

ing cannot be accepted. He may be right, but he has not yet proved his case.

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**The Epistle to the Romans; a Commentary Logical and Historical**  
By JAMES M. STIFLER, D.D., Professor of New Testament  
Exegesis in Crozer Theological Seminary. Chicago and  
New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1897.

It is remarked by the author in the Preface that this book is "not put forth in the interest of any theological system." But who, we may ask, would suspect that a book which claimed to be a scientific commentary *was* put forth in the interest of any system of theology? It goes without saying that it cannot be a commentary worthy of the name if it is put forth in the interest of any system of theology. To be put forth for that purpose would simply mean falsification of facts. Is there not, at the close of the nineteenth century, enough of the scientific spirit infused into the study of the Bible, so that a commentator need not assure his readers that his interpretation is straightforward, that it is really exposition and not imposition? Alas, if this be not true!

We are also informed in the Preface that the King James version is used as the basis of the commentary "because it is the one still more commonly read, and also because it is less presumptuous to criticise it than the other." But surely Dr. Stifler, as a New Testament teacher, feels that the King James version *ought* not to be more commonly read than the other. The fact that it is more read is a proof of the indifference and ignorance of Christian people. It seems as though teachers of the Bible in particular should take every opportunity to commend the revised version. Not to do so is, practically, to approve the King James version.

The work of Dr. Stifler is, confessedly, not a commentary in the ordinary sense of that term. It is rather a free reproduction and paraphrase of the thought of the epistle. The critical quality of the work may be indicated by the treatment of a single passage of the text, and we will take his discussion of the first passage that is characteristic of the epistle, 1: 3, 4: "Concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead." "Jesus Christ," says the author, "is declared to be pre-

éminent both on his human and on his divine side. . . . According to the flesh, looked at in his connection with the race, his origin was the very highest. He was princely, being descended from the royal family of David. According to the spirit of holiness—that is, looked at in his connection with the realm above—he was higher than all angels: he was the Son of God. . . . His resurrection powerfully asserted his sonship. The rising from the dead did not create him a Son. This very passage says he was born so.” And later, in summing up the thought of the salutation, the author says that it “asserts the incarnation.” Now, in regard to this interpretation it may be noticed (1) that the author uses such technical terms as the “divine side” of Jesus and the “incarnation,” terms which Paul nowhere uses. But these terms are quite as difficult of explanation as anything in the text; and if they are taken in the sense which they have in any particular system of theology, then it is quietly assumed that Paul held this system. It may be noticed (2) that nothing is said of the Jewish meaning of the language *Son of God*. It seems to be taken for granted that these words need no explanation. As one reads through the book, it appears that the term *Son* is understood in the metaphysical sense which it has in much of the theology of the past. But is there evidence that Paul used it in a metaphysical sense? Is there evidence that any biblical writer used it in a metaphysical sense? If there is, it might be stated; if not, it is important, both that this fact should be stated, and that the sense in which Paul really used the term should be discovered, if possible. Other points in the author’s treatment of this passage might be noticed, but these two may suffice. Critically and theologically the commentary before us may be classed with the work of Dr. Shedd.

GEORGE H. GILBERT.

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#### LITERARY NOTES.

THE Open Court Publishing Co. (Chicago) has issued a second edition of *Homilies of Science*, by Dr. Paul Carus (35 cents).

THE Fleming H. Revell Co. has issued, in one of the attractive bindings that we have learned to associate with Professor Drummond’s essays, a little book (*A Life for a Life*; 25 cents), containing three essays delivered by Professor Drummond at Northfield in 1893. The essays are informal, but stimulating and characteristically broad-minded.