

necessary aid to men largely occupied in the practical work of the ministry. The Bible has spoken to and aroused a responsive chord in the breasts of many generations of men, but it cannot be effective if it be unknown. The signs in

Canada noted above, of a living interest in Bible study, are most hopeful. May they prove but the beginning of a universal awakening to the majesty and the beauty, the life-giving and life-directing power of the Word of God!

---

## Requests and Replies.

Will you please mention the necessary Books for a beginner in Syriac?—Orcadian.

1. Nestle's *Syriac Grammar* (Williams & Norgate).

2. An edition of the Syriac New Testament. That by Gutbirius, with Latin Vocabulary (1664), is still procurable and useful.

3. The *Chrestomathia Syriaca* of Kirsch, with Glossary, by Bernstein (Lips. 1836), is extremely useful.

4. For an advanced Grammar the *Grammaire Syriaque* of R. Duval, Paris, 1881, is to be recommended.

5. The Old Testament may most conveniently be procured in the edition of Mausil, 1886.

Oxford.

D. S. MARGOLIOUTH.

Is there any History of the Authorship and Compilation of the Scottish Psalms?—C. H.

I sent you a brief note on 5th curt. anent Scottish Metrical Psalms. You might *add* to the books referred to—if the note is not already printed off—Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology*, London, 1892, Art. "Scottish Hymnody," pp. 1021-3. It is probably more accessible than one or two I named.

D. D. BANNERMAN.

---

## Our Debt to German Theology.

BY REV. PROFESSOR J. S. BANKS, HEADINGLEY COLLEGE.

### I.

MOST of the English translations of German theology have been published by a single firm—the Messrs. Clark, of Edinburgh, who so far keep the lead in the field which they were the first to enter. The first series to appear was the "Biblical Cabinet," in forty-five duodecimos, a most interesting and useful series in its day, and still not without value. The first volume, published in 1834, Ernesti's *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*, which well represents the entire series, struck out a new path in biblical study in this country. But this was only a forerunner of the stately series of "The Foreign Theological Library," which, during the forty-five years of its existence, grew into one hundred and eighty volumes,—a goodly library in itself, representing the best names in German theology, and covering almost the entire ground of theological study—Church History, interpretation of the Old and New Testaments, Dogmatics, Ethics, Apologetics, Biblical Introduction and Archæology. Martensen and Godet, while non-

German in race, represent the best side of the German spirit. Outside this series, the same house has translated other standard works, such as the Meyer *Commentaries*, Cremer's *Lexicon*, Winer's *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Lange's *Commentaries*, Thayer's edition of *Grimm's Lexicon*, Hefele's work on the Councils in part, and others. It has been a rule with the firm to publish only the works of orthodox writers, understanding orthodox in a liberal sense. Probably the difficulty of continuing a regular supply on these lines in the face of increasing competition explains the discontinuance of the series. The feature now referred to is worth noting, as it may serve to reassure those who suspect everything coming from Germany. It is mere prejudice to suppose that German is synonymous with Rationalist or heterodox. A moment's reflection would show the improbability of the homeland of the Reformation having fallen a prey to Rationalism. There has been a wonderful revival of scriptural

faith during the last fifty years in the universities and churches of Germany. Even Rationalism has fewer objectionable features than formerly. The Straussian and other epidemics have worn themselves out. Orthodox scholarship more than holds its ground. Many, indeed, still identify orthodoxy with the dark ages and all bad things; and if men like Stier and Godet and Dorner are weak and narrow, they are right. Two other faults are often found with German theologians. First, they are said to be cloudy and obscure in thought; and, secondly, by necessary consequence, cloudy and obscure in style. There is, doubtless, some foundation for the charge. Still, one or two things may be said in explanation. The German mind has a strong tendency to the abstract as the English has to the concrete. The one loves to theorise, to look at facts in the light of the principles they involve; it cares more for the laws of history than for history itself, and never rests until it has found the system of which isolated facts are a part. Sometimes, perhaps, the German seems to love abstractions for their own sake. The Englishman is the opposite of all this. He is impatient of theories; the very mention of idea is apt to worry him. These national peculiarities must be accepted on one side as on the other. Perhaps a German would say that he writes primarily for his own people, and must therefore speak in their dialect. The only way in which we can get at the meaning of many German writers, even in translations, is by again translating abstract conceptions into concrete cases.

The same is true in regard to style. It is absurd to suppose that a German cannot think and write clearly. The great names of German literature prove the opposite. Ranke and Mommsen are as clear as Freeman and Lecky.

Two additional points should be remembered. Part of the difficulty is often due to the subject. Logic and philosophy can never rival romance in interest for all minds. They will always make special demands on patient effort. Bishop Butler is often blamed for his style, which is perhaps not perfect; but something of the difficulty belongs to the nature of the questions discussed. The great questions of God's rule and man's destiny cannot be dismissed in the style of a newspaper paragraph. German theology deals mainly and by preference with subjects of this class. And, again, translators must bear part of the blame. Even if every

translation were perfect the original must lose much in the transfer, and translations from various causes are often far from perfect.

