimus—whom Paul describes by the honourable terms, “faithful and beloved,” and speaks of him as “one of us.” It is impossible to doubt that this Onesimus is the subject of the Epistle to Philemon, and that it also was therefore sent to Colosse. If any doubt at all existed on this point, it would be set aside by the statement of Theodoret, a Syrian bishop of the fifth century, who says positively that “the house of Philemon at Colosse was still standing in his time.”

In the city of Colosse, in the beautiful basin of the Lycus in Phrygia, there lived then at this time a rich citizen named Philemon. This man, as we gather from the Epistle, had been brought by Paul himself to the knowledge of Christ; and as Paul had never visited the Churches of the district in which Colosse was (Col. ii. 1), we must conclude that the rich Phrygian burgher had been converted by the Apostle at Ephesus during a visit which he paid to that capital. The wife of Philemon, we find from the second verse of the Epistle, was named Apphia, and as Paul mentions immediately afterwards in the same

verse the name of Archippus, it is highly probable that this third personage was no other than their son.

Chrysostom indeed speaks of Archippus as a friend of the house, and Theodoret supposes him to have been a Christian teacher receiving the hospitality of Philemon ; but these suppositions are not so natural. To us it seems more probable that Archippus, as a young Christian and the son of Philemon, should have been entrusted (in the absence of Epaphras, who had gone to Rome to see Paul) with the care of the Church at Colosse, and that it was in order to make him feel the responsibility resting upon him, that in the Epistle to the Colossians Paul wrote these words : " Say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it."

The Greek and Roman names of this household show what a hold the authority of Rome and the culture of Greece had taken of the once barbarous nations of Asia Minor.

After saluting the three principal members of the family, Paul goes on to greet the Church gathered in the house. This does not mean simply the household of Philemon ; the name *Church* does not allow of such a restricted signification. On the other hand, the distributive preposition *κατά* equally excludes the whole body of Christians at Colosse. It refers rather to that portion of the Church which was accustomed to meet in the house of Philemon.

But it may be asked, if Paul was writing to Philemon on a private matter, why should he have addressed his letter to the section of the Church of which Philemon's house was the centre ? And out of this question arises another. Why should he have associated the name of Timothy with his own in such a letter ?

It must be admitted that the case of Onesimus interested in some degree the whole of the little community that was wont to meet in the house of Philemon. They had

all heard of the wrongdoing and of the flight of his slave; and now that Onesimus had come back as a Christian, Paul wished to secure for him from them all the same brotherly welcome which he desired Philemon and his family to give him. Hence he wrote commending Onesimus to the confidence and love of them all. It was doubtless with the same end in view that he introduced the name of Timothy. Perhaps Timothy had himself visited Colosse. At any rate his recommendation would take away any semblance of favouritism or personal weakness on the part of Paul. That which Paul asked as the "prisoner of Jesus Christ," Timothy asked in the name of the Christian brotherhood ("Timothy our brother") which united him to the Church at Colosse and formed a plea for the kindly reception of the new brother. We hear nothing further, however, of Timothy in the letter, and Paul speaks throughout in the first person singular, because it was really his affection for and personal interest in Onesimus which made him write.

What was the wrongdoing which had caused Onesimus to run away? The Apostle refers to it in *v.* 18. The expressions used do not necessarily imply that the fugitive slave had committed a theft. They may be explained on the supposition that he had been guilty of culpable negligence which had brought serious loss on his master. However this may be, it was the fear of well-merited punishment which had caused Onesimus to run away. Where had he escaped to? and where had he met Paul? Many commentators think that it was at Cæsarea, in Palestine, where Paul was kept a prisoner from the summer of 59 to the autumn of 61. It is urged in favour of this opinion that Cæsarea was less distant from Colosse than Rome. But a fugitive slave does not seek to hide as near as possible to his master, and it was far easier to get from Ephesus to Rome than to Cæsarea. The runaway would obviously be much less likely to be found by

his master in the great capital of the world than in the little residence of Cæsarea. The other reasons urged in favour of Cæsarea are still more feeble and bordering on the absurd, as the reader may judge by reading those alleged by Meyer. We have already observed, in our paper on the Epistle to the Colossians, how much more natural it seems to date that Epistle from Rome than from Cæsarea, and this would suffice to decide the question with regard to Philemon. We find moreover in *v.* 22 what seems to me an irrefutable argument to show that that letter was written during the captivity in Rome, that is, between the spring of the years 62 and 64.

Let us now turn to the Epistle itself.

