

conditions of covenanted security, and cannot justify its existence in terms of the covenant." This is not the place to discuss this vexed question, nor to remind Mr. Gore that he speaks not in the name of the whole Church of England, but only in the name of a section thereof; nor can we speak here of the high value which other Churches attach to the Word and Sacraments as Means of Grace. We shall not animadvert on the manner in which he attempts to displace faith from its central position as the unique condition of salvation—"He that believes hath everlasting life,"—nor criticise the function he assigns to faith as an adjunct and

derivative from the apostolic succession and the sacraments. We can only express our regret that a great and reasonable and worthy discussion, which began so well, and maintained its dignity and worthiness for so long a time, should at last have disappeared in the morass of sacerdotalism. But, in truth, this notion of the Church seems to be the central idea in the mind of Mr. Gore, and he is unable to get away from it. The consequence is, that a book which promised to be a boon to Christendom, turns out in the end to be a mere plea for High Churchism of the more recent type.

## Some Difficult Passages in St. Paul's Epistles.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR J. AGAR BEET, D.D., RICHMOND.

### I.

"Thought it not robbery to be equal with God."—PHIL. ii. 6.

In order to understand the significance of the words thus rendered in the English Authorised Version, we ask (1) the meaning of the verb ἀρπάζω, (2) the meaning of the derived substantive ἀρπαγμός, (3) the meaning of the whole clause.

1. The root of the verb is correctly given in Dr. Ellicott's rendering "seized on or grasped at." It always means to take hold with a strong hand of something not yet in our hand. So John vi. 15, "Seize Him, that they may make Him king;" Acts viii. 39, "The Spirit of the Lord snatched away Philip;" 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4, "Caught up even to the third heaven." Forcible seizure is often unjust. But the above examples prove that injustice is no part of the idea conveyed by the word.

2. Of the derived form ἀρπαγμός, Dr. Ellicott says that "the usual force of its termination would seem to denote 'the act of seizing.'" And he quotes one passage, perhaps the only one outside Christian literature in which the word is used, in which it indisputably has this active sense. This meaning, however, which is at once suggested by the form of the word, he sets aside as unsuitable to the context; and expounds the word to mean, "a thing to be seized on," thus making it equivalent to ἀρπαγμα. But he does not suggest why St. Paul refused a common word which conveys exactly the sense he wished to convey, and selected a very rare word which at once suggests another meaning.

Having set aside the ordinary meaning of the termination of the word used by St. Paul, Dr. Ellicott silently alters the meaning conveyed by the root of the word. After assuming that the root idea of the word is to *seize* or *grasp*, he goes on to expound it to mean *retain as a prize*. So far as I can understand him, he means that the Son did not hold fast His equality with God, but gave it up. This meaning, thus silently slipped into the passage, the word ἀρπάζω and its derivatives never have. They denote always to lay hold of something not yet in our grasp. In no sense can the Son either grasp, or refuse to grasp, equality with God. For it is already His by an eternal and inalienable possession. Of the meaning which, somewhat furtively, Dr. Ellicott gives to the word, viz. to *hold fast* something already in our hands, he gives no example. And I believe that none can be found. That it means to *lay hold of* something not yet in our grasp, is assumed by Chrysostom in his exposition of the passage; and upon this meaning of the word an argument is based.

3. Another difficulty in Dr. Ellicott's exposition is that it implies that Christ did lay aside His equality with God. This I cannot admit; certainly not till I have proof clearer than the passage before us. Even after He had emptied Himself and had laid aside for a time and for our salvation the form of God in which He had previ-

ously revealed His glory, and while working as a carpenter at Nazareth, the Son was as truly "equal to God" as He will be when pronouncing judgment at the great assize. For the work in which He was then engaged was truly divine.

For his exposition, Dr. Ellicott does not claim any support from early Christian writers; except that he says, "so in effect Theodoret," whose words he quotes: οὐ μέγα τούτο ὑπέλαβε. But these few words of Theodoret suit equally well the exposition I advocate.

Dr. Lightfoot, in support of an exposition practically the same as that of Dr. Ellicott, makes a startling assertion: "this is the common and indeed almost universal interpretation of the Greek Fathers." In proof of this statement he gives several quotations. But not one of them supports the exposition they are quoted to support. The writers quoted merely agree with Ellicott and Lightfoot in rejecting another exposition, viz. that underlying the English Authorised Version, "thought it not robbery to be equal to God." But they say not one word in support of the exposition adopted in the Revised Version.

The exposition given in my commentary, which is that of Meyer and Hofmann, retains the root-idea of the verb ἀρπάζω, viz. to grasp with a strong hand that which is not yet in our hands, and the ordinary active meaning of the termination -μος; and it avoids any suggestion that the Son gave up His equality with God.

Unfortunately, for my rendering I can find no good English translation. Perhaps I may suggest as a latest attempt, "No grasping did He deem His being equal to God." Many a Turkish governor when appointed to a province has looked upon his appointment simply as a grasping of the wealth of the province. To his thought, the governorship and self-enrichment were equivalent. Similarly (1 Tim. vi. 5.) some have looked upon piety as worldly gain: νομιζόντων πορισμὸν εἶναι τὴν εὐσέβειαν. But when the not-yet-incarnate Son contemplated His approaching entrance into human life on earth, He did not look upon His divine powers as a means of laying hold of things pleasant to His human nature, but at His incarnation laid aside the full exercise of those powers, and thus "emptied Himself." By so doing, He set us an infinite example of unselfishness. And it is as a pattern of unselfishness that Christ is here introduced by St. Paul.

