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*Archibald Alexander*

ART. I.—*The Established Church of Scotland, with an account of the secession from the same.*

By a statistical table of the established Church of Scotland, published in 1720, the number of ordained ministers is 948; by a similar table of 1833, the number of pastors is 967; and the number of parishes 957. The increase of the clergy, therefore, in a space exceeding a century, does not amount to twenty; although, in that period, the population of the country must have been nearly doubled. It must be remembered, however, that the secession, which now includes one-fourth of the population, has occurred in this period; and other dissenters have also multiplied their numbers. These tables also, it is believed, do not include the ministers of the chapels of ease, and such as are without pastoral charge; such as professors in colleges, and tutors in private families; for we observe, that in the table of 1833, no minister is entered on the list, who is not the pastor of a parish. The reason, therefore, why the clergy are more numerous than the parishes, is that some parishes have more ministers than one.

In the former table, the number of synods is thirteen and the number of presbyteries sixty-seven; in the latter

*J. W. Alexander*

ART. IV.—Review of *Bush's Commentary on the Book of Psalms.*

*A Commentary on the Book of Psalms; on a plan embracing the Hebrew text, with a new literal version.* By GEO. BUSH, Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Literature in the New York City University. New York. Leavitt, Lord & Co. 1834. (No. I. Ps. I.—III. pp. 80, 8vo.)

THIS is a welcome and encouraging phenomenon. Our critical commentaries are, after all, to become *bona fide* articles of domestic manufacture. And we are glad to see that this important art is not to be monopolized. We are glad to see that a generous emulation has already been excited by the successful efforts of a few pioneers. This will have the good effect, not only of pressing into the service of the Bible a large number of gifted minds, but of preventing that uniformity in method and manner in style, which are almost unavoidable when many kindred works proceed from the same school or class of writers. The diffusion of a taste and zeal for sacred learning over a greater superficies, will also tend to interrupt the process of mere mechanical book-making. The usage of the present age allows too large a license, both in Europe and America, to the mere compilatory mode of composition. The fame acquired by such men as the Rosenmüllers shows to what extent this is the case in Germany, the very country where original research is carried to the greatest length. Even there, as well as in America and England, there is a strong propensity, among inferior writers, to this economical sort of manufacture. A few trifling changes in expression and arrangement are, by many, held to justify the substitution of a new name on the title-page. To this corps of *chevaliers d'industrie* Mr. Bush does not belong. Whatever the defects of his productions may be, there is always satisfactory evidence, that he made them himself. Originality at all points is impossible; but even where the ingredients of his books are old, there are unambiguous symptoms of the process of digestion, on the author's part. There are no crude, heterogeneous fragments, surreptitiously abstracted from their native mass, and thrown into the teeth of an inappropriate context. Mr. Bush may borrow yarn; but the web which he presents us, we can see at once, was woven, warp and woof, in his own peculiar loom.

We have now before us a pamphlet of eighty octavo

pages, neatly, and even elegantly printed, though without that scrupulous correctness of typography, which, in Europe, would be regarded as essential to the respectability of such a publication. But we know so much of the appalling difficulties which attend such printing, even in the most advantageous situation, and still more where the business is a mere experiment, that we are rather disposed to plead for Mr. Bush, before the public, than to pronounce his condemnation. A numerical computation of the *errata* we leave to critics who are capable of deriving pleasure from that species of arithmetic. We earnestly wish, however, that this most important item may be carefully provided for, in all the coming numbers.

The present pamphlet is the beginning and the specimen of an extensive work, the plan of which is stated on the cover. At first sight, we were very much disposed to apprehend, that the author had been guilty of a huge miscalculation, in engaging to complete the work within the compass of a dozen numbers. When we saw that the first included three psalms only, of which there was but one that could be looked upon as rising above the average standard of obscurity and difficulty, we inferred at once that the compression of the rest into ten or twelve numbers, was a hopeless matter, without the supposition of a change of plan. These first impressions have been greatly modified, though not removed, by more minute inspection. The reasons cannot be intelligibly stated, till the author's plan is understood. Mr. Bush proposes to insert the Hebrew text of every psalm, with the common English version, and another of his own. This is to be followed by the commentary, which, we find, consists, and is intended to consist, of a full exhibition of the "parallel usage" of Hebrew words (phrases.) This must, of course, be most extensive at the outset, when the terms make their first appearance. As the work advances, the verbal exposition will be superseded, in a multitude of cases, by a simple reference to previous explanations. This circumstance undoubtedly reduces Mr. Bush's pledge within the bounds of possibility; but we are still afraid that some deliberate modification of the plan, as it appears in this specimen, will be unavoidable. Nor do we think that such a change would be a sacrifice of any real advantage to the force of circumstances. We believe, on the contrary, that the necessity of abridgment would enhance the value of the commentary much. The

