

*SURVEY OF RECENT LITERATURE ON THE
NEW TESTAMENT.*

TEXTUAL CRITICISM.—A book which has cost its author so much labour and time as Mr. Hoskier must have spent on his deserves at least to have its title given in full. It is this: “*A Full Account and Collation of the Greek Cursive Codex Evangelium 604. With Two Facsimiles. Together with Ten Appendices, containing (A) The Collation of a Manuscript in his own possession. (B) A reprint with corrections of Scrivener’s list of differences between the editions of Stephen 1550 and Elzevir 1624, Beza 1565 and the Complutensian. (C) A full and exact comparison of the Elzevir editions of 1624 and 1633. (D) Facsimile of Codex Paul. 247 (Cath. Eps. 210), with correction of previous descriptions. (E) Report of a visit to the Philipps MSS. (F) Report of a visit to the Public Library at Bâle, with Facsimile of Erasmus’ second MS. Evan. 2, and a collation of Codex Apoc. No. 15. (G) Report of a visit to the Public Library at Geneva, with corrections of Cellierier’s collation of Evan. 75, as supplied to Scholz. (H) Report of a visit to the Library of Harvard College, Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A., with information concerning the sacred Greek codices there. (I) Some further information concerning Codex 1^a, an Evangelistary at Andover, Mass., U.S.A. (J) Note on 1 Tim. iii. 15. By Herman C. Hoskier.*”

Mr. Hoskier tells us that this book, which might be supposed to represent years of toil, has been produced in the leisure hours of an active commercial life. Truly, professional scholars must look to their laurels. Mr. Hoskier’s industry has been stimulated by a desire to abate confidence in Dr. Hort’s authority and to impart

the wholesome belief that we are yet in the infancy of scientific knowledge of the genealogical relations of MSS. To whatever school of criticism Mr. Hoskier's readers belong, they will not deny him a front place among textual critics. Certainly he has the capacity for attending to minutiae and for sustained accuracy of observation, which are more requisite in this than in most other studies. It may induce some to consult his book, to know that in the MS. which forms its main subject there are no fewer than two hundred and fifty readings. It is a duty of the rich to buy such books, but perhaps Mr. Hoskier does well to rely upon Bengel's saying, "Die grösste Frucht unserer Arbeit ist oft die Arbeit selbst."

INTRODUCTION.—The interest taken in the ascertainment of the origin of our gospels has during the last few months been manifested by the publication of two contributions to the literature of the subject. The first is *The Composition of the Four Gospels: a Critical Inquiry*, by Rev. Arthur Wright, M.A., Fellow and Tutor of Queens' College, Cambridge (Macmillan & Co.). The idea of the book is given in its opening sentences: "Education in the East, I am told, still consists largely in learning by heart the maxims of the wise. The teacher sits on a chair, the pupils arrange themselves at his feet. He dictates a lesson; they copy it on their slates, and repeat it till they have mastered it. Then the task is over; the slates are cleaned and put by for future use." The first of the teachers of the Christian gospel was St. Peter, by whom many who themselves became catechists were taught. A second cycle of teaching was initiated by St. Matthew, and a third by an unknown Paulinist; and these three cycles of catechising are *represented* by the gospels of Mark, Matthew, and Luke respectively. This scheme is obviously open to criticism at various points; Mr. Wright, however, has not only written a very interesting and stimulating book, but has made some

critical remarks which must enter into future discussion of the subject. His standpoint is that of free and reverential criticism.

