

THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW

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I.

THE MEANING AND VALUE OF THE DOCTRINE OF DECREES.

THE proposal to revise the Westminster Standards has brought the doctrine of the Divine decrees into the foreground. The controversy turns upon this pivot. Other features come in incidentally, but this is capital and controlling. This is the stone of stumbling and rock of offense. If election and reprobation were not in the Confession and Catechism, probably the fifteen Presbyteries would not have overtured the Assembly. It is for this reason that we purpose to discuss the *Meaning and Value of the Doctrine of Decrees*, so plainly inculcated in the Scriptures, and from them introduced into the Westminster symbol. We are certain that the Biblical truth of the sovereignty of God in the salvation of sinners, and of His just liberty to determine how many He will save from their sin, and how many He will leave to their self-will in sin, is greatly misunderstood by many who profess the Presbyterian faith, and who sometimes describe it in much the same terms with the anti-Calvinist, and inveigh against it with something of the same bitterness. The conservative and the radical reviser meet together at this point, and while the former asserts that he has no intention to make any changes respecting the doctrine of decrees that in his opinion will essentially impair the integrity of the Calvinistic system, he nevertheless practically coöperates with the radical in bringing about a revolution in the sentiment and creed of the Presbyterian Church concerning one of the most distinctive articles of its belief. Because revision, be it conservative or radical, contends that there is more or less that is *un-Scriptural* in the tenets of election and reprobation as they are formulated in the Standards, and that

his work on 'Messianic Prophecy.'” In this part there is the same lack of proportion in the treatment of passages as in the previous section. Nine pages are given to the discussion of “Shiloh;” half a page to that of “Immanuel.”

The fourth part, “New Testament fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy concerning the Messiah and the Kingdom of God,” is to our mind the most satisfactory portion of this treatise and worthy of the highest commendation. We know of no better treatment of this subject. The author guards against the error of the introduction of New Testament knowledge into the Old Testament. He makes the following important statement: “It is evident from the teaching of the New Testament, that the prophets of the Old did not understand their own predictions with the clearness and fullness with which they were understood by the apostles of our Lord, when they were enlightened by the Holy Spirit. It will scarcely be denied that Paul understood the prophecies of Isaiah better than Isaiah did himself. Hence, it would be absurd to attribute the knowledge of the apostle of the Gentiles to the evangelical prophet of the Old Testament. New Testament knowledge must not be sought in the prophets of the Old Testament; but in the teachings of our Lord, and of His apostles. This does not imply that the Old Testament prophets were not inspired; it means only that the horizon of the apostles was clearer and more extensive.”

Likewise, also, with equal clearness is the mistake guarded against of introducing Old Testament prophecy in its concrete form and drapery into the New Testament. This is illustrated in the treatment of the prophecies of the future of the Jewish people. Dr. Elliott looks for no restoration of Jewish rites and services, nor yet for a national restoration of the Jews to Palestine, with a certain preëminence in honor and Christian influence; nor yet does he hold that these prophecies are fulfilled by the conversion of the Jews to the Christian faith and their participation in the privileges of the Christian Church, for many of the Jews *may* return to Palestine, the country *may* become theirs, there they *may* be converted. This is a sensible view, because the exact meaning of these prophecies can only be determined by their fulfillment. Dr. Elliott also very successfully refutes other views, commonly called “Premillenarian.”

This entire volume is pervaded by a rare spirit of candor and modesty. It contains not a trace of virulent dogmatism, and pains are frequently taken to give at length the opinions of those differing from the author. The typographical execution of the book is of a high order.

Chicago.

EDWARD LEWIS CURTIS.

ESSAYS IN BIBLICAL GREEK. By EDWIN HATCH, M.A., D.D., Reader in Ecclesiastical History, Oxford. Clarendon Press, 1889.

These essays are the substance of the lectures delivered by the writer during his term of office as Grinfield Lecturer on the Septuagint. They are designed to point out to students of sacred literature rich fields which have not yet been adequately explored, and to make suggestions as to the method of exploration. The author collects facts, and from them deduces conclusions, attempting thus to teach his readers how to conduct for themselves similar investigations. His object seems to be not so much to impart knowledge as to teach methods; not so much to collect facts, and draw conclusions, and formulate theories, as to show *how* facts should be collected from which conclusions and theories are to be drawn. The book well subserves its purpose. It is inspiring and stimulating to the student, and full of suggestions to the teachers of Biblical science. It is especially timely now

that the relation between the Hebrew and its Greek versions is under discussion.

In his first essay, the author shows the value and use of the Septuagint in the materials which it affords for the study of Biblical Greek; and in the second and third essays, he illustrates the principles and methods laid down in the first by applying them to the study of certain words and groups of words. Especially interesting to us were the discussions of hypostasis, *mysterion*, *sykophantim*, *dikaïos*, *diabolos* and *diatheke*, of the group of words for "poor," and of the group consisting of *pneuma*, *kardia*, *psyche* and *dianoia*: The author clearly shows the differences which necessarily arose between classical and Biblical Greek from the fact that they were spoken at different times, and by different peoples, and in different countries; and then shows that these differences can only be ascertained by historical investigations, the materials for which are furnished especially by the Septuagint version, which, since it is proximate in time and cognate in character to the New Testament, and since it is of sufficient extent to afford a fair basis for comparison, is of unique value in New Testament exegesis. The way in which the materials afforded by the Septuagint should be used in the elucidation of New Testament Greek is then illustrated in such a manner as to lead students to follow in his steps.