A modern commentator has shrewdly observed that the Epistle to Philemon was a practical commentary on the injunction of the Apostle in the Epistle to the Colossians (*iv.* 6): "Let your speech be always with grace seasoned with salt." As we study the letter in detail, we shall be struck with the truth of this remark.

In the opening words *v.* 1-3, the Apostle speaks of himself as the prisoner of Jesus Christ, delicately substituting this description for the usual one, "servant of Jesus Christ." He is indeed at this time fulfilling his apostolic calling, not by active missionary labours, but by bonds and imprisonment.¹ This thought is well adapted to open the heart of Philemon to grant the request Paul has to make. He calls Philemon his "beloved and fellow worker," because when he became a Christian, he had placed his strength, his property, and his life at the service of the same work in which Paul himself was engaged—the salvation of men (*v.* 6). In *v.* 2 he gives Archippus a somewhat different title. He calls him his "fellow soldier," because, as Epaphras' deputy, he had to contend at Colosse for the truth, and specially to combat the false doctrine which threatened to invade the Church.

¹ The expression is equivalent to "captive servant of Jesus Christ."

These opening words are followed, as usual in Paul's epistles, by thanksgiving for that which God has already wrought in the readers, followed by a prayer for the continuance and increase of the work (*v.* 4-7). In *v.* 5 the Apostle says: "hearing of thy love," and not as in the corresponding passage of the Epistle to the Ephesians (*i.* 15) "hearing of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you." The conversion of the readers of the Epistle to the Ephesians was an *accomplished fact*, of which the Apostle had been assured once for all, while the love of Philemon was a present and constant disposition of mind, the ever new manifestations of which gladdened the heart of Paul. The Apostle adds, "and of the faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all the saints." It is not without advertence that Paul brings out in this instance alone, the faith which a Christian should have, not only towards the Lord, but also toward those who belong to Him. He had spoken of faith in an analogous sense in 1 Cor. xiii. 7. "Love covereth all things, believeth all things." In speaking of the faith which Philemon has not only in the Lord, but also in the work of grace which the Lord can perform in the heart of the vilest of men, Paul is certainly thinking of the welcome he is about to ask for him who was formerly the unfaithful slave; which welcome must depend entirely on the confidence felt by Philemon in the work of grace wrought in Onesimus. A succession of disappointing experiences often produces among Christians, particularly among those who are older, a religious scepticism which paralyses love and kills enthusiasm. The good there is in the saints must be always with their fellow Christians, a matter of faith. It was this faith toward all the saints which was about to be tested in the case of Philemon.

In thanking God for this gift bestowed on him, there is an implied exhortation that he should be faithful to it in

the case in question. In *v.* 6 Paul gives the substance of his prayers for his friend Philemon.

“*The fellowship of thy faith,*” must refer to the beneficent communications of which his faith is the source.¹ These become more and more abundant and effectual by the knowledge of the beauty and holiness of the work which God performs in Christians,² *to the glory of Jesus Christ,* through whom it is done. In desiring for Philemon a growing knowledge of the work of God in his brethren, Paul certainly wishes to prepare him to recognise with gladness and confidence the, to him, almost incredible change wrought in Onesimus. We see how free Paul’s style is from anything that is stereotyped. Every word has its peculiar fitness. The language of the Apostle is the ever fresh garb of a truth ever new.

After this preamble the Apostle passes to the subject of his letter, the commendation of Onesimus to his master. But before making his request, as he does in *v.* 17, he carefully prepares the way (*v.* 9–16).

In *v.* 8, 9, he reminds Philemon who it is who makes this claim on him; it is he who, as the apostle of Jesus Christ, might have all boldness to declare to Philemon the will of the Lord, and to enjoin him what was fitting to do under the circumstances. But he prefers to appeal to his heart, asking that of him as a proof of his love which he might have enjoined as a duty. His claims to the affection of Philemon are all comprised in that name *Paul*, which recalls to him so many memories, and in those two epistles which renders its appeal still more forcible, “the aged,” and “a prisoner.” Paul’s age at this time would be about fifty-five. His conversion took place in the year 36 or 37, and he could not have been then less than thirty years old. Had he been younger than this he would not have been

¹ The active sense of the word *κοινωνία* is proved by Rom. xv. 26.

² The reading “*in us*” is certainly to be preferred to “*in you.*”

competent to receive from the Sanhedrim the important commission entrusted to him. But the labours, the sufferings, the persecutions he had endured, had prematurely aged him, and he knew well how these two words, "aged" and "a prisoner," would touch the heart of Philemon.