The other contribution is from the Unitarian standpoint, and bears the name of Prof. Estlin Carpenter. It is published by the Sunday-school Association, and is entitled *The First Three Gospels: their Origin and Relations*. This is a book of marked ability. It has been written after the most careful preparation. The material is thoroughly digested, and is presented in an almost perfect form. No book in English gives so adequate a presentation of the present results of criticism as regards the gospels. But in our judgment the whole book is vitiated by the author's point of view. It will be with the greatest regret that many who have desiderated a thoroughly competent treatment of the gospels will find that a writer who has all the knowledge, critical tact, and faculty of lucid statement which mark him out as the man to give us this, has failed to do so through his adoption of what cannot but be condemned as extreme, if not biassed, views. The book Prof. Carpenter has given us is full of suggestion and of most illuminating criticism, but it also abounds in unverifiable statements and misleading principles. His treatment of the fourth gospel is not so unworthy of the name of criticism as Dr. Martineau's useless pages on it in *The Seat of Authority*; but what can be said of a critic who finds "all local colour" blanched away from the fourth gospel? If ever literary texture was dyed in the wool it is the fourth gospel. Had Prof. Carpenter gone over the gospel for himself verse by verse he would have been saved from falling a victim to theories of its origin which are contradicted in every chapter of the book itself. With the sincerest admiration for the critical and literary ability which marks this thoroughly business-like and scholarly volume, we cannot recommend it as a trustworthy introduction to the

gospels, and we are sure that those who know the subject best will read it with mingled pleasure and pain.

EXEGESIS.—It is not every year, even in this busy age, which is signalized by the appearance of a commentary representing so much well-applied scholarship and thought as Dr. Westcott's *The Epistle to the Hebrews: the Greek Text, with Notes and Essays* (Macmillan & Co.). To our thinking this is an even richer volume than the same author's work on the fourth gospel. It has no doubt the defects of its qualities: the multitudinous divisions and sub-divisions occasionally bewilder rather than enlighten, the mass of detail sometimes destroys the perspective. There is a lack in the volume of an occasional gathering up of results and vivid presentation of the force of the argument. The meaning is attended to verse by verse and even paragraph by paragraph, but one is not throughout in sensible contact with the writer of the epistle, animated by his purpose, and as eager as himself to see the evolution and result of his argument. Many readers also will resent the constant reference to the Fathers, and the almost total absence of reference to such modern students of the epistle as Bleek, Bruce, and Davidson. None of these is superseded by Dr. Westcott's work. Bleek still stands as the quarry out of which all students of the epistle will continue to borrow material. Dr. Bruce has succeeded in laying bare the inmost aim and spirit of the book, and in vitalizing its every part. Dr. Davidson has packed into a small and unpretending volume as much insight and knowledge and exegetical tact as would have made the fortune of a more ambitious commentary and as will train in interpretation many a future student. Dr. Westcott's work, notwithstanding these other able commentaries, has a right to exist, and occupies a place of its own, and combines so many of the merits of other books that it is bound to become a favourite. It maintains the reputation of

Cambridge for exact scholarship; it maintains also the English tradition of sober interpretation and patristic learning; it is the work of a sound and able theologian, the ripest product of a mind which for half a century has been receiving the most efficient training for it.

On the same epistle Dr. Vaughan has also recently published. His contribution is on the same lines as his volume on *Romans*, and is entitled *The Epistle to the Hebrews, with Notes* (Macmillan & Co.). His aim is to ascertain the exact meaning and usage of the words by adducing parallel passages from the LXX. and the New Testament. It is an applied concordance with suitable inferences. For thorough study few methods can be more useful, and Dr. Vaughan is so skilled an adept in this particular style of commentary, that he brings before his reader much that is instructive and that cannot elsewhere be found. His book is particularly useful as indoctrinating the young student in a method which he can himself carry out with no other aids than a good lexicon and concordance. By aiming only at one part of the interpreter's work Dr. Vaughan succeeds in doing it thoroughly. As an introduction to a healthy and sound method of working at the New Testament, this book cannot be too strongly recommended.

We welcome another volume on the New Testament from the hand of the Rev. William Spicer Wood, who, some years ago, issued an original and ingenious discussion of some passages in the Epistle to the Galatians. His present contribution is named *Problems in the New Testament*, and consists of twenty-five short and thorough discussions of difficult passages. This kind of book is much required. Why should a scholar dissipate his energy by remarking on every verse in a gospel or an epistle, whether he has anything fresh to say on it or not? Far better is it to follow the example so finely set in Field's *Otium Norvicense*, and discuss only such passages as the writer knows he has fresh

light upon. Mr. Wood's book is excellent of its kind. Widely and accurately read in the classics, he has a fine sense for grammar, and can generally justify by examples his renderings and interpretations. Occasionally he is carried away by his ingenuity, although in this respect he has been progressing since he published his former book. There are still some passages regarding which we decidedly think his interpretation wrong ; but even when he is wrong, he invests the subject with interest and brings fresh material to its discussion. We cordially congratulate Mr. Wood on his volume, and trust the reception it meets with will induce him to continue his studies and their publication.

