

ful to a student of religions. With his other qualities we must not forget the range of his reading, which is truly remarkable. And generally his views are stated with lucidity and in a charming literary style, though sometimes, owing to the nature of the subject, they may seem ill-arranged. A very pleasing feature in his writings is the generous way in which he speaks of others. What he has said of Ewald, Kuenen, Delitzsch, and Robertson Smith

might be quoted in proof of this. In spite of all that his critics have said about him, he is one of the brightest ornaments of Old Testament study, in his combination of profound faith and reverence with the most fearless criticism. When we think of the long list of his writings, we can only hope that he may be long spared to bless us with as many fruits of his genius and unwearied industry in the future as in the past.

## At the Literary Table.

### THE BOOKS OF THE MONTH.

*(The Prices of the Books mentioned below will generally be found in the Advertisement pages.)*

#### I.

THE INTERNATIONAL CRITICAL COMMENTARY. A CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY ON DEUTERONOMY. BY THE REV. S. R. DRIVER, D.D. (*T. & T. Clark*. Post 8vo, pp. xxiv, xcv, and 434.) This is the first volume of that new enterprise in which Messrs. T. & T. Clark have gone hand in hand with the great publishing house of Scribners in America, the International Critical Commentary. As the title-page and even the binding (which is most effective) tell us, the editors of the series are Professor Driver and Dr. Plummer for this country, with Professor Briggs for America.

Turning the pages of this volume, the thing that first strikes one, and it strikes one forcibly, is the skill with which the space has been made use of. Five hundred and fifty-three pages are a fair allowance for a modern commentary, but Dr. Driver has put, without cramming or confusion, as much matter into his book as another would have got into two volumes of this size.

The next thing, though it comes after a little examination, is its extraordinary accuracy. Large type and small type, Hebrew word and scriptural quotation, page after page has been examined, and as yet not one single slip has been detected. Some men despise such accuracy as this. They call it laborious, and even wooden. But it is the possession of all our ablest scholars, and it is doubtful if a man should be called a scholar who has it not. He may be a great and uncomfortable

genius, but a scholar to work with and confidently rely upon he cannot very well be. Surely the scholar is the man who counts nothing too small for his utmost care and conscience.

But the third surprise of Dr. Driver's book is just that breadth of outlook, that freedom of flight, which is supposed to belong to the genius, and be no concern of the scholarly commentator. Dr. Driver has mastered his author's statements in detail; he has also entered into his spirit; he has caught sight of his ideal; and he has worked along with him towards its attainment, sharing his work of faith and labour of love and patience of hope. 'Wooden,' did they say? then Deuteronomy is wooden also. For the great accomplishment of this volume is that it has given the Book of Deuteronomy back to us, and we feel the same life and interest in it as they felt to whom it first came. That is what every commentator seeks to do. It is Canon Driver's 'infinite capacity for taking pains' that has given him this great success in doing it.

THE ETHICS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. BY W. S. BRUCE, M.A. (*T. & T. Clark*. Crown 8vo, pp. 292.) A manual of the Ethics of the Old Testament has been long called for, and it is a surprise to everyone that it has not appeared till now. For the subject is quite accessible. In an occasional way much has been written upon it; and the general lines are well established. Moreover, it is quite a popular study now. We

have passed out of our fright over it. We do not need now to explain away or apologise for the deed of a Jael or the words of an imprecating psalmist. We are able to take an interest in the study for its own sake, and, as things go, few studies are more fascinating.

So Mr. Bruce has come in time. And it is a pleasure to be able to say that he has come with the requisite knowledge and the right spirit. He is in closest touch with the best literature of his subject, and is ready to acknowledge the debt of suggestion, or even quotation, where it is due. But he has evidently worked at the sources for himself, with a scholar's insight into their meaning, and a keen sense of their place and proportion. He writes an easy style, and he has had the wit to gather the whole subject into one compact and convenient volume. If he had given us an index we would have found no fault with his book. No doubt, that is intentional. He means the book to be read, not merely referred to. But most of us having found it so easy to read would have been very grateful if we had found it easier to refer to afterwards.