After thus reminding Philemon who it is that asks, he goes on to speak of the one for whom he intercedes. He is careful not to name him at first, knowing what painful associations the name would call up. He begins by describing the close bond which his conversion had formed between himself as the spiritual father and this child whom he had begotten in his bonds. And only after this does he mention him by his name Onesimus, which means "helpful," and which would be merely ironical if applied to the part played by him in the house of Philemon, but which has become now a true description, because of the kindly offices he has already done for Paul, and is anxious now to do for Philemon also if he will consent to forgive and receive him back. Paul is evidently playing here upon the name of the slave, but not as a mere *jeu de mots* to display his wit; rather as a delicate way of recommending the faithful slave to his master, by substituting for the remembrance of his past failures the hope of the services he might now render. It is in this capacity of a servant who will prove himself in the future worthy of his name (helpful) that Paul sends him back.

The same idea—"profitable to thee and to me" (*v.* 11)—is worked out in the succeeding verses. Only we must rectify the unfortunate modification introduced by the copyists in *v.* 12—"thou therefore receive him that is mine own bowels," which is an anticipation of the request in *v.* 17. According to the best manuscripts, *v.* 12 ought to read simply, "whom I have sent back to thee in his own person, that is, my very heart (or mine own bowels)." This expression is very common in Latin (*mea viscera, cor*

meum), meaning that which fills my heart. The sense is: "He is one with me in such a way that whatever you do to gladden him, my bowels will feel it as if done to myself."

Ver. 13, 14 enlarge on this idea of the value of Onesimus to Paul himself. He would fain have kept him in Rome, as an evangelist, all the more that his captivity rendered such help very needful to him. But he had refrained, not wishing to anticipate that which Philemon might feel prompted to do of his own accord, in granting the Apostle this welcome help. Paul does not wish to take Onesimus away from Philemon. If he is privileged to have his help, it shall be as a living proof of Philemon's affection for himself.

In *v.* 13 the Apostle says "that in thy behalf (*ὕπὲρ σοῦ*) he might minister unto me." This explains *v.* 15, 16, in which Paul enlarges on what Onesimus is to become to Philemon himself. Providence had perhaps permitted all that had happened in order that the temporary relation of master and slave, in which Philemon and Onesimus had stood to each other, might be exchanged for the eternal relationship of brothers in the Lord. Not that Philemon must on that account necessarily keep Onesimus with him; on the contrary, Paul has just hinted (*v.* 13, 14) at his hope that Philemon might perhaps spare Onesimus to him. But in this way the master would really benefit by the service of his slave; for the services which Onesimus would render to Paul in his Roman prison would be the very same kind offices which Philemon himself would gladly do him if he could. This is the explanation of the words, "on thy behalf," in *v.* 13. In *v.* 16, Paul says, "a brother beloved specially to me, but how much more to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord." These words show how little even slavery excluded the gentler domestic affections. Onesimus is henceforward beloved by Paul as by no one else ("specially to me") unless it be by Philemon, in whom the

old affection of the master will now be reinforced by the new affection of the brother in Christ ("both in the flesh and in the Lord"). Before leaving this passage, which is one of inimitable grace and delicacy, we may call attention to the word "*perhaps*" at the beginning of v. 15. The Apostle is going to try and show the good results of the parting "for a season" of Onesimus from his master. But it is always very difficult to interpret the ways of Providence, especially when man's own misdoing has to be taken into the category of causes working for good. Therefore, feeling that it might be rather startling to Philemon to represent Onesimus' offence in this light, Paul discreetly adds "*perhaps*." God might no doubt have brought about the conversion of Onesimus by some other means; but as a matter of fact He had condescended thus to overrule evil for good.

After these preliminaries, each one of which has its due weight in the balance, the Apostle at length comes (v. 17-21) to the request he wants to make. He has reminded Philemon who it is that asks—Paul the aged and a prisoner; he has said who it is for whom he pleads—his own son in the faith, and henceforth a brother to Philemon, one capable of doing immense service to the Apostle in the great work laid upon him and which is dearer than aught else to the heart of Philemon also. He thus comes in v. 17 to the request which is the keynote of this short epistle. "If then thou countest me a partner, receive him as myself." Let us imagine Paul arriving at Colosse and knocking at Philemon's door. What rejoicings there would be through the whole household, alike in master and slaves! What delight in all hearts, on all faces! Just such a welcome he now asks for the wandering sheep that has come back to the fold. His request is not only for pardon and complete restoration, but also for the welcome of a brother in the household of faith.

