

## BREVIA.

**The Gospel of St. John.** By Marcus Dods, D.D. Vol. II. [*The Expositor's Bible.*] London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1892.

The second volume of the Commentary on St. John by Dr. Dods is a natural continuation of the first. It has the same easy, graceful style, the same moderate and reasonable spirit, the same psychological insight and quickness to catch points of application to present-day conditions. It awakens, however, in my mind the doubt which I could not help expressing when the first volume came before me. For whom exactly is it intended? One would have thought that such a series was most needed by the preacher; but Dr. Dods seems to have written rather for the congregation. It seems to me that he has left the expositor, at least the pulpit expositor, nothing to say. Granted the basis of the exposition, and to a mind which is conscious of its own poverty in this respect he seems to wring from his text the last drop of practical application. But can we always quite grant the basis of the exposition? Of that I am not so sure. I am not sure that the difficulties have been always fully grappled with. Dr. Dods has such a wonderful way of making rough places smooth, that one might almost be tempted to think that St. John was as facile a writer as himself. That, however, is hardly the case. Take, for instance, that well-known passage, St. John xvi. 8-11:—

“When He is come, He will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged.”

Here the real points are not the conviction of sin in general, or of righteousness in general, but exactly in what lay the particular sin of rejecting Christ and how the guilt of that sin is brought home by the Paraclete; whose or what righteousness He reveals, and how that revealing is connected with the Ascension; and lastly, how there is any declared judgment of the Evil One. I do not say that Dr. Dods contributes nothing helpful on these points; he seems to me to hit the mark once and again; but his exposition would have been still more helpful if it had been more concise and more resolutely disengaged from confusing generalities.

It is a matter of taste; but I confess that for my own part I would rather have seen the two volumes compressed into one, and that a volume of fewer pages. I think too, as I said before, that we should have been more enabled to take our stand by the side of the Evangelist and see the history unroll itself as he saw it.

Just one point of detail. I observe that Dr. Dods rejects the revised rendering of St. John xiii. 2, "during supper," for "supper being served," or "supper-time having arrived." But has he not overlooked the change of reading, *δείπνου γινομένου* for *γενομένου*?

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**The Hebrew Accents**, by Arthur Davis. London, D. Nutt, 1892.

Probably only those who have already solved all the other problems of the universe and find still a little time upon their hands think of studying the Hebrew Accents. To such persons a book of reasonable compass on the subject would be acceptable. No one who desires full knowledge can dispense with the two Treatises of Wickes (Clarendon Press), but these works are both long and expensive. Mr. Davis here offers a brief compend on the Prose Accents, which will be found of service as containing the main principles and facts of the accentuation. The book certainly might have been clearer. The author has a tendency to multiply rules (in a way that drives the reader to mutiny or despair), where the statement of a single general principle would have been sufficient. Examples of this are the rules on Sheva at the beginning, and those on Metheg at the end of the book; and other examples occur throughout. For instance, three rules are given for the case of Munach taking the place of Metheg on the word of Zakeph, where the single rule that Metheg remains if on the first letter of the word would have been enough. It might have been well to mention that the apparent Pashta on the word of Zakeph is called *Methigah*, because the name suggests the explanation of the peculiarity. Neither will the reader easily pick up the conditions under which *Zakeph Gadol* is to be used. This subject, indeed, is rather obscure in itself, and the best editions do not remove the perplexity. Comp. Genesis i. 19 with xx. 4, in Baer.

The rules for interpunction given by Mr. Davis (p. 31 *seq.*) will be found instructive. It may be held as now ascertained that the accentual principle is a dichotomy, and not, as Ewald maintained, a trichotomy. The verse is divided into two by Athnach, and then each of these two halves into two by Zakeph, and so on. From this principle it seems to follow that Segolta does not mark the *third* of a verse, as Mr. Davis still maintains, but is really a divider of the first half of the verse. This accent is subject to peculiar rhythmical laws, but seems to be in some way a modified Zakeph.

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