Prebendary Sadler continues his commentary with unflagging industry. The recently published volume deals with *The Epistles of St. Paul to the Colossians, Thessalonians, and Timothy*. Mr. Sadler's point of view and style are now sufficiently well known ; and it need not be said that in commenting on 2 Thessalonians his views regarding Antichrist differ from those propounded by ardent Protestants. His comments in general are a good combination of the critical and edifying.

The book of Revelation still attracts commentators ; and the Rev. Alexander Brown, of Aberdeen, has published a thoroughly sensible guide to its interpretation. Proceeding on the understanding that the encouragements of the book were intended for the writer's contemporaries, and that these contemporaries would understand the symbolic language used, Mr. Brown finds the fulfilment of its predictions in the generation that saw the fall of Jerusalem. In applying this key to the meaning of particular passages he is remarkably successful. Sobriety and sense characterize the interpretation throughout, and no one can read the small volume without feeling increased hopefulness about the understanding of a book which is virtually sealed

to most readers. *The Great Day of the Lord* is published by Messrs. Hamilton, Adams & Co., and deserves to be widely read.

EXPOSITION.—Dr. Laidlaw, Professor of Theology in the New College, Edinburgh, and well known to theological readers as the author of a standard work on *The Bible Doctrine of Man*, has published a volume entitled *The Miracles of our Lord: Expository and Homiletic* (Hodder & Stoughton). There was undoubtedly room for such a treatment of the miracles. It was time that the results of exegesis should be gathered up and popularized; and this is most successfully done in the present volume. It is characterized by ample knowledge, by caution and sense in interpretation, and by practised skill in discerning the points best fitted for popular instruction. By those who wish to save themselves the trouble of independent research the volume may be relied on as presenting in a well-digested form all that they could learn by investigations of their own. It should prove a favourite with overtaxed preachers and with all lay readers.

MISCELLANEOUS.—Since 1874 Dr. Emil Schürer's *Lehrbuch der Neutestamentlichen Zeitgeschichte* has taken rank as the most reliable and comprehensive book on its subject, and as an indispensable part of the apparatus of the New Testament student. The new edition of this authoritative work is virtually a new book. Even what is retained of the old is generally rewritten, and a very large amount of new matter is introduced. So that, satisfactory as the original edition seemed, and difficult as it might have been for any other scholar to lay his finger on blanks and suggest additions, it is rendered obsolete by Dr. Schürer's own diligence and learning. It is from this revised edition, and simultaneously with its publication, that Messrs. Clark, of Edinburgh, have made their translation. The first volume, which contains the political history of Palestine

from B.C. 175 to the time of Herod the Great, has been rendered into English by the very competent hand of Rev. John Macpherson, who has also made useful additions to the already rich and serviceable bibliography of Schürer. Other three volumes of the translation have already been published, and one more will complete it. To praise such a work would be impertinent, and to commend it is needless save to very young students.

To any who seek information regarding the same period as Schürer deals with, but in a shorter and more popular form than the German scholar has adopted, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, by W. D. Morrison, can be very confidently recommended. It is one of Mr. Fisher Unwin's "Story of the Nations" series, and can stand comparison with the best of that goodly troop. Mr. Morrison has consulted the best modern authorities, notably Mommsen and Duruy, but there is abundant evidence that he has also for himself gone to the sources. He most justly observes that "a work of this nature will serve the purpose of shedding more light upon the Christian documents handed down to us in the New Testament, and will also assist us in forming a more accurate estimate of primitive and apostolic Christianity." The book consists of two parts, the first giving the history of the period, the second exhibiting the social and religious life. It deserves a wide circulation, and might with great advantage be used as a text-book in schools and colleges.