power of rejection and excision is among the last attainments of an author. Pascal did not speak at random when he said, that his letters were long because he had not time to make them shorter. Our judgment is actually blinded by parental fondness for the product of our intellectual labour. The only remedy for this mistaken kindness is the pressure of necessity, the sense of limitation, and constraint *ab extra*. What practised writer can have failed to learn how potent this compulsory conciseness is, in giving nerve and vigour to a flaccid style? Without the knife and cauterium, composition languishes; and without a strong necessity, they will not be applied. Mr. Bush needs these remedies, in general, less than most of his contemporaries. We have ourselves borne witness to his muscular and pregnant style. But we confess that, in the present case, he seems to have been writing too much at his ease; too much as though he had a big book in prospect, and could therefore well afford to lavish words. We say this with confidence, because we know the feeling to be natural and almost unavoidable, without a preventing cause. At the same time, we say it with all kindness and respect, not in the spirit of invidious cavil, but in that of candid friendship. We have adverted, in the first place, to this topic, because it strikes the eye as an obvious objection to the purchase of the work, and is more likely, therefore, to destroy its sale than any other fault whatever.

We now proceed to notice more particularly the contents of this first number. We have first an introduction of twenty pages, on the collection, arrangement, titles, authors, musical accompaniments, and poetical characteristics of the psalms; the principle on which they ought to be interpreted, together with a list of the most important critical commentators. On the general character of this introduction we can only say, that it is likely to be useful to the students of the psalms, though it appears to us to be somewhat slight and meager, when considered as the Prolegomena to a work so extensive and minute. This probably arises from the fact, that Mr. Bush intended to exhibit here simply those items of important information which could not find place in the body of the work. To this method we have no objection, and indeed regard it as an improvement on established usage. *Minutiae* are often better understood in detail, than when collected into masses. We

shall briefly notice a few detached particulars in our author's introduction.

At the end of the second section we observe a statement which may possibly mislead the reader; and as it relates to the way in which the verses of the Psalms are numbered and referred to, it is worth while to correct it. The statement is that "on numbering the verses in Hebrew, the title is numbered as the first verse." This would imply, that the number of verses in the Hebrew Bible is always one more than in the English, which is not the fact. Some Psalms, as for instance the eleventh and fourteenth, are numbered alike in both, because the title forms only *a part* of the first verse in Hebrew. This is a little matter, but facility of reference is far from being a trifle.

We are not entirely satisfied with Mr. Bush's tone in relation to the antiquity and authority of the titles to the Psalms. He does not indeed reject them, like the modern German critics; but he expresses a sort of uneasiness about them, which we think unreasonable. External evidence places them precisely on the same foundation with the Psalms themselves. Let them remain there, till external evidence requires their removal. Their clearness or obscurity is nothing to the purpose. As soon as we begin to settle critical questions by the measure of our own exegetical capacities, the foundations will be out of course. Such a course involves the germ of neological scepticism. The true principle is a very simple one. Let the question of genuineness be determined by historical evidence, or inspired authority. When so determined, let it not be shaken by any accumulation of exegetical difficulties. Dispute about the meaning as you will, but let the text alone, till authority or testimony interpose to change it. With this view of the matter, we consider Mr. Bush as making large concessions when he says, "How far these titles are to be regarded as genuine, is a matter of doubt." The minds of the students of the Bible ought not to be troubled with gratuitous misgivings, where nothing decisive can be said on either side, for lack of evidence; and where the presumptive proof is all on one side, there is surely no necessity for breeding doubts in favour of the other. The present case is one of small importance; but the principle involved is of extensive application.

