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J. Addison Alexander

- ART. I.—1. Ernesti Friderici Caroli Rosenmülleri *Scholia in Vetus Testamentum*. 20 vols. 8vo. Leipzig: 1788—1829.
2. *Handbuch der biblischen Alterthumskunde*. Von Ernst Friedrich Karl Rosenmüller Vols. I.—IV. Leipzig: 1828—1830.

THESE are the titles of the two most important works of the late Professor Rosenmüller, neither of which was finished when he died. The name of this writer is at present so familiar to the scholars of America, that a brief sketch of his life and writings cannot be utterly devoid of interest. To those who know what the life of a laborious German scholar is, we need not say that his biography will exhibit little more than a chronological list of his publications.

This distinguished orientalist and biblical critic is often called *the younger Rosenmüller*, in order to distinguish him from his father, who was also an eminent Professor in the same University, and a labourer of note in the same general field, though in another subdivision of it. John George Rosenmüller, the father, born in 1736, was successively Professor of Theology in three Universities, Erlangen, Giessen, Leipzig. His local reputation, as a preacher and an ecclesiastical functionary, was extremely high; but his

that it is the opinion of antiquity, and especially of the Jews, on this subject. For ourselves we have no hesitation in saying, that we regard Rückert's manner of treating the sacred writers as not only more manly and rational, but as more satisfactory and safe, than the way in which they are treated in such miserable books as Jenkyn on the atonement, and in a large class of similar works, which circulate freely among our churches, and whose authors profess much more deference for the authority of the scriptures. We are convinced that we shall never be able to retain the doctrines of the bible, unless we consent to receive them not only in *substance*, but in the very form and fashion in which they are there presented.

ART. IV.—*The Man of Faith, or the Harmony of Christian Faith and Christian Character.* By John Abercrombie, M.D. New York: Van Nostrand and Dwight. 1835.

Archibald Alexander

THIS is a delightful little book. It is short and sweet. Dr. Abercrombie is already a favourite with the public, as an author. His works, on Intellectual and Moral Philosophy, have been extensively read, and well deserve the popularity which they have acquired. Even in those works it was not difficult to discern, that the author was no infidel or enemy to religion, but one who feared God and believed the gospel. Till we saw this little volume, however, we were not aware that his mind was so thoroughly imbued with the genuine spirit of Christianity.

It is very pleasant to have the most familiar truths set before us in a new dress; especially if they are exhibited in a simple and lucid style. Professed theologians are so accustomed to certain *common-place* phrases, that they can scarcely write any thing without using their technical language. It is, therefore, desirable, that other men, such as do not pursue theology as a profession, should occasionally discuss religious subjects; and it cannot but be advantageous to the cause, when a gentleman of so accomplished and cultivated a mind, as Dr. Abercrombie, employs his pen on themes of this kind.

This short essay, composed without the formality of

chapters and sections, is a sort of lecture on 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7. "And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity."

On each of the particulars in this passage, the author comments in a style of great beauty, simplicity, and spirituality. His remarks are not only just, but discriminating, and often original. On such a subject we do not expect new ideas; it is sufficient if the writer presents to us truths well known, in a concise, distinct, and pleasing form. Dr. Abercrombie appears to possess the gentle and amiable spirit which he so persuasively recommends; and we can hardly conceive how any well-disposed person can peruse this small volume, without sensible pleasure and real profit. To those in whom a refined taste is combined with a pious disposition, such a discourse must afford a delightful entertainment. Short essays suit the spirit of the times. Most persons are too busy, or too indolent to venture upon even a thick duodecimo, unless it be altogether a work of fancy, intended only for amusement. The work here recommended, can be despatched in two readings of an hour each; and some, who never pause on what they read, would finish it in a single hour.

In the latter part of the essay, when the author comes to the word "charity," he brings in appropriately, St. Paul's beautiful and striking description of this grace, in the 13th chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians, and descants on each particular, showing the relation of one part of this amiable character to another. But we must permit the reader to judge of the style and spirit of the author, for himself. Our first extract shall contain our author's views of the nature and operation of "*faith*."

