

present, his eyes rested at last on the baby asleep on his breast, and he bent tenderly over it with a look of pitiful affection, and kissed it on the forehead, then gazed earnestly and meaningly at the minister. His action and expression said as plainly as words could have done: 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth.' He was going home in penitence, too weary to care whether he was received as a son or a servant: knowing only that Father was Father, and that Home was Home. — J. VICTOR LOGAN.

SEVERAL years ago some Englishmen were sailing on the river Nile. Coming to a place where General Goodow's yacht came in sight, they greatly desired to see him and speak with him. But they did not like to board the Government boat. One of the men, knowing Goodow well, said, 'I know how we could bring him.' 'How?' 'Hoist a flag of distress,' was the reply. They did so. The ruse succeeded. Very soon the Governor-General's yacht was alongside to see what help could be given. 'This man receiveth sinners,' has been rendered, 'This man is on the lookout for sinners'; and he is especially on the lookout for sinners in distress. 'When he was a good way off, the father saw him,' and in spite of his ragged misery and distress received him royally.

THERE was even in this return that belief in the father's love which condones all offences. There was the instinctive, undying feeling that a parent is still a parent and will receive when others cast us out. You may have read the experience of the great French philosopher Diderot. 'The first few years of my life in Paris had been rather irregular, my behaviour was enough to

irritate my father, without there being any need to make it worse by exaggeration. Still calumny was not wanting. People told him—well, what did they not tell him? An opportunity for going to see him presented itself. I did not give it two thoughts. I set out full of confidence in his goodness. I thought that he would see me, that I should throw myself into his arms, that both of us should shed tears, and that all would be forgotten. I thought rightly.' So thought the prodigal. He put himself again within reach of his father's love, and that love received him without question, exulting in the ample opportunity of uttering itself. This was no time for inquiry as to why he had come. Here he was, and in need. That is enough for true love.—MARCUS DODS, *Parables of our Lord*, 2nd ser., p. 136.

MAY we imagine it? the sob, the tears,  
The long, sweet, shuddering breath; then, on His breast,  
The great, full, flooding sense of endless years  
Of heaven, and Him, and rest.

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## The Canon and Text of the New Testament.<sup>1</sup>

BY THE REV. JAMES MOFFATT, D.D., BROUGHTY FERRY.

WERE it not for the abundant Germanisms and the occasional Americanisms that are strewn over his pages, one might almost regard Dr. Gregory as another Rendel Harris, for this volume is characterized by a delightful felicity of treatment and a quiet humour bubbling up amid the most technical sections of the subject. A personality, as well as a scholar, is in evidence. Thus, in speaking of Jude's Epistle, and of the supposed difficulty of imagining that one who wrote it could have plain peasants as his grandchildren, the author slyly remarks: 'Even in this enlightened twentieth century there may be found grandsons of facile authors who are themselves not able to

write books' (p. 122). Or again, in discussing the circulation of the primitive Scriptures among Oriental villages, he quaintly notes: 'In some cases we may hold it likely that the village churches received old and damaged rolls which the city churches had cast aside on securing new and better copies, precisely as it sometimes to-day happens that city churches send old Bibles or hymn-books or prayer-books to churches on the frontiers of civilization' (p. 321). Asides like these relieve the long processes of argument. But, indeed, Dr. Gregory's book is happily different from what any one accustomed to the somewhat arid and technical literature of the subject might have anticipated. Handbooks on the Canon are never, in Montaigne's phrase, 'a languid pleasure.' Even Westcott's, the best in English,

<sup>1</sup> *The Canon and Text of the New Testament*. By Caspar René Gregory. 'The International Theological Library,' 1907, pp. 540. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. Price 12s.)

cannot be described as readable. The text of the New Testament now and then lends itself to brighter treatment, it is true, yet even Nestle and Kenyon, through no fault of their own, seldom manage to hold the general reader with an arresting spell. Dr. Gregory, on the other hand, contrives to invest his double subject with real charm. There is nothing laboured or intricate in his book. His naïve easy style, his crisp handling of abstruse problems, and his unashamed interest in the religious life of the early and of the modern Church, make the reader's path smooth and straight from first to last. There is not a footnote in the whole volume. Hardly one Greek word occurs. All early Christian passages are translated, and the smallest phrase or allusion likely to puzzle the general reader is explained with scrupulous care. Dr. Gregory has chosen to write for the man who occupies the place of the unlearned, and he will have his reward.

The book, thus arranged for perusal rather than for reference, falls into two parts. Dr. Gregory is a first-class authority on the text, and the second portion contains much valuable matter, even in the shape of opinions, upon the problems of textual criticism. The previous section on the Canon suffers more severely from the self-denying ordinance which the author has so rigorously obscured. His deliberate avoidance of all reference to recent critics becomes positively heroic. Who else could have written nearly 300 pages upon the Canon nowadays without mentioning Loisy and Leipoldt, Zahn and Harnack? But this leads to a cursory and unqualified method of statement, which often permits the reader to slide unawares over a real difficulty. Thus, to take one or two instances at random, it is scarcely accurate to say that 'the gospel history' for Justin 'is precisely the history that we have in our four Gospels' (p. 96). The evidence for the case of the Fourth Gospel in Ignatius is by no means so undisputed as the reader might infer from the sentences on p. 178; the argument (pp. 191-192) against the likelihood of letters being forged in Paul's name<sup>1</sup> ignores the well-known experience of Josephus; it is surely too summary to state that 'Clement of Rome knows First Timothy' (p. 210); and the remark that 'the criticism of the Canon shows that in the sense in which the word used to be

<sup>1</sup> On p. 224 the author accepts Tertullian's theory that Barnabas wrote Hebrews.

understood, and is by some to-day still understood, there never was a canon,' savours of paradox (p. 286). Dr. Gregory has evidently in his mind circles of contemporary Christianity which idolize the Canon and the literal language of the New Testament, and his paragraphs will prove most educative in this direction. But, while dubiety might exist upon certain books, there is surely no doubt that bishops and councils were concerned from time to time to determine practically if not formally what was and what was not Scripture.

