

NOTES ON RECENT NEW TESTAMENT STUDY.

THE detailed analysis of the Gospels has received an acute contribution from Dr. Emil Wendling, whose *Ur-Marcus. Versuch einer Wiederherstellung der ältesten Mitteilungen über das Leben Jesus* (Tübingen, 1905) is a much-needed rehabilitation of the theory that our canonical Mark is not the original Mark, though the author's subtlety of division leads him often to results which seem unjustified by the internal evidence. The cardinal criterion by which the two strata of the Gospel are differentiated is that in the earlier form Jesus appears as a highly gifted teacher, whose life and sayings are briefly recorded; whereas the second and later stage represents Him as a worker of miracles. In addition to these, Dr. Wendling postulates a redactor, whose functions are editorial.

The Egyptian element in the eschatological world of the book of Revelation has more than once been discussed by archaeologists, and in the April number of the *Monist* (pp. 179-200) Miss Alice Grenfell illustrates afresh the Johannine imagery from the papyri and monuments of the Nile valley; e.g., the hair *white as wool* of i. 14 from the similar traits of Ani after his beatification and from Queen Thiti. The Egyptian analogies to *the second death* (pp. 182-3) are mostly to be sought on tombs or coffins, which have been occasionally found with the inscription: "Thou dost not die the second death," i.e. be annihilated. The sea of glass before the throne (Rev. iv. 6) suggests the water under the throne of Osiris (in the Book of the Dead), while the *four beasts* of iv. 6 have long been compared to the four funerary genii near the divine throne of Egypt, also semi-animal in form (pp. 184 f.). These four genii,

besides their connexion with the fortunes of the departed, represented the four points of the compass (cf. Rev. vii. 1, pp. 192 f.). Among other parallels noted by the writer is that of the sixth stanza of the Hymn to the Nile ("Thou driest the tear of every eye") with Revelation vii. 17 (Isa. xxv. 8); also, "in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, there are two scarabs of lions with serpent-headed tails" (cf. Rev. ix. 19: *the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions: . . . their tails were like unto serpents*).

The question of the Imperial cultus, so vital to the criticism of the Apocalypse of John, has recently been touched on two sides. Dr. Edward Meyer, in the *Historische Zeitschrift* (1903), p. 398, has called attention to the influence upon such a practice exerted by Aristotle's idealizing sketch of the godlike perfect being, whose virtues hover on the borderland of the human and the divine. Herr Adolf Matthaei, in the *Preussische Jahrbücher* (1905), cxxii. pp. 402-79, calls attention to more concrete and immediate traces of the rise of the cultus in the Eastern provinces. In the island of Thera, for example, which lies not far from Patmos, an inscription has lately been deciphered, in which a certain Artemidorus boasts of having erected altars and a sanctuary to the first three Ptolemies, and many other evidences of the widespread instinct for the canonization or deification of monarchs are to be found previous to the opening period of the Roman Empire, when the Caesars took over the habit for the sake of policy, and when, even as early as 27 B.C. in an island like Thera itself,¹ a pagan altar could be inscribed "to the almighty Caesar, the son of God." Here Matthaei discusses the problem of how far the various emperors were to blame for conniving at the practice.

¹ See Adolf Bauer's description of Thera in the same journal (1900, c. pp. 281-295).

Domitian, he rightly judges, was deliberate in the matter. This emperor, under and against whose régime the Apocalypse of John was composed, not only permitted, but encouraged and enforced the payment of divine honours to himself as "Dominus ac Deus." As for the religious element or value of this cult, while the worship of the dead emperors naturally sprang often from quite naïve gratitude on the part of the common people, the cult of the living emperor is pronounced by the writer to have been less sincere and admirable. Yet, bound up as it often was with hypocrisy and servility, a modern historian will not judge it as harshly as did the prophet John or the early Christian apologists. In its better phase, it denoted a blend of patriotism and religion, and worked for the unifying of the wide empire under its divinely appointed head.

In discussing the thirteenth chapter of the Johannine Apocalypse (pp. 477 f.), the writer takes the first beast with the crowns and horns to represent the Imperial cultus, whilst the second symbolizes the provincial authorities whose function and joy it was to promote the interests of the cult in the temples and assemblies of the provinces, especially throughout Asia Minor.