Another subject, in regard to which Mr. Bush is not entirely satisfactory, is the principle on which the interpreta-

tion of the Psalms should be conducted. The defect in this case, is a want of clearness and precision in the statement of his views. The whole section on this subject is obscure, and might induce a careless reader to suppose that it was penned by one whose mind was not decided. This, we know, is not the case, but we are really in doubt with respect to the precise ground which our author takes, on the contested subject of a double sense. He professes to accord "in the main," with Bishop Horsley, and quotes a passage from that writer, full of strong expressions, in favour of a double sense in many of the Psalms. "David's complaints against his enemies are Messiah's complaints." "David's afflictions are the Messiah's sufferings," &c. "In a word, there is not a page of this Book of Psalms, in which the pious reader will not find his Saviour, if he reads with a view of finding him." This phraseology implies, nay asserts, that the very same passage, may, and often does, refer to a two-fold subject. Yet Mr. Bush immediately proceeds, after "admitting the general principle of a prophetic and spiritual interpretation of many of the Psalms," to lay down two rules for determining when this prophetic and spiritual meaning may be put upon the language. The first of these rules is, that "the sense resulting from a cautious and critical explication of the terms of the passage, and an impartial construction of the whole sentence, according to the known usage of the language and the writer, must be such as naturally and justly to refer to the Messiah, and such as *cannot without violence be applied to any other subject.*"\* This doctrine may be sound, and Mr. Bush may hold it, but nothing surely can be more directly in the teeth of Bishop Horsley. This involves the whole section in a mist, which is far from being dispelled by the concluding statement, that "although by no means disposed to adopt the *polydynamic* hypothesis of Cocceius, and other spiritualizing interpreters, yet on the other hand, we are equally averse to that jejune and frigid theory of exposition which sees nothing beyond the mere letter of the Psalmist. As our views on this subject will abundantly disclose themselves to the reader in the course of the ensuing commentary in the actual mode of interpretation adopted, it will be unnecessary to dwell longer upon them at present." He also says, that an adequate example of the way in which his canons are to be applied

\* Page 17.

is furnished in the preface and notes to the second Psalm. But the second Psalm is not a fair criterion. After once admitting that the Messiah is at all referred to there, it is easy to admit that he is the only subject. There is no perplexing complication of the past and future, the divine and human character; no express mention of David and allusions to his history in connexion with expressions and representations which are wholly inappropriate to an earthly King. These are the cases which must try the strength of the conflicting theories. When our author reaches the sixteenth Psalm, we shall expect to see his principle of interpretation thoroughly evolved. Till then we stand in doubt. We think, however, that we can explain this want of clearness and consistency. It arises from a practical blunder, into which we think, that Mr. Bush has been betrayed. He should have written his book first, and his introduction afterwards. It might then have comprised the *residuum* of his valuable thoughts, all for which he had not previously found a proper place. In that case, too, he would have known distinctly what his own opinions were, and not have been obliged to anticipate by a sort of guess, his own unformed conclusions. If the work should be completed, we would seriously advise the author to re-write the introduction. His mind would then be teeming with appropriate materials, and his imagination glowing with the aggregate impression of this divine anthology.

The introduction closes with a catalogue of commentators on the Book of Psalms. It might of course, have been enlarged with ease; but not perhaps to the advantage of the reader. In our author's brief remarks upon the writers named, we meet here and there with sentences exhibiting that characteristic felicity of expression which distinguishes most of his continuous productions. Of Venema's commentary it is well observed, that "its great defect is the immense expansion into which the author beats out the ideas of the Psalmist, like a little mass of bullion converted into acres of gold or silver leaf." "Hammond," says Mr. B., "is often peculiarly happy in seizing and displaying the precise import of a word or sentence, though he sometimes overladens\* his interpretations by heaping upon them a mass of authorities, and sometimes alternates them by a kind of critical wire-drawing, to the barest filaments of meaning."

\* There is no such word.