'This is at once the source of spiritual life, and the supporting element of moral health; and, until a man be firmly established in this great principle, it is vain for him to expect to make any progress in the cultivation of Christian character. When we thus consider faith as the source or primary moving cause, essential to the culture of every sound quality of the mind, and to every regulation of individual conduct, we have to view it in two aspects, in its relation to truths regarding things not seen, and more especially and peculiarly in its relation to the offers or promises of the gospel of peace.

‘In considering the operation of faith in regard to the truths which relate to things not seen, we have to keep in mind the peculiarity of the situation in which we are placed in the present state of existence. In our connection with the things of the present world, we are surrounded by physical or material objects; with those we communicate by means of our bodily senses; they are continually obtruding themselves upon our attention, with little, or no exertion of our own, and therefore they exercise over us a constant and extensive influence. But these are not our only relations:—as moral and responsible agents, as immortal beings, we have to do with objects as real as those which are presented to our senses, though of a very different nature. The truths by which we ought to be influenced, respecting them, are addressed to a different part of our constitution, and are to be received upon a separate kind of evidence. They do not come under the cognizance of any of our senses, but are addressed directly to the mind; and their due influence upon us is produced through that mental process which we call faith. In the exercise of this important operation of the mind our first object is, by a process of judgment, to satisfy ourselves of the authenticity of the statements which are thus addressed to us; and this we do by an examination of the evidence on which they rest. When we are thus convinced of their truth, the farther operation of faith is to place them before us in such a manner, that they may exert the same kind of influence over us as if the things believed were actually seen, or the events expected were taking place in our view. This corresponds with the definition given by the apostle: “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen;”—that is, faith is that exercise of the mind by which things which are future, but expected to take place, influence us as if they were present,—and things not seen, as if we saw them.

‘The truths which it is the office of faith to place before us with all the vividness of present existence, are those which relate to the character and perfections of God,—the great concerns of a world unseen,—and the awful realities of a future judgment, and a state of endless being. When these overwhelming truths are really believed, and the thoughts are consequently directed to them in a degree at all proportioned to their momentous importance,—the mind is in the exercise of faith; and its operation is to keep the truths before us as regulating principles in the mental economy,—and

governing principles in the whole character and conduct. It causes them to exercise the same kind of influence over us as if they were objects of sense,—as if the Deity in all the splendour of his attributes were disclosed to our view, as if we were present at the dread hour in which he shall appear in all his sublime and terrible majesty as a righteous judge.'

This is excellent, and communicated with a conciseness and perspicuity which serve to exhibit the truth inculcated to the best advantage. Without the incumbrance of formal definitions and technical distinctions, we have here the nature of faith so briefly explained, that every attentive reader may at least understand it theoretically.

If we should go on to quote all that pleases us in this little volume, we should transfer a large portion of the work to our pages; but our design is to recommend the work, not to transcribe it, therefore we pass over many beautiful and striking passages which we have marked, and give the author's views on the subject of prayer.

'The disposition of mind which we have thus considered, as being included under the term godliness, may be the habitual exercise of the duly regulated mind. But there are certain special means by which it is encouraged and promoted; and the chief of these is prayer. Not that the Eternal Omniscient One requires to be informed either of our wants or our desires. All our necessities are better known to him than they are to ourselves; and the most secret thoughts and inclinations of the heart are naked and open before him. But he has specially appointed the exercise as a mean of communication with himself, and through which he is pleased to dispense the blessings of his grace. In addition to these considerations, the exercise of prayer is calculated to bring a special and peculiar benefit to ourselves. In the midst of our ordinary engagements in life, indeed, we may elevate the soul to God; but, surrounded by the distractions of external things, this must be done in a partial and unsatisfactory manner. Our feeble and imperfect nature, so much under the influence of the objects of sense, requires every possible aid to enable us to feel the due impression of the things of faith. It requires us to withdraw from external things, and in solitude and silence, and by solemn acts of devotion, to bring ourselves, as it were, into the immediate presence of God. There is a power in the mind by which it thus brings down upon itself an influence from the inner sanctuary, a special impression of the perfections of that in-

