

THE
BIBLICAL REPERTORY.

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No. I.

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

the exclamation of the early ages be renewed, "BEHOLD HOW THESE CHRISTIANS LOVE ONE ANOTHER!" The Lord hasten in his time a consummation so devoutly to be wished! Every Christian heart will say—Amen!

Charles Hodge

ART. III.—*Commentar über den Brief Pauli an die Römer. Von L. J. Rückert. Leipzig: 1831.*

Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans. By L. J. Rückert. Leipzig: 1831.

THIS is, on the whole, one of the best German commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans. The author is, or was, as we understand, a teacher in the Gymnasium at Zittau; a circumstance to which he owes much of his excellence, and some of his faults, as a commentator. The qualifications for a good commentator are so numerous, that it is perhaps vain to expect to find them all united. We must be content to have the deficiencies of one supplied by the excellencies of another. Rückert has given a very good view of the requisites for an accomplished exegete. He should, in the first place, be a philologist, possessing not only a knowledge of languages, but of history; he should be a logician, and a man of imagination. This last demand, though rather startling, is still reasonable in the sense in which he uses the term. It is now acknowledged that the only safe foundation of scriptural interpretation is grammar; a knowledge of the force of the several words, and of the laws which regulate their connexion. In reference to the New Testament writers, the first question is, what the simple Greek, agreeably to the usage of classic writers, means? and then what is the usage of the Hellenistic writers, especially those of the New Testament itself? It is a difficult question how far the classic usage should be allowed to predominate over the Hellenistic. Rückert complains that commentators give the apostle far too little credit for a knowledge of pure Greek, and, consequently, resort to the usage of the Hebrew where it is altogether unnecessary. His principle is to adhere to the usage of pure Greek, except in cases of absolute necessity. It must be admitted that the Hebraic character of the Greek of the New Testament was a long time allowed to give a latitude and looseness to the interpretation especially of the

particles, destructive of accuracy and certainty. There is danger, however, of going to the opposite extreme. Nothing is more natural than that men, whose vernacular language was Hebrew (or Syro-chaldaic), whose knowledge of Greek was, in a great measure, derived from the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, should exhibit many traces of Hebrew idiom and usage in their Greek style. Few things, therefore, are more generally admitted, or in fact more obvious, than that the Greek of the New Testament does, in a multitude of particulars, depart from classic usage, and conform to the peculiarities of the Hebrew. We think that Rückert's principle and practice are both wrong in reference to this matter. He adheres to the classic usage, except in cases of *absolute necessity*; that is, except in those cases where the passage, when interpreted agreeably to the force of the words in pure Greek, makes no sense at all. Now we think it altogether reasonable, that in all those cases where an interpretation, founded on a well ascertained Hellenistic or Hebraic use of a term, gives a sense better suited to the context, more agreeable to parallel passages, it should be confidently adopted. There are very many instances in the work before us in which, as we think, the writer adopts a very unnatural interpretation, rather than depart from the authority of his favourite classics. Paul was far more likely to write after the manner of the Septuagint, than after that of Xenophon.

In demanding historical knowledge in an interpreter, he of course requires that he should be acquainted with the character, opinions and circumstances of the age and nation to which the writer, who is to be explained, belongs. In this respect the recent commentators have in general an advantage over the earlier ones; though here also they have been guilty of excess in often taking it for granted that the opinions of Jews, living some centuries after the apostles, might, in all cases, be brought forward in illustration of the doctrines of the sacred writers.

One of the most important qualifications of an interpreter of the epistles of the New Testament undoubtedly is the power of tracing the connexion of thought and the course of the argument. The philological commentators have, to a great extent, been annotators rather than commentators, and from the fragmentary character of their expositions have failed to throw as much light on the sacred text as the old logical and doctrinal expositors. Most of the recent commentators who acknowledge the value of the qualification

of which we are speaking, content themselves in a great measure with showing the connexion between one verse and another. Even Rückert, though he remarks on this defect, and though he is superior to most of his predecessors in this respect, is very far from satisfying an inquiring mind. He gives no clear and satisfactory analysis of any one extended passage.

