

pretation of the Acts, he will nowhere else find so many hints for the modern uses which its story can serve.

SERMONS.—Montaigne tells his readers that he writes for his own pleasure, and is content "that every one should see my natural and ordinary pace as ill as it is." Dr. Maclaren, who has hitherto given to the public only selected and very highly wrought specimens of his pulpit utterances, gives us now¹ the means of testing his "ordinary pace." In this first series of "A Year's Ministry," we have twenty-six sermons which have been preached on consecutive Sundays during half a year. Dr. Maclaren's work stands this severe test thoroughly. For our part we prefer his ordinary pace. The style is more direct and forcible than in his previous volumes. The illustrations are not so carefully elaborated, but they are none the less telling on this account; and they are as plentiful, as felicitous, and as illuminating as ever. The sermons in this volume are textual, sometimes almost expository; they speak only of what is found in the verse chosen as the text. Sermons of this kind always appear limited in their range of thought; but whatever may be in this respect lacking, is in Dr. Maclaren's volume compensated for by the felicity with which religious principles and truths are applied to life as it actually is. The volume will be helpful to preachers, as well as acceptable where the hearer needs to supplement the preaching.

MARCUS DODS.

BREVIA.

Brugsch on the Religion and Mythology of the Ancient Egyptians.²—The very title of Dr. Brugsch's new book is enough to arrest the attention of all students and people who are interested in the results of Egyptian decipherment. The author has for many years been known as a constant worker in the large field of Egyptian hieroglyphics; he has published a number of texts and works which, although most of them will require careful re-editing, yet will last for a number of years to remind future students of his work. The

¹ *A Year's Ministry*. First series. By Alex. Maclaren, D.D. (London: Office of Christian Commonwealth, 1884.)

² *Religion und Mythologie der alten Ägypter*. H. Brugsch. (Leipzig: 1884.)

process of extracting from the texts of the Egyptians what they actually believed about their gods, and other points of their marvellous religion, must of course be long and difficult. The reasons are not far to seek: different periods had different forms of the Book of the Dead, different cities had different gods as their objects of worship, and in addition to this a series of changes was going on perpetually in the Egyptian mind which causes the Egyptologist of to-day the utmost difficulty to account for.

The first good account of the Egyptian religion was given by Mr. Renouf in his Hibbert Lectures. It was good because he had studied all the texts in Egyptian, because of his great knowledge of the Book of the Dead, and because he knew the religion as a whole. As might be expected, exception was taken by some to his conclusions and statements, more especially by Dr. Lieblein. The majority of Egyptologists have, however, accepted them. There is a great deal in Dr. Brugsch's book which will be useful and intelligible to experts only; the portion which will interest the general Bible reader will be the part relating to the monotheistic character of the religion, and the unity of God. The word for "God" in Egyptian is *nutar*, which means "power." The verb or adjective *nutar* means "renovation" (Renouf, Lect. iii. p. 94). The Coptic word *nouti*, formed by phonetic decay from the old hieroglyphic *nutar*, is used by the translators of the Bible to express the Hebrew אֱלֹהִים (Gen. xvii. 1), אֱלֹהֵיךָ (Gen. xxxiii. 20), אֱלֹהִים and the Greek Θεός, meaning of course the supreme God. The plural of this word is used to express *theoi*, *div*, and a similar usage is to be found in the hieroglyphics. *Nutar* then, was used by the Egyptians to express the One great God, and the plural *nutaru* indicated gods generally, *theoi*. Dr. Brugsch has quoted several passages (before cited by Mr. Renouf) in support of his view that the Egyptian religion was monotheistic. As they are interesting, we reproduce some of them from the sayings of Ptahhotep: "If thou art a wise man, bring up thy son in the love of God." "A good son is the gift of God." "Thy treasure has grown to thee through the gift of God." The following are from the sayings of Ani (Renouf, p. 101; Brugsch, p. 91): "Let not thy voice be loud in the temple of God, for such He abhors." "Forget not thy mother . . . lest she should raise her hands to God, and He should listen to her prayer. Give thyself to God, keep thyself continually for God, and let thine eyes consider the acts of God."

There is, then, no doubt that the Egyptians meant by that *nutar* or *power* used in this manner what we mean by God Almighty. Their conceptions of the Deity were as follows (Brugsch, pp. 96-99): God is One, the One who has made everything. God is a spirit, a hidden spirit, the Spirit of all spirits, the spirit of the Egyptians, the Divine spirit. God is the everlasting. He is eternal and infinite, perpetual and everlasting. No man has learnt to know Him. His name remains hidden. His name is a mystery to His children. Numerous are His names, very many are His names. No one knows their number. God is life, and man lives through Him alone. He puffs the breath of life into the nostrils.¹ God is father and mother. God produces and is not produced, He gives birth to, but is not given birth to, He creates and is not created, He is the creator of His form and the moulder of His body. The heaven rests upon His head and His feet bear the earth. God is compassionate to those who love Him. He protects the weak against the strong. God knows who recognises Him. He rewards him that serves Him, and protects him that follows Him.