One practical difficulty has met us in the study of words in the manner followed in these essays. In order to find out the meanings which the Septuagint gives to any particular Hebrew word, it is necessary, at present, to look up in a Hebrew concordance all the passages in which a word occurs, and then to search through a Greek Bible in order to find how it has been translated in each place. So with a Greek word, we must look up all the passages in the concordance of the Septuagint, and then search through the Hebrew Bible to find the Hebrew equivalent in the various places. To obviate this difficulty, we need a Hebrew-Greek and a Greek-Hebrew concordance.

The fourth essay is an attempt to find from the quotations made from the Septuagint by the fathers of the second century, how far we can ascertain the text or texts which preceded the three revisions which are known to have existed in the time of Jerome; while the fifth argues that the composite quotations made in the New Testament, and in the same fathers, support the antecedent probability that collections of excerpts from the Old Testament were in existence among the Greek-speaking Jews of the dispersion.

From the testimony presented in the sixth essay, based on Origen's revision of the Septuagint text of Job, and on a Sahidic version made before Origen's time, the author proposes to test the truth, and the sufficiency as an explanation of the facts, of the hypothesis that the text revised by Origen was made from a shorter and more original Hebrew text than that from which Origen made his revision. He concludes that "it seems probable that the book of Job originally existed in a shorter form than at present; and that in the interval between the time of the original translation and that of Theodotian, large additions were made to the text by a poet whose imaginative power was at least not inferior to that of the original writer."

The last essay is on the text of Ecclesiasticus. After a review of the Greek MSS., and of the Latin and Syriac versions, a discussion of the more important typical variants is made, with the conclusion, that the versions are of great value in determining the original text, that some cursive MSS. are of value superior to that of some of the more famous uncials, and that in many cases where neither MSS. nor versions present an intelligible text, a conjectural emendation such as that which we use in the fragments of the Greek philosophers, is the only legitimate process of correction.

While in the above statements we have sought to present a fair analysis of

the author's aims and conclusions, no adequate conception of the beauty of his method, the thoroughness of his investigations, and the stimulus of his enthusiasm and example can be gained otherwise than by the perusal of the work itself.

Allegheny.

ROBERT DICK WILSON.

BIBLISCHE PARALLELBERICHTE ODER AEHNLICHE ERZÄHLUNGEN AUS DEM ALTEN UND NEUEN BUNDE BEHUFSS ERKENNTNISS VON DEN VERFASSERN BENÜTZTEN QUELLENSCHRIFTEN; NACH DEM URTEXTE ZUSAMMENGESTELLT. VON DR. RUDOLF SÖDER. Stuttgart: 1889.

The author claims that this work is the product, on his part, of a special study of the historical books of the Old and New Testaments, as well as of the best treatises on Biblical Introduction. His object in writing it, he says, has been to help forward a wider diffusion of information concerning the peculiar methods of writing history adopted by Biblical authors. He holds that a failure to understand the difference between these writers and those of the Western world and of our own time has led to gross mistakes and unjustifiable conclusions. On the one hand, there is a "naive conception," and an "unbounded liberty" in the treatment of literary material; on the other, reflection and good judgment. This sounds very much like what we have heard before. Moreover, our author's method of illustrating his points offers nothing that is new to Biblical scholars on either side of the water. The title of the book sets it forth fairly well, although it is not till we open it that we discover that the words "nach dem Urtexte zusammengestellt" mean no more than that Dr. Söder has *translated* for himself the parts of the Bible he has selected. In the Old Testament passages the LXX has been taken, however, as a guide, and in the New the texts of Tischendorf and of Westcott and Hort have been followed. In the order of his selections and their arrangement our author has aimed to follow what he conceives to be the order of their rise in history. We confess to a feeling of great disappointment that so good an idea as this work represents has been so poorly developed. A book in which parallel passages, or alleged similar narratives, in the Old and New Testaments, should be set side by side in the Hebrew and the Greek languages for the purpose of comparison, touching questions of higher criticism, is greatly to be desired. We would hail with pleasure even a serious effort to do this on the basis of a German or English translation. In this work we have only some specimens of such passages, with no attempt at completeness, and in a German translation which cannot be relied upon, because we cannot know the exact text that is followed. From Genesis nine alleged double narratives are selected, which is not one-half the whole number usually given, and the selections are not always the best for the purpose intended. From the Mosaic history (Ex.) there are seven selections; from that of the Kings and prophets six, and from the New Testament seventeen. Dr. Söder's point of view may be judged from what he says concerning the last: "Consequently, just those synoptical narratives were placed side by side which show the most independence as well as the gradual development of the original material of the Gospels. The fourth Gospel was unsuited to it, because of its wholly different and systematically different conception of the life of the Master; while the third Gospel marks a transition from the simple use of the original facts to the thoroughly ideal treatment of them by John."

Hartford.

E. C. BISSELL.