When Rückert requires that a commentator should be a man of imagination, he means that he should have the power of transferring himself to the age and circumstances of the sacred writers; to lay aside the views and modes of thinking peculiar to his own times, and see with the eyes, and think, as it were, with the mind of those who lived when the New Testament was written. With regard to the Epistle to the Romans, for example, he must place himself in the situation of its author, remember his history, his training, his feelings his opinions, and allow all these to influence his interpretation, and not the views, opinions, or modes of thinking of the nineteenth century.

Besides these intellectual qualifications, our author demands of a commentator that he should be perfectly impartial. 'The interpreter of the New Testament has, and can, as an interpreter, have no system, whether of doctrine or feeling; he is, as far as he is an exegete, neither orthodox nor heterodox, neither Supernaturalist, nor Rationalist, nor Pantheist, nor any other *ist*; he is neither pious nor impious, neither moral nor immoral, neither sensitive nor obtuse; because he has but the one duty of searching out what his author says, and giving the result over as a simple fact to the philosopher, theologian, moralist, or ascetic.' There is a good deal of truth in all this, though it is rather extravagantly stated. It is indeed the simple duty of the interpreter to find out and report what the sacred writers say; but it is surely not a matter of little moment, even in reference to his qualifications for this task, whether he is able to sympathize with his author or not. It is no new doctrine that the feelings of piety enables a man to understand the language of piety; that the perceptions of the understanding are greatly influenced by the state of the heart. How different is the import of the Psalms to a devout spirit, from their meaning to a man of the world. Let any one read De Wette's commentary on that portion of the sacred writings, and he will see what an impartial *historical* commentator makes of some of the most pious and delightful effusions of the holy Psalm-

ist. The whole medium through which the writer looks is false, and his own position is false. He regards David altogether as such a man as himself; he cannot enter into his feelings, nor understand his language. Nor is it less obvious that the opinions which are entertained of the origin and authority of the scriptures, must influence the commentator's views of the several parts of them. An interpretation, for example, of some of the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments which is perfectly natural on the assumption of the inspiration of the sacred writers, becomes absurd and impossible if that inspiration is denied. How can the man who regards the ancient prophets as popular orators and demagogues, take the same view of their meaning as the man who believes that they spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and that they were appointed to testify beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow? It is therefore absurd to say that it is a matter of no moment whether a commentator is a Rationalist or Supernaturalist. It makes all the difference in the world. The *general* principles of interpretation of such men are the same, but their different views must modify essentially these principles. Both acknowledge that the interpreter must endeavour to find out what the author intended to say; but who is the author? a man of the same limited knowledge and faculties with ourselves? or a man whose field of view is so enlarged as to take in the future as well as the present? Nothing can be plainer than that a man who denies the possibility or the fact of inspiration, cannot be a competent interpreter of an inspired book. Real impartiality, therefore, does not place all classes of men on a level, nor render all opinions and feelings alike matters of indifference to a commentator; but it secures the due influence of all the facts in the case, of all the real peculiarities of the sacred volume, and allows the inspired writers to explain themselves.

It may be asked, how has the author fulfilled these requisitions for a good commentator, which he himself demands? This is a question which he of course leaves to his readers, and which they, we presume, will answer, in the general, much to his satisfaction. The commentary has a great deal to recommend it. It is accurately philological; it is concise and to the point; it has neither the violent interpretations of many of the avowed Rationalists, nor the sublimations of the more recent philosophical commentators. The author gradually and naturally evolves that sense which he considers to