It must be remembered, however, that some of these ideas are applied to other gods or powers, and it is a common thing to find the title "one god" applied to a god whose name is mentioned. This lofty conception of the unity of God of the Egyptians belongs particularly to the earliest times of their history, and there is no reason for us to wonder at the gross misconceptions of the Greeks on this matter, for when they as well as the Christians came in contact with the Egyptian religion, it had sunk to the lowest depths of absurdity and ignorance.

The next subject taken into consideration by Dr. Brugsch is the Cosmogony. He quotes a number of most interesting texts on this matter, but we should have been better pleased had he given us the texts (where they were small) at the foot of the page. As it is we must wait for the second part before we can satisfy ourselves about his translations or speak further about his conclusions. Meanwhile, all those who take an interest in the Egyptian religion as deduced from the statements of the monuments and papyri will welcome with the greatest pleasure a part of so full and interesting a book as that of Dr. Brugsch promises to be.

E.

¹ Comp. Gen. ii. 7.—וַיִּפֶחַ בְּאַפָּיו נְשִׁמַת חַיִּים—

Dr. Parker's Commentary on the Bible.—Commentaries on the whole Bible have been of late years so abundantly produced, that when Dr. Parker announced his "People's Bible,"¹ many feared that he had fallen a victim to a great ambition, and that he could not singlehandedly compete with the bands of scholars marshalled by the editorial batons of Schaff, Ellicott, and the rest. The first words of the published work dissipate such fears. "This is not a Bible Commentary in the usual sense of that term. It is a pastor's commentary upon such portions of Holy Scripture as are of obvious and immediate importance to the growth of the soul in Divine wisdom, and is, therefore, not intended to take the place of the verbal and critical commentaries which so ably represent the latest phases of Christian erudition." This accurately describes the task which Dr. Parker has imposed upon himself and for which he is exceptionally qualified. In the work of expounding Scripture he has many superiors: in the work of applying Scripture he has none. The preacher in his barren moods looks round with resentment on his shelves of commentaries and inwardly asks, What is there in one of these volumes that will fire me to the preaching point, what is there to quicken imagination or bring Scripture into contact with men as they are? This "pastor's commentary" will in great measure supply this want and fertilize barren moods. But mere borrowers must beware; the sword is the weapon of a giant, and if awkwardly swung will fall flat. The book is wholly and from the root Dr. Parker's own. Not an echo of any former commentary is to be heard in it. Genius, says John Foster, is the gift of lighting one's own fire. Dr. Parker is self-kindling. Let him select his own points, do not murmur that much is omitted, be content that he writes a commentary on life rather than on Genesis, and the book will be prized.

Dr. Parker's genius is too well understood to call for remark. When the debt to refinement has been paid by frowning on the absence of the scholar's self-suppression and on the too realistic descriptions, and on the amorphous character of Dr. Parker's work, we may give ourselves up to the enjoyment of his pithy and profound comments on men and manners. There is heather on the mountain, over which some may stumble; there are even at

¹ *The People's Bible: Discourses upon Holy Scripture*, by Joseph Parker, D.D. Vol. I. Genesis. (London: Richard Clarke, 1885.)

long intervals wet and muddy bits that need draining; but if any one seeks a wide view and a bracing air, let him come up hither. Here is nothing tawdry, nothing commonplace. Open the book where you will, you read on and on. Not only the racy, vigorous language, but the fertility of ideas and the penetrating observation of inner and outward life engage the attention. Dr. Parker looks at life in the concrete and in the individual. He knows not only human nature but men. He is therefore as fertile as life itself, and never wearies us by monotonously reproducing favourite types. Had he handled brush and palette instead of using spoken discourse, he would have been found thumb-nailing in the streets, the theatres, the political gatherings and all the resorts of men. He illustrates the principles he enforces not by figures but by instances, and in two or three firmly drawn lines gives you his idea. He makes his point and passes on, never spoiling by over-elaboration. He knows the difference between one straight, hard blow and a succession of fumbling undecided pats. A good swordsman, he is alert, rapid, and thrusts home to the hilt. We cordially wish him health to complete what promises to be a most useful undertaking.

MARCUS DODS.

Old Testament Notes: (1) Canticles ii. 3, 5; vii. 9. In the *Journal of Philology* (No. 25), Dr. Robertson Smith maintains that תפוח is the apple, not the quince; (a) because the quince has a distinct name; (b) because, according to testimony adduced by him, the true apple is known in Palestine and has the qualities referred to in Canticles. (2) Jeremiah viii. 22, etc. Dr. Field proposes for the word אֶרְקָה used here and in Jer. xxx. 17, xxxiii. 6; Isa. lviii. 8, the sense of cicatrisation or the formation of a new skin over a wound after suppuration has ceased.

EDITOR.