It should also be mentioned that the works reproduced in English are only specimens from a vast field. The greatest works can never be translated, for obvious reasons. There are truly great names in German theology which are almost or altogether unrepresented in English, e.g. Thomasius, Von Hofmann, Gess, Kahnis. Others, like Schleiermacher and Rothe, are only represented by minor works, which give a most inadequate impression of their powers and work.<sup>1</sup>

That this great influx of German thought and learning during the last fifty years has deeply influenced religious thought and teaching in Great Britain and America, is beyond doubt. The change almost amounts to a transformation. In many cases the influence can be seen. We can scarcely take up a theological work of any mark that does not show signs of it. Many works could not have been written at all, and more could not have been written in their present form, without this foreign aid. Some are taken bodily from that source. Germany supplies the ground plan, the materials, the furnishing, the addition being some detail of form and decoration. But by far the greatest amount of influence is that which it is impossible to trace in detail. The material has been incorporated in the mental and moral life of preacher or writer, and is given forth without any thought of its origin. Often when we are enjoying the eloquence of some powerful preacher or lecturer, or reading with delight the expositions of English commentators, we are really feeding on thoughts that have come from hard German brains and prosy German pens. What English preaching and teaching would have been without this influence it is difficult to say; but we may be sure that preachers and students have not assimilated Lange and Meyer and Delitzsch without their life and work being greatly enriched. Any one who will compare the present state of theological knowledge in this country to-day with its state during the first half of the century will observe an immense advance. Take commentaries on Scripture. He would be a most stupid man who should throw a slight on the Clarkes and Henrys of the past. But if we place these

<sup>1</sup> The first by *Selected Sermons*, the second by *Still Hours* (Hodder & Stoughton).

beside their successors,—the Westcotts, Lightfoots, Ellicotts, Jamiesons, and others,—we see that we have travelled a long way since those days. And if we could analyse these works, and still better, if we could enter the workshops of the writers and notice the models they follow and the tools they use, we should find in the front rank and in constant use German exegetes of all schools, not merely those which exist in translations, but many more which do not.

Another and still more valuable result in the same field is the rise of a new school of English exposition, which promises in course of time to rank with the German. The standard of Hebrew scholarship is higher in Great Britain and America than it ever was. Other causes may have helped, but there can be no doubt that our leaders in this field have been fired by the example of continental scholars, as they have worked in their spirit and been profited by their labours. It is quite a common thing nowadays to find German reviews speaking with respect, almost envy, of British scholarship, a thing unknown a short time ago. There is an accuracy and exactness about our knowledge of the Scriptures which was unattainable before. As another evidence of progress in a related sphere, I may mention the six massive

volumes of Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Biography and Antiquities*, the Biography covering only the first eight centuries, a monumental work which would do honour to any age. A few of the articles are by continental writers, but the majority are the work of English hands, and are astonishingly full and accurate.

One effect of the great stimulus given to the study of Scripture is increased attention to Biblical, as distinct from Dogmatic, Theology. By Biblical Theology, we understand not only the systematising of Scripture teaching, but also the doctrines which arise directly out of Scripture. This is a subject which has long been a separate one in Germany. Witness the excellent volume by Schmid on New Testament Theology, and the more elaborate work by Weiss. Not much has yet been done in this country, though there are signs of a beginning. Bruce's *Kingdom of God* is a specimen of the kind of work referred to. The enormous amount of study given to the study of Scripture must in time bear fruit in this form. The analysis of the direct teaching of Scripture is a fascinating field in which much waits to be done. The growth of revelation, the different types of inspired teaching, the unity of the final result, all need to be brought out.

---

## Gifts in Sleep.

A SERMON TO CHILDREN.

BY THE LATE REV. PROFESSOR W. GRAY ELSMLIE, D.D.<sup>1</sup>

“Except the Lord work for you, it is in vain for you to rise up early and sit up late, in order that you may eat the bread of toil. Why! God gives it to His beloved while they are asleep.”—Ps. cxxvii. 2 (amended translation).

If you have thought already what the meaning of these words is, I think they must have perplexed you a little. God gives presents to people that He loves when they are sound asleep. Did He ever do that to me?

I will show you what the man who wrote this psalm wanted to put into men's hearts and minds. The beginning of the psalm is plain enough. Many a house has been built beautiful and strong; and perhaps the very night before the family were to go into it a fire burned it all down. The same

with a city; the guards kept watch, but the enemy got in and the town was burned and destroyed. When people see things like that they say, “We can't prevent accidents happening; it is God that does it; it is all in God's hands.” Then the poet goes on to say something more. “You toil as hard as you can; you rise early and sit up late; and you are doing all that in order that you may get bread to eat; and do you know that in all that work of yours you cannot do without God's help? It would never get you your food if God didn't give it you. God is not asleep when you are sleeping.”

<sup>1</sup> Republished from an early number of *The Modern Church*.