be correct, and then states and briefly examines the views of his predecessors. It is very difficult for an American to appreciate either a German book or a German man. The influences under which their respective characters and modes of thinking are formed, are so different, that it is not easy for the one to understand the other. There are few better illustrations of the principle so often inculcated, that in order to judge correctly of any one writer, we must be familiar with the whole spirit of the age and nation to which he belongs, than is afforded by the present race of German authors. Their whole training, their philosophy, their terminology are different from ours. We should, therefore, be constantly led into error and injustice if we were to measure them by our own standard, or interpret their language by the light of our own systems. We very much question whether the world has ever seen a Christian community in such a state as modern Germany exhibits. The teeming mind of that branch of the Teutonic race, instinct with the mystic spirit of the east, and entirely emancipated from all restraints of authority, of popular opinion, or even deference for the revelation of God, has shot up a multitude and variety of opinions, such as we believe the world has never before witnessed among any one people. There are the flat and bald common sense philosophy and Deism of the English and French school of the last century; the transcendentalism of Kant; the idealistic Pantheism, of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, with every modification of Christianity. There are pure specimens of all these forms of opinion, and these elements exist in all conceivable combinations, mixed in every possible proportion, and giving rise to an indefinite variety of results. It would be difficult, therefore, to find any two men occupying exactly the same ground, or exhibiting the same phase. Had these men to act together, Babel would be a scene of order in comparison with a convocation of German theologians and philosophers. But as they have nothing to do with each other, and as the government concerns itself as little with their opinions as with the fashion of their dress, there is perfect peace in the midst of the most complete discordance. The theologians being one of the largest and most influential classes of the literati, exhibit their full proportion of diversity and extravagance of doctrine. Some are simple Deists, unphilosophical and unimaginative; others call themselves Supernaturalists, because they admit something above the course of nature, either in the revelation or confir-

mation of Christianity; some believe in the New Testament, but reject the Old; some admit the authority of Christ, but deny that of the apostles; some acknowledge the general divinity of Christianity, but deny that it has any fixed form of doctrine, assuming that it is rather an element of spiritual life than a system of objective truth; others again, though claiming to be Christians *par excellence*, are atheistical Pantheists, the Sufies and Budists of Christianity; while others are simple orthodox believers.

To which of these numerous categories does our author belong? It is hard to say. He has so well acted out his principle that an interpreter should be neither Rationalist, Supernaturalist, Pantheist, nor any other *ist*, that a man may read almost his entire book without making the discovery. Here and there, where the apostle's doctrines are a little too strong for him, he enters a caveat lest his readers should infer that he himself believes all that he makes Paul teach. It is not, however, until we get to the introduction, which is at the end of the volume, and which he begs may not be read until the whole commentary has been studied, that we learn any thing very definite as to the author's own opinions. We there discover that he considers himself a Christian, professes a reverence and love for the gospel, and confidence in its truths and promises; that he has an exalted opinion of the apostle Paul, regarding him as a high-minded and liberal Jew, greatly in advance of his age, but a Jew still, as much behind this century, as he was before his own, and necessarily subject to the errors and prejudices incident to his peculiar situation. We present the reader with a few extracts from this portion of the work before us.

In Section IX. of the introduction, speaking of the value of this epistle, he says, 'Even in the earliest ages, it was highly esteemed, and has been so ever since. And it deserves to be thus estimated. Any one, indeed, who seeks only doctrinal decisions, and these, according to his own mind, who after his own principles has cut out a system and who is unable to appreciate any thing that does not accord with it, who measures antiquity by the standard of the nineteenth century, who looks upon the east with western eyes, and who neither can nor will assume any other point of view than his own, must find the Epistle to the Romans a constant stumbling block. Here are doctrines which he cannot believe, a doctrine of atonement inconsistent with reason; here every thing is attributed to faith and nothing to works; here is the