In his address on the study of the *κοινή*, delivered at the Hamburg Conference of Philologists, which has been reprinted in the *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Alterthum* (1906, 246-263), Professor Albert Thumb reverts to the vexed question of Hebraisms in New Testament Greek, and protests eagerly against the practice of finding a Semitic or Aramaic background behind phrases like *σὺ τίς εἶ, ποῦ ἐστὶν ἐκεῖνος, καὶ λέγει τὶ κλαίεις* in the Fourth Gospel, as though such could only have been written by a Palestinian Jew. The sense of a term like *קָדוֹשׁ* is totally different from *εὐθέως*, and Harnack is rebuked for detecting a Semitic

colouring in the logion of Acts xx. 35. Heitmüller is welcomed to the ranks of the anti-Hebraists for showing that even the formula εἰς (τὸ) ὄνομα was current in various senses throughout Hellenistic Greek, and that the distinctively Jewish ἐν (τῷ) ὀνόματι is not absolutely at variance with the spirit of the Greek language. Special mention is also made of Dr. J. H. Moulton's work on New Testament Greek. In fact, "as almost every day may throw some fresh light on so-called 'Semitisms,' it is wholly erroneous, in the present state of research, to build any literary or theological hypotheses whatsoever on forms of speech which appear to be Semitisms."

Dealing with questions of grammar, Professor Thumb affirms that ἀπέχουσι in Matthew vi. 2, 5, 16 is equivalent to ἔλαβον or ἔσχον, i.e. it is an aoristic present, according to the analogies of Greek usage (cf. Erman's proofs from the papyri in *Archiv für Papyrussforsch.* i. 77 f.). Again, the Asiatic home of the Fourth Gospel is more than suggested by the fact that (p. 259) the preference of the author for ἐμός, instead of ἐμοῦ and σοῦ, agrees with the survival, in the Pontic and Cappadocian dialect alone, of the possessive adjectives, the other non-Greek dialects retaining the forms μου etc., while the infinitive of purpose, which is prominent in the New Testament, also lingers in the Pontic dialect.

Two incidental protests against this dominant tendency, represented by Deissmann and Moulton, to eliminate Hebraisms as far as possible from Biblical Greek, are voiced by Dr. Nestle and Professor Swete. The former, in Preuschen's *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* (1906, 279-280), points to an expression like ὁμολογεῖν ἐν τινι (Matt. x. 32, Luke xii. 8) as a "Syrism." He agrees with Zahn that this cannot be explained apart from the influence of Semitic idiom. Similarly, Dr. Swete, in his new commentary on the Apocalypse (p. cxx.), devotes a

footnote to deprecating the somewhat hasty induction "that the Greek of the New Testament has been but slightly influenced by the familiarity of the writers with Hebrew and Aramaic. . . . It remains to be considered how far the quasi-Semitic colloquialisms of the papyri are themselves due to the influence of the large Greek-speaking Jewish population of the Delta."

The recent article by Professor Baljon, which was noticed in these columns (June, pp. 561 f.), has confirmed Messrs. J. C. B. Mohr of Tübingen in their resolve to issue a new and elaborate commentary on the New Testament, entitled a *Handbuch zum Neuen Testament*, which will introduce readers to the results of historical and linguistic criticisms as these affect the religious interpretation of the New Testament scriptures. One part of this commentary has already appeared, viz. an edition of Romans by Dr. Hans Lietzmann, the general editor of the series. To this I hope to return later. Meantime, the prospectus of the work may be noticed, especially some pages by F. Niebergall, the well-known Heidelberg writer, upon the practical exposition of the New Testament. Niebergall's problem is that of Baljon. He faces the ordinary dilemma: either Scripture is the Word of God, or it is false. Formerly, a mediating phrase was found in, "Scripture is not God's Word, but contains God's Word." Now, the favourite statement is, "Scripture is the record (*die Urkunde*) or original document of the divine revelation." Commenting on this somewhat enigmatic sentence, Niebergall points out that "revelation," on the lips of a man, presupposes faith. "As religious people, we call any object or fact a means of God's revelation, when we connect therewith the God whom we possess within ourselves—a proceeding which (I put what follows in a relative clause, in order to avoid any miscon-

ception of my main statement), which naturally does not exclude the other, i.e. the religious conception and use of 'revelation,' under corresponding conditions." Revelation is not some objective magnitude, which is the same to all and sundry. It exists as such primarily for those who view the scriptures subjectively under the category of "God saith."

Taken apart from this subjective presupposition and interpretation, the Scriptures show various stages of an evolution in the religious ideas and practices of the peoples whom they describe, and "for a really historical understanding of Scripture the most vital thing is a clear conviction that it is composed of precipitates from the spiritual activity of persons who sought to exercise an influence, in the moral and religious sense of the term, upon their various ages. In this all are at one. Only, they differ in the object, the means, and the presuppositions of their work." Historical criticism seeks to differentiate the various ideals of the life which was acceptable to God. It seeks to understand the environment of each attempt to realize the ideal, and to unfold the convictions of faith which served to promote that realization. "Instead of the Word which God once spoke to his people, we therefore get a rising series of testimonies, and indeed of personalities, who speak of God according to the ruling spirit of their respective ages and in their own way."

The same general problem is handled, from a similar standpoint, by Professor Otto Baumgarten in a brief introduction to the excellent and successful *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments*, which Professor Johannes Weiss is editing for the special benefit of those who desire to learn untechnically how the results of modern criticism work out in a commentary.