This is excellent criticism; but there are two allusions in this catalogue of writers, with respect to which we are constrained to ask our author what he means. Speaking of Henry Ainsworth, he observes that, "Considering *the age* and the circumstances in which he wrote, his philological attainments were truly astonishing." And of Henry Hammond he says in like manner, that "his knowledge of the original may be considered, for *the day in which he lived*, profound." Had Mr. Bush underrated these two writers, we should have held our peace; but as he has chosen to exalt them at the expense of their contemporaries, we boldly join issue and defy him to make good his innuendo. We are glad of an opportunity to say a few plain words upon this topic, not in relation to Mr. Bush, whose remarks already quoted may be merely inadvertent, but in reference to a sort of slang which has long been current among half-taught Hebraists and nursling critics. The impulse which the study of the Hebrew Scriptures has received within a few years in America, had its origin in Germany. It was German books that introduced the new régime, and especially the writings of Gesenius, as presented to the public by Professor Stuart. A natural consequence of this fact was, that in the minds of Hebrew students, the study of that language was associated closely with the name of that distinguished German scholar. Gesenius himself was in the zenith of his reputation, and the extravagant expressions of his worshippers at home were taken for more than they were worth by his admirers in America. The idea was thus engendered in the minds of many that Gesenius had, as it were, created the whole science of Hebrew philology. He had indeed added a few links to the long chain of improvement, upon which a train of sturdy Cyclops had been hammering since the days of David Kimchi. In the eyes of sciolists, these antecedent links were confounded with the new ones which Gesenius had been forging, and the whole massive series was miraculously looked upon as his exclusive property, to the shameful disparagement of all who went before him. Hence it became common to refer all questions of lexicography and grammar to the paramount authority of this one man. This foolish admiration soon extended itself to other kindred works, and as the circle of acquaintance with German books enlarged, one after another was exalted to a like bad eminence. This ignorant idolatry must of necessity excite contempt in the real scholars of the



old world; first, because they know how much they are themselves indebted to their predecessors; and secondly, because the worship of particular writers is, among the Germans, periodical. Before one had reached the acme of its paroxysm, the exciting cause had begun to disappear. The fame of Gesenius had begun to wane, and he is at this moment looked upon by many of his ablest countrymen as wholly *antiquist*. Is his real merit therefore lessened? Not at all. His supplemental links are still appended to the chain of improvement, while the skill of younger labourers is appending more. It would be as foolish to deny his merit as it was to overrate them. But for another reason, this excessive admiration of living German writers must be thought ridiculous in Germany itself. Inferior scholars, even there, adopt the same cant phrases that are current among us. But the leading orientalisists of Germany are very far from sharing in the folly. They know too well that they are standing on the shoulders of a race of giants, and they laugh at the pigmies, who affect to treat these giants with disdain. The extravagant praises of Gesenius, as the inventor of Hebrew grammar, cannot be more absurd in any age than those of the grammarian himself; for he knows best how much he is a debtor to those who went before him. What would Rosenmüller think, if he were told that his unconscionable extracts from Vitringa, and even from the margin of Michaelis's Bible, are regarded in America as the fresh coinage of his own exhaustless mint? And we need not ask how Tholuck must enjoy himself, on being gravely thanked for classical quotations, which he himself had copied, word for word, from older writers. If the muddy stream of traditional quotation were sometimes followed up a little nearer to its source, a good deal might be gained on the score of correctness as well as reputation. Mistakes of the same sort, but on a larger scale, have sometimes been occasioned by the mania for translation from the German, a disease engendered by the same ignorance of the past, and the same false estimate of the present, which we have been exposing. The most striking instance is afforded by the laborious English version of Jahn's Hebrew Commonwealth, the best part of which, as the Germans say themselves, is extracted from a work, now obsolete of course, but known in former times by the name of the "Connection between the Old and New Testaments." The consequence is, that Mr. Stowe employed a large pro-

portion of his time in translating out of Jahn, what Jahn had himself translated from Prideaux! Of the triplicate thus presented to our choice, we must confess that we prefer Prideaux himself.