There remains however one dark spot on the picture. Onesimus had caused considerable loss to Philemon, either by his own dishonesty or by the results of his negligence. In any case the loss had not been made good. Here then Paul offers himself as security for the reparation which is still due. "If he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth thee aught, put that to mine account." This offer might scarcely appear serious. In order that his reader may see that it is so, Paul repeats emphatically, "I, Paul, have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it."

Some interpreters have supposed that Paul wrote only this passage of the letter with his own hand. This seems to me a strained and childish explanation. He meant to call attention to the fact that, the whole letter being written by himself, the offer contained in these last words was well guaranteed: "I will repay it: *I* (ἐγώ), Paul, have written it with mine own hand." The past tense, "*I have written*," is a common form in Greek, by which the writer places himself by the side of the reader when the communication is received.

Bonâ fide as the offer is, it is clear that the Apostle thinks it impossible that Philemon will accept it; therefore he adds: "that I say not unto thee how that thou owest to me even thine own self besides"; which evidently implies that beyond the remission of this debt, Philemon owes himself, all that he is and all that he has, to St. Paul, inasmuch as he owes to him his eternal salvation.

In contrast to such unworthy conduct on the part of Philemon as demanding the payment of this debt by Paul, (who has, even in that case, taken the burden upon his own shoulders and released Onesimus), the Apostle goes on to describe in loving words what he really expects from his old convert: "Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ." It is in Christ that he pleads; in Christ that he hopes to gain a hearing;

and this granting of his request will remove any uneasiness he might have felt for his dear son Onesimus. He hopes for even more than the obedience to which he feels he has a just claim. He is confident that Philemon will do beyond what he asks. Are not these words sufficiently clear? How can they have been misconstrued by so many commentators? De Wette, who sees the idea of the enfranchisement of Onesimus already expressed in v. 16 (*ὑπὲρ δούλου*), thinks that here something more is asked, some further benefit to be granted to Onesimus with his liberty. Meyer and Wiesinger, who refuse to see even here a request for the emancipation of Onesimus, also regard these words as indicating some special benefaction to be added to the pardon granted him.

We can but hope that Philemon read the thought of Paul more truly than these interpreters. Paul had clearly asked him to give up Onesimus to him for the work of an evangelist. Now it is perfectly plain that such a gift must imply the liberation of Onesimus, and that this is what Paul means by the words, "knowing that thou wilt do even beyond what I say." The Apostle has been accused of sanctioning the institution of slavery by restoring to his master a slave who had escaped from the yoke. On the contrary, the way in which Paul sends him back, reminding his master that it is not a slave, but one better than a slave, a brother beloved who returns to him, contains the moral premisses from which must follow, not only the immediate emancipation of that one slave, but the ultimate abrogation of slavery itself.

We have seen that the Epistles of Paul usually conclude with some personal references, greetings and commissions to the various brethren. It is so in this Epistle. There is something very touching in the request to Philemon in v. 22. Paul has just been asking him to receive Onesimus as himself; now he adds, as though with a smile,

“Withal prepare me also a lodging; for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you.” If there remained any doubt about this letter being written from Rome, these words would be conclusive. When Paul was imprisoned at Cæsarea, he had just taken leave, and as he believed for ever, of the Churches in Asia Minor (Acts xx. 22), and all his thoughts were turned towards Rome. How could he at that time have been cherishing the hope of again visiting Colosse? In order to do so, he would have had to cross by sea from Cæsarea to Ephesus, and travel thence inland to Colosse; or to traverse the whole of Asia Minor, passing through Phrygia. We know that nothing was farther from the Apostle’s thoughts than such a journey. But the case was altogether different when, after his captivity in Cæsarea, he had already passed one or two years in Rome. Circumstances had materially changed in the East, and particularly in Asia Minor. Colosse itself was in danger through the introduction of false doctrine. The evil had come of which he had forewarned the Ephesian elders (Acts xx. 29). “I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock.” Before starting for Spain, the extreme limit of the then known world, and so cutting himself off finally from his old field of labour, the Apostle had a longing to go once more to the East to consolidate his work there. He expresses the same desire in writing from Rome to the Church at Philippi (Phil. ii. 24). “I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall come shortly.” It may be said that the Apostle thus himself contradicts his farewell words to the elders of Ephesus (Acts xx. 25). “Now behold I know that ye all among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more.” But in any case the contradiction remains between these words and the passage in Philippians which we have just quoted, a passage which, as all critics agree, must have

been written from Rome. At the time when the Apostle took leave of the elders of Asia, he was leaving for the West, to fulfil a mission which, as far as he could judge, would absorb all the rest of his life, and it was very natural that he should look upon his farewell as final. And even if this presentiment had not proved true, there would have been nothing contrary to apostolic inspiration, rightly understood; for that inspiration only extended to the great facts of salvation. (See the Pastoral Epistles.)