doctrine of eternal election and reprobation presented with a severity which is almost revolting; here are expectations cherished which later ages have long since rejected as unfounded; in short, to many a theologian this epistle has been a cross and a rock of offence; many have estimated it as of little worth because they knew not what to make of it, and many have wished it well out of the bible. I acknowledge freely and openly that there are many declarations in this epistle with which I can by no means agree, I discover more than one difficulty in Paul's system, and here and there observe traces that the author was a Jew and not a philosopher, a son of antiquity and not of modern days. Yet I can assert that all this neither lessens my esteem for the man, nor lowers my estimate of the value of his work.' Again in the following page, 'If this epistle is regarded with the eyes of the nineteenth century, and of a man of general scientific culture, much may be discovered which is purely national, much which may appear very narrow minded; but let any one place himself on the level of the apostle's age and nation; compare him with his cotemporaries and fellow apostles; regard, not so much what still adhered to him, as what he had cast off, and he cannot fail to entertain a different opinion. How much was necessary to enable a Jew to acknowledge the call of all nations to the attainment of salvation; to lead a Pharisee to see the insufficiency of legal virtue; how much was required to bring a man, educated in Jewish opinions, to regard the requirements of the law as a restriction to the soul, the law itself as a fetter from which he must be freed before he could really flourish. All this must be taken into view to estimate the liberality of Paul aright, and to see that in any other stage of culture, he would, to the same degree, have excelled his cotemporaries in the freedom of his views, and in the unfettered exercise of his mind.'

On page 669, he says, 'In reference also to doctrines, the Epistle to the Romans has great value. Admitting that the view here expressed of the person of Christ, the doctrine of the atonement as a vicarious satisfaction (*stellvertretender Darbringung*), the doctrine of predestination contain as many contradictions as you please; admitting that it is impossible to reconcile one's own views with those of the apostle—on this point every one must be left to his own judgment—I have long since freely expressed my own. All these matters, and others of a similar nature, belong to speculation, and must ever excite different views, they do not concern the essence

of Christianity. The substance of the gospel (having all along in my exposition kept the theologian silent in order to give the interpreter free scope, I may be allowed, at the close, to assume the former character for a few moments) is contained in this epistle. The fundamental doctrine of the whole system, that of the corruption of men, on which the necessity of redemption rests, is there fully presented; man is sinful, exposed to punishment and worthy of death; all mankind are destitute of any thing by which to secure the favour of God; there is no speculation on human nature, such as would belong properly to the schools, to determine whether it can attain an excellence satisfactory to God, but the simple fact that neither in Heathenism nor Judaism has such excellence been attained, is held fast, and our nature is represented as deeply sunken and in need of redemption. Even under the law, where it has a clear rule as to what should be done, it falls far below the mark; in the heart of every man there is hidden a sinful disposition which prescribes another law more powerful than the divine, which it constrains him to obey, whence arises an inward conflict, which renders him far more miserable than he would have been without the law. This is the substance of Paul's doctrine concerning sin, as presented in the Epistle to the Romans. It is possible that it may not please every one; but I acknowledge openly that I am not ashamed of it, for it is the doctrine of experience, it is what all ages have felt, and every man who earnestly examines his own heart, will find to be true as regards himself.

‘From this misery, as Paul teaches us, God delivers us through Christ. What the law could not do, that God has effected through him. He delivered him unto death for our redemption, and removes from our hearts the load of guilt, makes us his children, and gives us his spirit which produces the assurance of his love, leads us into all good, and fills us with hope and confidence. All personal merit is removed, for none such exists, salvation is the gift of free grace; the only condition is, that we should, with sincere, firm and humble trust, believe that God has provided salvation for us through the death of Christ. If we have this faith, we have peace of conscience, are free from condemnation, and the heirs of eternal life through the grace of God. This is the substance of the doctrine of redemption, as taught in this epistle. The question, How the death of Christ has effected all this? is answered by Paul as the matter must have appeared to a Jew; to others the subject may appear differently, but the

substance is what we have stated above. And with this view every understanding must agree, and every heart that feels its own necessities, can find them here supplied. It may not, indeed, flatter those who are of a proud heart, but the gospel is for the humble; it may little suit those who are confident in their own virtue, but Christ only came to call sinners to repentance, and to heal such as are of a contrite heart. The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. To such, therefore, Paul's Christianity may be allowed to remain; others may seek a different fountain of life, if they think they can find one.