We beg Mr. Bush's pardon for connecting with his name a train of observations which are so very far from applying to himself. Aside from the two brief phrases which suggested this discussion, we have not the slightest reason to suppose that he partakes of the hallucination now described. On the contrary we have the strongest reasons for believing that he stands on higher and more enlightened ground. And we entertain the hope, that he will be a zealous agent in restoring public sentiment to sanity on this point, and (if we may for once usurp the prerogative of coining words) exploding *Germanolatry*. In Germany itself the older writers are beginning, under the happy auspices of Tholuck and his fellows, to resume their right position; and already we begin to see the symptoms of obedient imitation in America. A few years ago an extensive commentary might be published without the name of John Calvin being seen upon its pages. But now that the reformer is revived again in Germany, we too are to be told, forsooth, that he was a man of merit! The rage for translation is, we think, subsiding, and along with it the notion that the present race of Germans made the Hebrew Bible. Some who have studied in the German school begin to talk cavalierly of their former masters. We trust that the day is coming, when both extremes will be avoided; when no man will pretend to be a finished philologist without a familiar knowledge of the German writers; but when no man will imagine that the age of Gesenius and De Wette has a right to disparage that of Lightfoot and the Buxtorfs; and when American scholars will be more disposed to draw from the capacious cisterns of the olden times than to drink stolen waters from the shallow troughs of plagiaries and compilers.

We have already mentioned that the present number contains the first three Psalms. The text of each is preceded by a preface. We are glad to see that Mr. Bush has not fallen into Rosenmüller's method of writing about nothing. That laborious critic, not content with stating what may happen to be known in regard to the historical occasion of the Psalms, undertakes to do the same in cases where there is not even a trace of information, or a hook to hang conjecture on. If nothing else will answer, he de-

lights the reader by informing him in many words of what we do not know and what we cannot tell. The same charge lies in some degree against the livelier De Wette. He too indulges in sagacious guesses as to questions which do not admit of historical solution, and would scarce be worth solving if they did. Here is a characteristic difference between the Christian and the infidel interpreter. To the latter all things in his text are equally important, or rather equally trivial. The Hebrew text of every verse is given at large. This is a great convenience to the student, though the style of execution is to us unsightly. A smaller Hebrew type, in the body of the page, would please us better. The common translation of each verse is given from the English Bible, together with another by Mr. Bush himself, which he calls the *literal version*. Would it not have been sufficient to insert a literal version of particular phrases, in the notes where they occur? The execution of this version in the first three Psalms, is not exactly to our taste. Here and there a word is more significantly rendered; but the only variation from the English Bible, consists, for the most part, in adhering closely to the vulgar distinction of the Hebrew tense, as preterite and future. This is one of the points in which we think that the grammars of Gesenius and Stuart are behind the real improvements of the age. We cannot of course discuss that subject now. Suffice it to say, that in our opinion Mr. Bush is frequently less true to the original than the common version; for example, he corrects the common version of the first Psalm, by changing *the man that walketh not*, to *the man that hath not walked*. It would be hard to convince us that the first is not decidedly the better of the two. Nor would we very readily abandon our belief, that in the poetical books both the future and the preterite (so called) are, as a general rule, to be translated by the present indefinite, without some positive reason to the contrary in the context, or the meaning of the verb itself. On the critical notes we have two remarks to make. The first is, that they are confined almost exclusively to one sort of exposition, viz. the comparison of verbal parallels. The references to the ancient versions are few and unimportant; and the analogy of the cognate dialects is entirely untouched. Our second remark is, that the exposition, on the principle adopted, is very fully and satisfactorily executed. A novel feature of the plan, to us, is the insertion of the passages at large, in which the word to be explained

occurs. This method may appear to favour laziness; but even that is better than to crowd the book with references which by nineteen readers out of twenty would be utterly neglected. Mr. Bush's collection of illustrative texts, thus printed at full length, has afforded us much pleasure. The mere perusal is a pleasing exercise, and the effect upon the judgment, for the most part, very strong and satisfactory. This part of the work we would not wish to see curtailed, nor had we any reference to this when we charged it with prolixity. There is but one improvement that we can suggest. In many cases, where the texts illustrative of certain doubtful words are numerous, there are one or two which may be looked upon as *loci classici*, decisive of the question. These should in every case be given at large, and the rest either merely referred to, or set forth in full, as might be found convenient.

We shall now briefly notice some of Mr. Bush's annotations.

Under the second verse of the first Psalm he traces the various meanings of the word rendered "*he meditates.*" We think that in so doing he inverts the process. It is certainly more natural to derive the sense of *meditation*, through the intermediate notions of *soliloquy* and *muttering*, from the general idea of *uttering sound* or *making noise*, than to reverse the order of deduction. It is very unlikely that a term expressing originally a mental act, should, by any modification, be employed to denote, not only inarticulate groans and signs, but the tone of a harp, the cooing of doves, the growling of lions, and the voice of distant thunder. We despise the fantastical vagaries of mere verbal etymologists; but the logical distinction of primary and secondary meanings is essential to perfect lexicography.