The salutations contained in *v.* 23, 24 are the same as those in the Epistle to the Colossians, with the exception of those addressed to the Church at Colosse generally and to neighbouring Churches. These would have been inappropriate in a private letter.

After this detailed study of this short Epistle, which is at once so simple and so *naïf*, so full of heart and fine of wit; so appropriate to the particular circumstances, and, with all its playfulness so earnest, we find it difficult to understand how any critic could ever have been found to call in question its genuineness. This has been done, however, by Ferdinand Baur, who, to use his own expression, discerns in this Epistle "the embryo of a Christian novel, in which the author proposed to illustrate by a short narrative this great idea: that that which is lost in this world and for time, is found again in Christianity for all eternity. It was in order to work out the idea that the Gospel united for ever those who have been severed for a time by outward circumstances, that the unknown author conceived this fiction of the relation between Onesimus, Paul, and Philemon." Only a theologian very much pre-occupied with erudite ideas, could have come to regard the simple fact which forms the basis of the Epistle to Philemon as only the fictitious illustration of a theory; or rather the author must have been very much driven into a corner by the consequences of his own system before he could

have invented such a way of escape. Baur was forced by his own theory of primitive Christianity to deny the authenticity of the Epistle to the Colossians, because the Christology of that Epistle was inconsistent with the limitations which he had laid down for the Apostle Paul, and approached too nearly the theology of the Apostle John. Now the Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon are so closely linked together that it would be impossible to accept the one and reject the other. Hence Baur was compelled to sacrifice this innocent little Epistle, and to perpetrate a sort of critical murder.

We are now in a position to estimate the full importance of this short Scripture, and to pay our tribute to the wisdom of those who were not afraid to give it a place in the canon of the New Testament. It brings out two points of inestimable value and interest. First: It shows us what St. Paul was in little things. We know what he was in the treatment of great principles, and in carrying out the main work of his life, his mission to the Gentiles. But there are many great philanthropists who have undertaken to reform the world, and yet in their private life have shown themselves the proudest, most hard and self-seeking of men. In theory they have been full of the love of humanity; in fact, full of self-love. The Divine charity which the love of God had enkindled in the heart of Paul showed itself in little unnoticed things no less than in the great overt acts of his public life. We see him in this letter concerned (and with what tender solicitude!) for the reception which a poor guilty slave would meet with from his master. He writes in his behalf a letter as carefully considered, both in form and substance, as those which he addressed to the Churches of Rome and of Corinth. He throws as much heart into it as if the gravest interests of his apostleship were involved. And in order to show the importance he attached to it, instead

of dictating it, as was his custom, he writes it with his own hand. Such is the difference between true Christian love and that of mere humanitarian reformers.

This Epistle brings out secondly the marked difference between the Gospel method of action and the way in which men set to work to accomplish social revolutions. It was not by calling on the unhappy slaves to rise in armed rebellion against their masters that the Gospel struck off their fetters. It rather melted them by the fervour of Christian love, and so penetrated society with the principles of the Gospel that emancipation became a necessity.

The Epistle to Philemon was the first indication of the tendency in this direction, and may therefore be fairly called the first petition in favour of the abolition of slavery. In this respect Wilberforce was but a follower of St. Paul.

F. GODET.

RECENT ENGLISH LITERATURE ON THE NEW TESTAMENT.

TEXTUAL CRITICISM.—By the diligence of Bp. Wordsworth, Prof. Sanday, and Mr. White, we are put in possession of another volume of *Old Latin Biblical Texts*;¹ and had the summer months yielded only this, they might still be pronounced abundantly fruitful. Much of the labour which has been expended to fill these 400 pages is of a kind which need never be repeated, and which will save the time and eyes and brain of future critics. The Bobbio MS., containing portions of the Gospels according to St. Mark and St. Matthew, is the oldest existing representative of the African version, and therefore stands in the front rank of Latin texts. It probably belongs to the 5th cent., and, if credit is to be given to an inscription it still bears, it is the identical

¹ *Old Latin Biblical Texts, No. II. Portions of the Gospels according to St. Mark and St. Matthew from the Bobbio MS. (k), together with other fragments usually cited as n, o, p, a₂, s, and t.* By John Wordsworth, D.D., Bishop of Salisbury, W. Sanday, M.A., D.D., and H. White, M.A. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886.)