‘The redeemed believer is freed from sin, in order that he may henceforth serve God, and devote to this service all the powers of his soul and body, as the only thank-offering that God requires. He is able to do this, for his old, corrupt nature is removed, he is dead to sin, and lives with Christ a new life. The sense of guilt no longer oppresses him, the Spirit of God in his heart destroys fear, and sustains his weakness. This is the doctrine of sanctification. In these three points consists the essence of Christianity. We may, therefore, assert that the whole Christian system in its substance is contained in the Epistle to the Romans, and, if this is the case, it must, in a doctrinal view, be worthy of our highest esteem. May every reader acknowledge its value, and derive from it the benefits it is adapted to afford!’

We think these extracts present the author in a very interesting light. Here is a man, who has evidently never been either taught or induced to bow to the authority of the New Testament as the ultimate standard of truth. He believes only what he sees and feels to be true in the light of his own reason and experience. Much that Paul teaches does not accord with his views and feelings, and he, therefore, rejects it as the residuum of Jewish error which the apostle had not succeeded in removing from his own mind. Much, however, commends itself to his understanding and heart, and he embraces and delights in it. He no doubt regards Christianity as a revelation from God, the communication of which to the world, however, was committed to honest and enlightened, but still fallible men. He has, therefore, no means of separating the divine from the human element but his own reason and feelings. What is true to him is divine, what is not true is human, Jewish and erroneous. This is by no means a solitary case; perhaps the majority of educated Germans are in the same situation. They admit no infallible

objective standard of truth. The consequence is, that there is comparatively little, of what is called speculative faith in the gospel among them. They believe its doctrines no farther than they experience their power. The evils connected with this state of things are numerous and serious. There may be much zeal, piety, and correct opinion, because all those who are made the subjects of the grace of God are brought to feel the adaptation of the whole Christian system to their nature and necessities, and they, therefore, embrace it in all its essential features. But those who are not thus affected, are in a great measure emancipated from its influence. To them it is not true, and has not the authority of truth. Nothing, however, is more obvious than that the speculative and hereditary belief in the divine origin of the gospel, and in the truth of all its doctrines, prevalent in most Christian countries, has, in various ways, a most beneficial influence. The very admission that these doctrines are absolute truth, is an admission that the belief of them must be salutary, and their rejection injurious; for no opinion can be more monstrous than that error is as healthful in its operation on the mind as truth. Appeal on this subject may be confidently made to experience. Let two communities be compared, the one educated in the knowledge and belief of Christian doctrines, and the other in the disbelief of them, and the result will show how valuable in the formation of human character, is even speculative faith.

Besides this, the moment that the truth begins to operate on a skeptical mind, it is encountered by a multitude of difficulties. Error, prejudice and misconception surround, weaken and pervert it; and should it retain its hold, it is still so hampered that its effects are distorted and unnatural. We see, therefore, among the class of persons to which we have referred a modicum of truth working like leaven in the midst of a heterogeneous mass, and giving rise to all manner of portentous forms of doctrine, grievously injurious even to those who are sincere Christians. Such persons, too, accustomed to rely solely on themselves for their convictions, vacillate in faith as they vacillate in feeling. When their pious affections are in lively exercise, all seems clear and certain; but the moment their feelings cool, old errors, like the ghosts of murdered friends, crowd upon their minds and resume their former mastery. We cannot, therefore, estimate too highly the advantage of having a firm and rational faith in the authority of the scriptures as the fixed and ulti-

mate standard of truth, to which we may constantly refer, and on which we may rely. When this is relinquished we are in a pitiable situation; the doubtful and changing phases of our own minds become our only guide; and we are constantly wandering on the uncertain confines of light and darkness, sometimes on one side, and sometimes on the other. The evil heart is its own master; and every form of error, which suits the idiosyncrasy of the individual, is invested for him with all the majesty and authority of truth.