In his notes upon the fourth verse, Mr. Bush develops the peculiar syntax of the relative in Hebrew. In a case so plain, mistake were scarcely possible. We merely wish to notice the effect produced by the transfer of occidental forms to oriental grammar. After stating that the relative is used absolutely, he translates the sentence thus—" (as to) which the wind driveth away." The words in the parenthesis are not merely superfluous; they confuse the whole affair. It does not follow, that because the Greeks and Romans used an absolute accusative, with a governing preposition understood, we must explain a Hebrew form by a supposititious particle. "Which the wind driveth it away,"

is an exact translation of the Hebrew words, and a perspicuous exhibition of the peculiar syntax. So likewise in the case from Jeremiah, "who the word of the Lord came to him," and in that from Deuteronomy, "which thou shalt not understand its tongue," are English phrases formed exactly on the Hebrew models, and convey a precise idea of the idiom in question.

In the notes upon the first verse of this Psalm, there is a very clear though brief exhibition of the forensic meaning of the words rendered *to condemn* and *to justify*. We were therefore disappointed when we found that in the fifth verse, Mr. Bush had left entirely out of view the forensic phraseology and figures which to us are most apparent, and without which this fine passage would be shorn of half its strength. "The allusion couched," says Mr. B. "under this term (judgment) is perhaps in many instances to the judgment of the last day, but in the present passage we take it as a general expression implying that *whenever God shall arise in his displeasure, and shall bring his controversy with the wicked to an issue*, as he often does in the calamitous visitations of his providence in this life, they shall not be able to stand, *they shall be* discomfited and overwhelmed, *convicted and condemned*; their erect attitude, their bold front, their lofty bearing, shall be exchanged for the lowly crouching of conscious guilt and suppliant shame. To such an effectual and utter subversion are the wicked often brought by the stern discipline of the providence of God in this world." (p. 39.)

This is resolving the figure, not explaining it; transmuting poetry to prose, by way of exposition. All that our author says may be found by implication in the verse; but it lies beneath the covert of a splendid metaphor. There is no necessity for supposing an allusion to the final judgment, though we think there is one. But even admitting that, as Mr. Bush supposes, the reference is merely to providential judgments, he has done the verse injustice. It is easy to show how. Let us first read the verse with Mr. Bush's exposition as already quoted, according to which its original, immediate meaning is, that when God sends his judgments on the wicked, they will crouch. To us the words are full of gorgeous imagery. They bring before us not an abstract proposition, but a scene. The thrones are set, and the books are opened. The word for *judgment* means a *tribunal* or a *trial*; *wicked* and *sinner*s are forensic terms for criminals and convicts; *the righteous* means the *innocent*, or

rather the *acquitted culprits*. The sense of the whole is that *the guilty shall not stand at the judgment among those who are acquitted*. Whether this judgment be the universal, final one, or merely an ordinary providential judgment, matters not. The figure is the same, and needs the same elucidation. It is easy to perceive that this mode of exposition was in the author's mind, till he expounded it away. In the passage above quoted, the words which we have distinguished by italics, contain the real commentary. The rest is mere diluting paraphrase, and at the same time one of the very worst samples of verbosity in the book. We have made these free remarks, because the Book of Psalms contains a multitude of similar allusions, which are robbed of all their emphasis unless the idea of judicial process is distinctly kept in view. For example, in the first verse of the 143d, we are persuaded that the superficial reader loses much by not appreciating fully the forensic terms. "Enter not into judgment"—do not bring me to the bar, do not put me on my trial; "for in thy sight"—before thy judgment seat, before thee as a judge; "shall no man living be justified"—the technical term for *acquitted, declared innocent*. Nothing is gained and much is lost by diluting the metaphors of Scripture into paraphrastic common-place. How common is it in preaching on a figurative text to begin by throwing away the dress in which the Holy Spirit chose to clothe his revelations, and which is best adapted to the structure of our minds! When will men be wise above that which is written? We should like to see a commentary on the Book of Psalms, which should have for a primary object the elucidation and striking exhibition of its figurative passages. The fact is, that this Book needs comparatively little exposition of the ordinary kind. A vast proportion of it is extremely simple, and exhibits nothing which would puzzle even inexperienced students, or drive them to the critics for assistance. On passages of this kind it is labour lost to write extensive comments. They will not be read. Exegetical works, if they would answer their design, must be constructed on the principle that commentaries are necessary evils. We mean that they who write them must be thoroughly aware, that they are far more likely to be consulted than read. They must be written with specific and continual reference to the wants of those for whom they are intended. In this case the extreme of brevity is by far the safest. No mistake can be more fatal to a work of this