The section on the text opens with a fascinating account of how papyri were treated and circulated, Romans being taken as an illustration. The material side of textual criticism is thoroughly handled, and the volume then follows the usual order of topics in this department. No one will be surprised or take any offence at the chivalrous vindication of Tischendorf's honour, and no British scholar will grudge the space and credit assigned to Westcott and Hort. For details, of course, the student will still need to consult the manuals of Zahn, Nestle, and Kenyon. This volume makes no attempt to supersede these standard works upon the text, any more than the corresponding volumes on the Canon. But a great scholar, speaking even colloquially and sporadically upon his own subject, is never to be ignored, and the student will find here the *obiter dicta* of a shrewd judge, as well as general considerations urged which are too commonly passed over in the current text-books. Thus Dr. Gregory has the cardinal merit of never forgetting that the history of the Canon and the text must be received as an historical human evolution, not as a mere documentary kaleidoscope. He emphasizes rightly, among other things, the longevity of some early Christians, such as Pothinus and Polycarp; this really was a factor in the preservation of second-century tradition. 'How many other bishops and Christians wove the long years with long bands in one, whose names we do not know, because they were not martyrs, or because the story of their martyrdom has not reached us? Who that has any appreciation of historic sequence and of historic contemporaneity can speak of the early Christian Church as if it were a disjointed, ill-connected series of little societies that know little of each other and less of the past, and were a ready prey for every and even the most unskilful forger of Scriptures?' (p. 145). This is well said, and it

needed to be said. Again, 'There is no danger of any one's trying to stop all preaching until the text of the New Testament is finally settled. That would be absurd. For preaching did not begin with the New Testament. Preaching, vivid work in the Church, preceded by years the New Testament' (p. 507). The debatable land of importance for theology, inside textual criticism, is pronounced very narrow. (Perhaps, had Dr. Gregory faced the recent movements<sup>1</sup> initiated, e.g., by Merx on the Syriac versions and by Mr. F. C. Conybeare, he would have modified this reassuring statement.) Yet, none the less, the

<sup>1</sup> Another aspect of the problem is the influence of the Canon upon the form and text of the New Testament Scriptures. How far, if at all, did the motives and aims of 'canonization' operate in the way of altering, say, the titles of some books? One would have welcomed Dr. Gregory's valuable opinion on this crucial point, but he does not seem to have considered it as germane to his subject.

Christian must be prepared to admit and welcome the effects of the textual critic. 'It is singular to see a man anxious to have the latest and best thing in electric lights, but totally indifferent as to having the best text in his New Testament.'

With this ironical sentence the volume closes. The index is not adequate, by any means, nor is there the slightest attempt, as I have hinted, to furnish the student with bibliographical information. As a matter of fact, the appeal of the book is not to the advanced student so much as to the general public, and for the purpose of educating the intelligent Christian it may be commended. It is an unambiguous, fluent, and alluring sketch of the extremely intricate subjects which it professes to discuss. Any one who masters it will be not only enabled but incited to pursue further investigations and research under the guidance of the professional experts in either department.

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## The Man of Sorrows a Man of Joy.

BY THE REV. ROBERT OSWALD, B.D., ST. STEPHEN'S PARISH, PERTH.

'For the joy that was set before him.'—Heb. xii. 2.

WE know our Lord as the Man of Sorrows, and such indeed He was; but here He is set before us as the Man of Joy, and deep as was the sorrow, and personal as it was to Him, this joy was deeper still, and still more personal. It was for the joy that was set before Him that He endured the cross, despising the shame. Let us understand the words—'the joy set before him.'

The customary interpretation does not do justice to this noble passage. It takes the joy set before Him to be a prevision of the end of His humiliation and sacrifice in heavenly glory. It sees the joy spring out of His hope of success, His assurance of victory. But this is wooden and commonplace. It does not do justice to the mind that was in Christ Jesus. It does not sympathetically understand the mood out of which, not only this of Christ's, but all noble and heroic actions spring. For what have we to say of all noble and heroic acts but this,—their root and impulse are never calculation, but always inspiration, not the weighing and balancing of consequences and possibilities,

nor even the fruits of success, but always the vision of the beauty of the act itself. It is the love of love, the nobility of self-sacrifice, the thought of the misery of sufferers ended, and their happiness and safety won, that flash on a heroic soul to ravish it by their beauty, and fire it by their moral appeal; that smite 'the chords of self that trembling pass in music out of sight' to issue in some noble hymn of love and sacrifice and service. And in this vision and rapture there lies a joy, stern but sweet ineffably, a veritable music and harmony of the noblest and most godlike in us.

That, we venture to say, was 'the joy set before him.' It was not the issue of the act, but the act itself, that was a joy to Him. The joy lay not in the distant victory, but in the splendour of the present and pressing sacrifice. He rejoiced not in the hope of future good, but in the loveliness of present love. The root of His action was not calculation, but inspiration. So Man of Sorrows as He was, more deeply and more essentially He