There is another point of view in which the extracts given above possess peculiar interest. We see a commentator possessed of uncommon qualifications for his work, making Paul teach doctrines which the author himself cannot receive. It is presumable, therefore, that these doctrines are in fact very clearly taught. Such is Rückert's reverence for the apostle that it is with evident regret that he represents him as teaching error. He would gladly present his favourite apostle in a more favourable light; but his conviction that it is the duty of an interpreter to be the mere reporter of the meaning of his author, constrains him to acknowledge that Paul does teach doctrines which, in his estimation, are contrary to reason. He makes him teach the doctrine of the supreme divinity of the Saviour in Rom. ix. 5. He examines and rejects as entirely unnatural the arbitrary interpretations which Socinians and others have given of that interesting passage.* He represents him as inculcating, in the strongest and clearest manner, the doctrine of election and reprobation. He mourns over this, but cannot avoid saying that the doctrine is so clearly taught that nothing but a determination not to allow the apostle to say what his commentator could not believe, could lead any interpreter to doubt or deny the fact. The testimony of such men as Rückert is adduced, not as decisive evidence of what the scriptures teach, but as collateral proof in favour of an interpretation which, on other and far higher grounds, is adopted as correct.

With regard to the doctrine of atonement also, we have seen, that he understands Paul as teaching, not only the fact that the death of Christ secures the pardon of sin, but also the mode in which it produces this result. It is not by its moral influence on the heart of the sinner, nor by its being

* We do not know whether Rückert himself rejects this doctrine or not. He does not include it in his enumeration of the essential doctrines of the gospel, and he refers to it in connexion with other doctrines which he says are matters of speculation, about which he says, every man may think as he pleases.

an exhibition of the divine character designed to impress the whole rational universe, but because it was a substitution and a satisfaction. This is not the author's, but Paul's doctrine. He considers himself as taking a philosophical, and the apostle a Jewish view of the subject. He thinks Paul wrong in the manner in which he presents this important doctrine, but he does not attempt to pervert or deny the simple meaning of the sacred writer. How much better is this method of dealing with the scriptures, than that which leads the commentator to fritter down their statements, and to allow them to mean no more than he, in his philosophy, holds to be true. There seems to us to be no medium on this subject. We must either consent to receive the doctrines of the bible *as* they are taught there, and *because* they are there taught; or we must deny the plenary inspiration of the sacred penmen and admit their doctrines no further than we can prove and feel them to be true. It is in violation of all rational principles of interpretation that, while acknowledging their authority, we refuse to take their language in its simple and full meaning, and reject the form while we profess to receive the substance of their doctrines. Paul not only teaches us the fact that the death of Christ saves us, but also that it saves us a sacrifice in the Jewish sense of that term. The Socinians deny this, and while they admit the fact that the death of Christ is the means of our salvation, and even that it is a sacrifice, yet they insist that the true idea of sacrifice is not that of an offering designed as a satisfaction to divine justice, but of a rite intended to produce a sense of ill-desert or a persuasion of the mercy of God in the mind of the offerer. The real doctrine of atonement, therefore, they say, is that Christ died to lead men to repentance, and convince them of God's mercy. Our new-school brethren, on the other hand, have a different view of the philosophy of a sacrifice; they suppose that it is not only designed to make a moral impression on him who presents it, but to be an expression of God's displeasure against sin. They, therefore, tell us that the true doctrine of atonement is that Christ's death is a 'governmental' display of God's hatred of sin designed to prevent the evils to his moral government which would arise from gratuitous pardon. Need any thing be said to show that this latter view is as purely a philosophical speculation as the former? That it neither is nor pretends to be the scriptural form of the doctrine? It is the opinion of the nineteenth century on the nature and design of sacrifice; it makes no attempt to show

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