Baumgarten is convinced that the historical criticism of

the New Testament must be of signal service to the genuine interests of practical edification among Protestant Christians. But does not the former, it may be retorted, produce a chill feeling of distance? Scripture, to be used for devotional purposes, must be taken as a timeless word of God. Its eternal truths are independent of time and place. What then is the use of busying oneself about the remote historical origins and developments of Biblical ideas, especially as this tends to distract the mind from their living and permanent appeal?

Baumgarten's first answer is that, without historical criticism, it is impossible to arrive at a correct and definite idea of what is Biblical. Unless investigations are made into the rise and environment of the Scriptures, our notions of what is Scriptural become confused with slavery to the letter of the record; piety becomes the prey of literalism, and the doors are open for allegorizing, with all its attendant anarchy and looseness of thought. Historical criticism, whether higher or lower, here proves itself the true ally of practical religion. In relegating each passage to its original site and in reading one Scripture after another in the light of its contemporary situation, it "frees the living present from a slavish bondage to primitive Christianity." Only thus can the Bible, as Herder saw, become a popular book, a book for the people. Besides, the knowledge of such local conditions helps a sound and practical view of Scripture by showing that the writers did not speak of some ideal dream unconnected with the needs and experience of their own day. They addressed their present. And the one way to escape the rationalizing exegesis, which ignores the form and particular expression of Scripture as irrelevant, is to penetrate through that form and expression to the living religious forces which were temporarily but really enshrined therein. For the personal experience underlying these ex-

pressions is of abiding value. The truth of Scripture lies not in impersonal laws and principles, but in the phases of personal life and faith.

Furthermore, historical criticism delivers piety from erroneous ideas of the unity of Scripture, as if the latter were an iron-bound, rigid harmony. The differences of standpoint, visible in writers like Paul and James and John, correspond to varieties of personal feeling in our own day; and historical exegesis explains how it is possible and even justifiable for one to be Johannine, another Pauline, in his outlook on Christianity.

Finally, there is the service done by historical criticism in giving a true representation of certain idiosyncrasies and traits, e.g. in a writer like Paul, which often are either literally construed to the detriment of Christianity, or generalized away by the dogmatic interest. Historical criticism explains these from the contemporary world of ideas and practices. It thus frees Christianity from what are supposed often to be hampering anachronisms. It enables a right judgment to be passed upon the faith, by disclosing the personal and historical channels along which it has flowed in early Christianity. "And in this way the real life of the Scripture ceases to give people the paralysing impression of being remote, unintelligible, and unreal; whilst, on the other hand, we are prompted afresh to search the Scripture gladly and freely, that Scripture in which we believe our race to-day may still find its true life, inasmuch as it testifies of him whose very person contained the reality of God."

The August number of Preuschen's *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Zeitschrift* is largely given over to patristic studies, but there are two interesting minor contributions to the exegesis of the New Testament by Nestle and A.

Bischoff. The former (pp. 257-259) suggests that the choice of shepherds as recipients of the revelation of the Davidic messiah's birth (Luke ii. 8-20) must go back to some special phase of Jewish tradition. He finds this in *the tower of Eder* (or, *of the flock*) mentioned in Micah iv. 8, which Jerome already interpreted in a messianic sense as referring to the shepherds of Bethlehem. Thus Luke ii. 8 would be based on Micah iv. 8, just as Matthew ii. 6 is modelled on Micah v. 2. Bischoff again (pp. 274-279) re-opens the question, whether *the end of the Lord*, in James v. 11, does not refer to the death of Jesus. In view of passages like James ii. 1 and Matthew xxii. 44, he will not admit that the mere absence of the article precludes the reference of κύριος to Jesus. Besides, must not τέλος, in the light of James i. 4, 5, and Matthew x. 22, xxiv. 13, denote a climax of relief from mortal woes which is too definite and final to be explained by Job's relief from pain? Job lived a hundred and forty years after his so-called τέλος (Job xlii. 16). As for the objection that Job and Jesus would be thus set side by side as examples, Bischoff points to Hebrews xii. 2, 3 and xiii. 7. The plural ὑπομείναντας, he contends, suggests a plurality of examples. And finally, the conventional form of the text may not accurately represent the original argument of the writer. Either τὴν ὑπομονὴν . . . εἶδετε might be taken as a parenthesis (cf. Luke xi. 18, xx. 19, and Rom. i. 13), within brackets, or εἶδετε might be supposed to have a double connexion, first with the accusative and then with ὅτι. Failing either of these exegetical hypotheses, we might read: *Ye have heard of the patience of Job and the end of the Lord, and have seen, etc.* Bischoff does not refer to an article by Bois in the *Studien und Kritiken* (1886, pp. 365-366), where a similar view of the passage is also advocated, on the ground that ὅτι depends on μακαρίζομεν, τὴν ὑπομονὴν . . . εἶδετε being put in brackets.

JAMES MOFFATT.