comprehensible One, who is thus disclosed to us, as if by his more immediate presence. We realize his omniscient eye, and stand in awe under the truth, that he understandeth our thoughts afar off. We feel the impression of his holiness, and bow beneath the sense of our own depravity and guilt. We feel the influence of his love, and throw ourselves upon his mercy. We commit ourselves to his grace to supply all our wants out of his fulness,—to conduct us in safety through the dangers, the difficulties, and the evils of life, and to carry us forward in the course which leads to eternal peace. Would we seek to know our own moral condition, and to fix the deep impression of an inquiry of such eternal importance, we cannot use a mean of greater efficacy, than putting it into words, in the presence of Him, to whom it is better known than it is to ourselves. Is there any mental or moral habit which we feel to have acquired a mastery that puts in peril the safety of the soul, we cannot assail it in a more efficient manner, than by fully confessing it before Him who seeth in secret, and asking from him a might which alone is able to rescue us from its power. Such is the province, and such the efficacy of prayer. It maintains our intercourse with things which are not seen. It is the life, the strength, and the nourishment of the soul; and it will be diligently cultivated, not as a mere duty to be performed, but as a mean of spiritual life, by every one who feels the deep import of the truth, that all the graces of the Christian character must be founded upon and supported by godliness.'

The observations which immediately follow, on the subject of *brotherly-kindness*, are so excellent, that we cannot refuse to our readers who may not have the book, the gratification of perusing them.

'The mental condition, which has been referred to in the preceding observations, does not waste itself in monkish solitude, or even in the exercise of sublime contemplation. It tends at once to lead the man who is the subject of it to the relation in which he stands to his fellow-men, and to the various important duties which belong to the situation in which he is placed. While it leads him to seek after purity of heart, it also produces a character and conduct calculated to promote the good of others,—the happiness and comfort of all those with whom he may be brought into contact, in his passage through this state of trial and discipline. Following out this, as the natural or necessary result of a healthy moral condition within, the apostle next inculcates, that to

temperance, patience and godliness, is to be added *brotherly-kindness*. This seems to include the highest exercise of all those affections which bind man to his fellow-men; leading us to feel towards each other as brethren,—to study the wants of others,—to enter into their feelings, and, in as far as we have power, to relieve their distresses. It tends to promote a conduct distinguished not only by the highest degree of integrity, but by habitual complaisance, sympathy, and kindness; and this is not to be regulated by the condition of men as to the things of this world, but by the high and broad principle, that, whatever may be their lot as to external things, they are the children of the same Almighty Father with ourselves, inheriting the same nature, possessed of the same feelings, and soon to enter on the same state of eternal existence, when all the distinctions which exist in this world shall cease for ever. It thus leads us to bring ourselves, as it were, to the same rank and the same situation with them, and with a brotherly interest to view their wants and their feelings as if they were our own. The principles of conduct which arise from this interchange of tender affections is applicable to every situation of life, and to all those exercises of justice, benevolence, forbearance, and friendship, which may be called forth by our various relations to our fellow-men. It sets aside those artificial distinctions by which, on the principles of the world, men are kept at such a distance from each other; and it sets aside, what is more powerful still, the principle of selfishness, by which men are made so acutely alive to every thing that concerns their own wants and their own feelings, and so cool in what relates to the wants and feelings of others. It goes farther still; for, according to the sublime maxims of the gospel, it teaches us even to love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, to do good to them who despitefully use us. The benevolence of the gospel thus raises us above the highest principles to which we are led by the mere feeling of human kindness;—it leads to do good to the evil and the unthankful, and this is impressed upon us by the highest of all motives—the imitation of him who is the Giver of all good. Such a character is exemplified, in the most striking manner, in the whole life of Him, who for us, and for our salvation, humbled himself and became a man of sorrows. He humbled himself that he might mingle with mankind,—that he might enter into their wants,—that he might know their feelings,—that, having suffered being tempted, he might succour them that are