kind, at the present day, than that of supposing that something must be said on every passage, as a thing of course. Nobody reads, or will read, commentary, for its own sake. With respect to the Psalms especially the wisest course would be, to let alone the simple passages which need no exposition, and thus obtain an ample space for the elucidation of that which is obscure. We cannot but think that with regard to this point, Mr. Bush has erred. He has begun too much *secundum artem*, and as if he were determined to say something upon every word. The very next number, we are well persuaded, will exhibit an improvement as to this particular. Instead of exhorting him to change his plan in this respect, we would urge him to enlarge it. As we said before, there is not half so much necessity for mere verbal critics on the letter of the Psalms, as for men who to philology unite at least a measure of imagination, taste, and sensibility to grandeur. By a man so qualified, the study of this book might be rendered a delight to every cultivated mind. While the light of learned criticism might be richly shed on every dark and doubtful context in the Psalter, the mists of ignorant misapprehension might be swept for ever from the face of its surpassing beauties. Images which are now seen only like cloudy pillars in the distance, might thus become pillars of fire before the student of the Bible. The prophetic passages, especially, admit of being drawn from their obscurity, and placed in brilliant light and strong relief before our vision. We refer not to the illustration of predictions from their supposed fulfilment, but to lucid exhibition of the prophecies themselves. If darkness shroud the type, how shall the antitype be recognized? To the work which we have mentioned who is equal? Not the mere philologist, the plodding verbal critic, the laborious lexicographer, the diligent translator. Philological knowledge is of course essential; but without imagination and the love of sacred song, it could accomplish nothing. Mr. Bush has enough of all these gifts to make at least a fair experiment. His turn of mind, his peculiar tastes, and his literary habits, mark him out more distinctly than any other writer now before the public, as the proper person to attempt what may be called, in the German phrase, the *aesthetical* interpretation of the Hebrew poets. This term presupposes as large a degree of philological criticism as may be required for the complete development of the author's meaning. And beyond this, what is wanted?

We had marked several passages in Mr. Bush's commentary on the second Psalm, intending to advert to them. But the present notice is already disproportionate to Mr. Bush's pamphlet, and we could not animadvert upon his exposition of the second Psalm, without stirring a question of theology on which we are at variance, but into which we do not wish to enter now. We stop short, therefore, at the end of Psalm the first.

In conclusion, we sincerely recommend the work proposed and here begun, to the attention of our readers. We know Mr. Bush to be a scholar, and a student, and a devotee of learning. We know him to possess a cultivated taste and varied knowledge. We know that he is not a mere compiler, or translator from the German. We fully believe that the succeeding numbers will exhibit much improvement, and we confidently look for as complete a commentary, on the plan proposed, as any other scholar in America could furnish.

Since the above was written, we have examined a German work upon the Psalms, of later date than any named in Mr. Bush's catalogue. The author is Ludwig Klauss, a village pastor in the Dutchy of Anhalt. The book, which was published at Berlin in 1832, with a short recommendatory preface by the well known preacher Krummacher of Bremen, is a neat octavo of above five hundred pages. We recommend it to the notice of Mr. Bush, and of all such as make use of German helps in the study of the Psalms. De Wette's work upon the same part of Scripture has been greatly eulogised. His introduction has been given to the public in an English dress, and is pronounced by Mr. Bush to be "particularly excellent." Now De Wette, it is well known, is an infidel, and interprets the Psalms like an accomplished Deist. Klauss writes his book avowedly as a corrective and a supplement to those of Rosenmüller and De Wette. With the latter, it is particularly useful to compare him, as they go perhaps to opposite extremes. The one, to borrow Krummacher's comparison, interprets Scripture after the manner of him who cut the book with a penknife and cast it into the fire. The other labours to collect the fragments and re-unite them in a consistent whole. Klauss, in short, takes the ground of high, evangelical supernaturalism, in opposition to that of low, sceptical rationalism. His hostility to falsehood sometimes leads him to extremes, and he has certainly been guilty of a waste of