For this exposition, I cannot claim the support of any early Christian writer. For the more part, the Greeks simply quoted St. Paul's words, thinking that they would be understood. The Latins, led away by an incorrect translation of ἀρπαγμός, adopted the exposition embodied in the English Authorised Version, but now generally abandoned. In short, this is one of the few passages in which the help of early writers fails us; and we are left to the guidance of the grammatical meaning of the words used.

### Haran in Very Early Times.

THE well-known German scholar, Dr. Winckler, published recently, in the literary supplement of the Munich *Allgemeine Zeitung*, a very remarkable essay on "The Political Development of Ancient Mesopotamia," in which he endeavours to prove that the city of Haran, to which Abraham removed from Ur of the Chaldees, and in which his kindred dwelt perhaps for centuries, was in very early times a religious, literary, and political centre of the first importance. Some of the chief points in the argument, which is too lengthy to be reproduced *in extenso* in these columns, may be briefly stated as follows:—(1) We find clear traces in the inscriptions of the worship in the very earliest times in Northern Babylonia of the moon-god

under the name of Sin. Where did this worship come from? Not from Southern Babylonia, for there—in Ur, for instance—the moon-god was called not Sin, but Naunar. We must turn elsewhere, and we have not very far to go. Haran is well known to have possessed a much venerated sanctuary of Sin, and Dr. Winckler has no doubt that thence this particular cultus travelled to the Southern cities. (2) The high regard for Haran exhibited by several Assyrian kings—Salmaneser II., Sargon, Esarhaddon, and Assur-bani-pal, and by the last of the kings of Babylon, Nabu-nahid—is best accounted for on the supposition that these monarchs attached great importance to Haran as the seat of an ancient monarchy, and the capital of that part of the country. (3) The first kings of Assyria called themselves only "Kings of the

World"; and all their successors retained this curious title, invariably giving it the first place. Where did it come from, and why was it so carefully retained? Most inquirers have derived it from Babylonia, but Dr. Winckler maintains that all efforts to localise it there have been failures, and once more suggests Haran, adducing in support of his conjecture the remarkable fact that Nabu-nahid uses this ancient title in only one inscription, the inscription in which he mentions the rebuilding of the temple of Sin, in the capital of Western Mesopotamia. (4) The variety of cuneiform writing known as "Assyrian" cannot, in the opinion of Dr. Winckler, have been a modification of the "Babylonian." Neither can it have been developed in Assyria itself. A letter written in this character has been brought to light

by the recent finds at Tell-el-Amarna, professing to emanate from the king of Mitanni. Now, Mitanni was a region to the west of the Euphrates. So we may reasonably look in Western Mesopotamia for the birthplace of the Assyrian cuneiform; and if so, what more likely city than Haran? The conclusions of Dr. Winckler will probably be modified in some respects by subsequent research, as is so often the case with the suggestions of Assyriologists; but it may be safely asserted that he has made out a strong case, and has placed in a new light the history of a city which must always be interesting to biblical students as one of the resting-places of the father of the faithful.

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## The Revised Version: Notes and Criticisms.

### I

BY THE EDITOR.

PROFESSOR ORRIS of Princeton contributes an article to the *Homiletic Review* for March, on the word "also" in the Revised Version of the New Testament. In the Greek, *καί*, when it is equivalent to "also" or "even," is *always*, he says, placed *before* the word or phrase which it is intended to emphasise. For example, 1 John iv. 21, "And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brethren also" (*καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ*); Acts xii. 3, "And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also" (*καὶ Πέτρον*). Now there are not a few instances where this invariable rule has been quite overlooked by the Revisers. Take Matt. vi. 14, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." The two words that here stand in antithesis in the Greek are not the acts of forgiveness, nor the agents, but the objects—"men," "you." Therefore the translation ought to be: "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive *you* also (*καὶ ὑμῶν*). The looseness is the more extraordinary that from its position "you" is specially emphatic in the Greek.

But more objectionable is the rendering of Luke vi. 13, "And when it was day, He called

His disciples: and He chose from them twelve, whom also He named apostles." Possibly we know what is meant here from other facts, but as it stands the statement is misleading, for it reads as if Christ had already named some other persons apostles, and now these also He named apostles. It should be: "Whom He named *apostles* also" (*καὶ ἀποστόλους*). They were already named disciples; on choosing them, He named them apostles also.

A text in which the precision of the original is greatly lost is Heb. viii. 6: "But now hath he obtained a ministry the more excellent, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant." "I doubt," says Professor Orris, "if any one with a knowledge of the English only, and without direct or indirect help from one who knows the Greek, could say what office the 'also,' in the phrase 'by how much also,' performs, or should perform. But if the 'also' is placed where the *καί* is placed, so as to emphasise 'a better covenant,' as distinguished from 'a superior ministry,' the passage will need no commentary. 'But now hath he obtained a ministry more excellent? By as much as he is the mediator of a better covenant also' (*καὶ κρείττονος διαθήκης*)."