The Hereafter, by James Fyfe (T. & T. Clark), contains a large amount of exegetical matter. The first part of the volume exhibits the beliefs of ancient peoples regarding a world to come, not always drawn perhaps from first-rate authorities, but in the main correctly given and conveniently arranged. Archæology is also made to yield its testimony, and the doctrine and phraseology of the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, and the New Testament are discussed at length. In the second part, the Scripture doc-

trine of retribution is expounded, objections to it answered, and the theories of universal restoration and conditional immortality discussed. There is a very large amount of ground gone over, and occasionally points are handled with greater minuteness than there is any occasion for; but this is a fault which perhaps leans to virtue's side. A little more literary skill however in maintaining a due proportion between the parts of the book would no doubt have made it easier reading. Still it is a storehouse of material for any inquirer into this difficult branch of theology. The criticism is candid and unbiassed, and the thinking quite independent. The conclusion arrived at favours the traditional view, or at least the traditional view as held by reasonable men. It is a book that ought not to be lost sight of in a discussion which is likely to be long-continued. If a second edition is called for, the proof should be more carefully corrected.

Attention ought to be drawn to a somewhat remarkable attempt to re-write the life of Christ. It is published anonymously by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Limited, under the title *Jesus, the Carpenter of Nazareth*. It is "written in short, realistic pictures, endeavouring to avoid theology and sectarianism, that mothers of all creeds may read it to their children, and that children in later life may read it for themselves." Experiment has proved that the book meets the approval of children both of younger and of older growth. Indeed there are frequent passages in the narrative which fascinate by their picturesque and quite fresh presentation of familiar scenes. A mind alert and imaginative is revealed on every page. A single expression often breaks out a window for us, and gives us quite a new glimpse into the real atmosphere of the life of Jesus. That every chapter is wrongly dated is a great misfortune, not so much in itself, as because it may deter some from trusting the realistic detail woven into the story.

Such distrust will be out of place. Careful study has evidently been spent upon details. The book deserves a place in every Christian family.

Among sermons of recent publication there is at least one volume which is likely to win some permanence of regard: *The Great Alternative, and other Sermons*, by Rev. Charles Moinet, M.A., Kensington (Hodder & Stoughton). They are quite unlike the sermons which now-a-days make a bid for popularity, and are absolutely devoid of everything sensational or rhetorical. They depend rather on a manly dignity and reasonableness, and on an unaffected originality both in their subjects and in their style. The religion of Christ in contact with the individual and with society has been Mr. Moinet's study. He is strongly evangelical, and resolutely abides by the old lines, yet without any appearance of narrowness. On the contrary, one feels as he reads these strong and nervous pages how fully evangelical doctrine accords with the width and variety of human nature and of human life. Few volumes of sermons are so fitted to win respect to the pulpit.

Prof. Gretillat, of Neuchatel, has issued with Attinger Frères of that town the fourth volume of his *Exposé de Théologie Systematique*, which may be described as the most easily read and entertaining system of theology ever published. This present volume comprises soteriology and eschatology, and is certainly not less interesting than its predecessors. It has the same light but decisive touch, the same impartiality, the same accuracy in exegesis. While refuting universalism and conditionalism, Prof. Gretillat inclines to the belief that Scripture has not furnished us with material for definitely determining the fate of the wicked.

A frequent and esteemed contributor to these pages, Prof. Beet, has published his Fernley Lecture, delivered last autumn, under the title, *The Credentials of the Gospel*.

(Wesleyan Methodist Book Room). If the forces marshalled in defence of the Christian position by Mr. Beet are the same veterans whose colours and facings have been seen before, they certainly present under his command a new front, and the old weapons have been altered into arms of precision. He aims at proving that the *gospel* is true, and in order to accomplish this he reviews its suitability to the needs of man, exhibits the inadequacy of nature and of other religions to satisfy these needs, and sets in a convincing light the historical basis of Christianity. The hinge on which the argument turns is the resurrection of our Lord; and this is handled in a wise, well-informed, and conclusive manner. There is much that is freshly thought and admirably put throughout the book; and however well read in apologetic literature any one is, he will find much to interest and much to convince in the chapters which deal with the resurrection and the miraculous. At this point Prof. Beet makes a distinct advance in the argument, and deserves the thanks of all who are interested in the defence of Christianity. The book is throughout written in an admirable style.

MARCUS DODS.