ingenuity in labouring to fortify untenable positions. But the very fact that his extreme opinions are in a direction opposite to those of De Wette, Gesenius, and the like, enhances the value of his book as a corrective and an antidote. His notes, so far as we have carried our inspection, are confined to matters of dispute and doubt. There is no pretension to the name or nature of a perpetual commentary. A large part of the volume is engrossed by an elaborate and ingenious introduction. As a specimen of the author's way of thinking we may mention, that he holds the old rabbinical opinion which refers all the Psalms to David as the *rédacteur* or author. This position he maintains with no small learning and acuteness, though of course without success. He conjectures that the first seventy-two Psalms formed an earlier collection made by David for his own private use, to which the rest were added by the same hand, for the purpose of forming a Book of Psalms and Prayers for public use. He vindicates the genuineness of the superscriptions to the Psalms, but denies that the preposition *Lamedh* ever denotes the author. He advances many singular opinions in relation to the titles of certain Psalms. These we cannot here detail, but must content ourselves with saying, that the phrase translated by most critics *To the Chief Musician*, he regards as an infinitive, and explains it as denoting that kind of musical composition, in which the same strophe recurs at stated intervals, as the *refrain* or burden of the song. His principles of interpretation are distinctly and perspicuously stated. While he admits that the grammatico-historical mode of exposition is the only rational and right one, he denies that it is incompatible with a prophetic and spiritual, or even allegorical and mystical interpretation. The characteristic feature of his system seems to be, that the larger, higher, and remoter meaning is, in all doubtful cases, to receive the preference. The *Messiaic* Psalms he distributes into two unequal classes, those which relate directly and exclusively to Christ, and those which have a double sense. The first embraces only Psalms 2, 16, 22, 40, 45, 72, 110, and perhaps 109 and 118. The exegetical authority of the New Testament, the inspiration of the Old, and the claims of both to our faith and obedience, are very satisfactorily stated and asserted.

We have made these remarks, because the fashionable rage for German criticism seldom reaches further than De Wette, Gesenius, *et id genus omne*. Disingenuous infidelity

may be forgiven, but bigoted attachment to truth is an unpardonable crime. This critical injustice is a crying sin in Germany, and is creeping upon us. Let us shake the viper off. Let us learn to judge an author by the merit of his writings, and not by the obloquy or silence of his enemies. The infidels of Germany have been bedaubed with eulogy *usque ad nauseam*. When will the struggling pietists be noticed? Even admitting that they are inferior, (Tholuck and Heugstenberg may serve as an example,) does not the goodness of their cause entitle them at least to our compassion? For ourselves, we are determined not to echo the decisions of a party, and an anti-christian party too, in Germany, on these important subjects, but on suitable occasions to appeal from the inexorable judgment of neology to that of revelation and our readers' common sense.

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ART. V.—*New Ecclesiastical Law.*

*Samuel Miller*

IT has been lately announced that the Synod of Philadelphia, at its annual meeting in Gettysburg, in October last, adopted, and proceeded at once to enforce, a doctrine in reference to ecclesiastical proceedings, which appears to some altogether novel, and truly extraordinary. The doctrine is this,—“That no *complaint, appeal, or protest*, can be admitted by any judicatory, except in *judicial cases*.” In adopting this doctrine, the Synod seems to have intended a distinction between what they denominated *legislative* acts, and *judicial* decisions; meaning by the latter, cases of regular judicial process, in which there are parties, charges, and a judicial sentence; and by the former, all acts of ecclesiastical bodies in which they prescribe laws, express opinions, or perform any other legislative or executive functions. And, therefore, when the Synod, by a large majority, had passed a vote, adopting the “Act and Testimony,” a respectable minority was refused the privilege of entering their protest against the decision. The reason assigned for this refusal was, “that the Synod never rendered any *judgment*, in its proper sense, in relation to the “Act and Testimony;” that no judicial matter had been before it in relation