tempted. He has left us an example that we should follow his steps; and he has left us precise instructions respecting the course by which this may be done, and the objects whom he has specially committed to our care. These are the hungry, the naked, the stranger, the sick, and the prisoner. He has even left us the solemn intimation, that, at the last and great day of account, our moral condition will be estimated by the actual influence which has been habitually manifested in our relations to our fellow-men, as done from a principle of love to him and of devotedness to his service. While we retire, therefore, from the influence of external things, and devote ourselves to the high undertaking which relates to the culture of the moral being within, while we feel the supreme importance of cultivating temperance, patience, and godliness, as the qualities which are essential to our own moral condition, let us constantly bear in mind that the direct tendency of these is to lead us forth to our fellow-men, to seek them in their hour of need, to minister to their wants, to relieve their distresses, to instruct the ignorant, to reclaim the wanderer, to soothe the wounded spirit. For this exalted exercise, wealth is not necessary; the humblest of those who breathe the spirit of the Redeemer, may show much kindness and do much good to others as humble as themselves.'

Having introduced extracts of unusual length from this little volume, there will not be occasion to add much in the way of further commendation, except to say, that the pious of all denominations may derive both pleasure and profit from this essay. It contains nothing which can be offensive to any one who has imbibed the pure and peaceful spirit of the gospel. Real Christians, of different denominations, are not so far apart in sentiment and feeling, as it would sometimes seem, when the flames of contention are enkindled between them; for we find that they relish the same practical works, and are equally edified by them. O that the time were come, when they shall all be of one heart and one mind, and when they shall no longer bite and devour one another, but, as brethren of the same family, live in peace and love! Even now, much may be done by kindness and courtesy, to mitigate the asperity of party-zeal, and to cultivate that "CHARITY" *which suffereth long and is kind—which envieth not—which vaunteth not itself—is not puffed up—doth not behave itself unseemly—seeketh not her own—is not easily provoked—thinketh no evil—rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth—beareth all things—*

believeth all things—hopeth all things—endureth all things. This is the virtue which exceedeth all others, and never faileth; for though knowledge be precious, and prophecy, given by divine inspiration; yet these shall “fail and vanish away;” for our imperfect and dim knowledge acquired here, shall be changed into clear and open vision; and when the light of eternity shall dawn upon us, even inspiration shall cease; for we shall then “know as we are known.” While here, “Faith, Hope, and Charity,” must be our ornament and armour; but though all these are inestimably precious, and indispensably necessary, yet **THE GREATEST OF THESE IS CHARITY.** After this, therefore, should we follow, as after that which is superior to all gifts as well as to all other graces. This is the more excellent way which Paul has so beautifully delineated, and which, he assures us in another place, is **THE BOND OF PERFECTNESS.**

J. Addison Alexander

- ART. V.—1. *Christologie des Alten Testaments und Commentar über die Messianischen Weissagungen der Propheten.* Von E. W. Hengstenberg der Philosophie und der Theologie Dr. und der letztern ord. Professor an der Universität zu Berlin. (Vol. III.) 8vo. Berlin: 1835.
2. *Grammatik der Hebräischen Sprache des Alten Testaments.* Von Heinrich Ewald. Zweite Auflage. 8vo. Leipzig: 1835.
3. *Corani Textus Arabicus ad fidem librorum manuscriptorum et impressorum et ad praecipuorum interpretum lectiones et auctoritatem recensuit indicesque triginta sectionum et suratarum addidit* Gustavus Fluegel Philosophiae Doctor, &c. Lipsiae, typis and sumptibus Caroli Tauchnitii. 4to. 1834.
4. G. W. Freytagii *Lexicon Arabico-Latinum.* Tomi Tertii Pars Prior—Pars Secunda. 4to. Halle: 1834.
5. *Tausend und Eine Nacht Arabisch. Nach einer Handschrift aus Tunis herausgegeben.* Von Dr. Maximilian Habicht, Professor an der Königlichen Universität zu Breslau, &c. (Vol. VI.) Breslau: 1834.

WE have here placed together a few recent publications from the German press, connected only by their common