THE MESSIAH OF THE GOSPELS. BY CHARLES AUGUSTUS BRIGGS, D.D. (*T. & T. Clark*. Post 8vo, pp. xv, 562.) As Dr. Briggs' work proceeds, one comes to realise the grandeur of its conception, and the ability with which it is wrought out. Our idea of the Messiah was a limited one. We should have considered one volume sufficient to exhaust its contents. Dr. Briggs has shown us that it is a legitimate term, and in many important aspects the best term, under which to gather the whole religious life of Judaism and Christianity. There is no straining here, and there is no irrelevance. The one great theme is ever the centre, and all the rest is grouped naturally around it.

But this is the richest volume of the three yet issued. Perhaps the soil was more virgin. The Messiah of the Prophets we knew a little of; we also knew a little of the Messiah of the gospel times. But then we have been content to let the title drop, and in dealing with apostolic teaching believed that we had passed into other conceptions. Thus the Messiah of the apostles is new. And it is wonderfully rich in exegetical and theological productiveness. Take especially Dr. Briggs' study of the Messiah of the Apocalypse. The know-

ledge of the literature is most extensive, and yet the treatment is quite original. They who know this book best will learn from Dr. Briggs; and they who know it but little will be able to add a new field of discovery to their mental possessions.

LEXICON SYRIACUM. AUCTORE CAROLO BROCKELMANN. PREFATUS EST TH. NÖLDEKE. (Edinburgh: *T. & T. Clark*. Berlin: *Reuther & Reichard*. Crown 4to, pp. viii, 510.) The issue of Brockelmann's Syriac Lexicon in parts is now ended, and the publishers have sent it forth in one handsome volume. Indeed, it is the finest volume in matter of type and paper and binding that has come into our hands for some time. It is probably as charming a lexicon to handle as ever was issued. And it will meet a long and keenly-felt want. There are so many Syriac students now, for undoubtedly in this direction at least knowledge has been increasing from more to more, and yet so little has been done of a truly scientific kind to satisfy and help them forward, that one rejoices greatly over the issue of this scholarly book. It will be to all students of Syriac what Liddell and Scott is to all students of Greek, and what Brown and Driver will soon become to all our students of Hebrew.

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS BY THE REV. J. MORGAN GIBBON. (*Clarke*. Fcap. 8vo, pp. 148.) Archdeacon Watkins of Durham is so safe and sound a theologian that men rubbed their eyes, and looked again, when they read in his Bampton Lectures that the books of the Bible were useless until each generation had translated them into its own language. It was a very wise thing to say, for all our astonishment. And when men like Mr. Gibbon arise, making so hard a book as the Epistle to the Galatians applicable to the life of to-day, making it ours as if it had been written for us, how can we sufficiently thank them? For there are just two kinds of expositors who ought to be permitted to touch the Bible—those who give it to us as nearly as possible as it was first written, and those who give it to us as nearly as possible as we can now use it. The one needs scholarship and the historical imagination, the other needs faith in God as a God of the valleys as well as of the hills, and some residence in the valleys with Him. Dr. Driver's *Deuteronomy*, one of the Books of the Month, may be

named as an eminent example of the work which the one kind of expositor can do. Mr. Gibbon's *Galatians* is a genuine example of the other.

**SEVEN WORDS OF LOVE.** BY THE REV. J. ALFRED DAVIES, B.A., B.D. (*Dickinson*. Crown 8vo, pp. 204.) The Seven Words of Love were uttered on the cross. We have had many courses of sermons on them ere now, but we are ready for many more. It is a subject, indeed, which every preacher should preach upon, and publish his sermons, if he ever intends to publish sermons at all. For on such a subject it is scarcely possible to fail, or even to continue commonplace. But besides the seven sermons on the Seven Words, Mr. Davies has published thirteen sermons on other subjects, and these sermons are so strikingly straightforward and serious that their author abundantly proves himself independent of the beauty of his text, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed even of his commonest works.

**THE ROLL-CALL OF FAITH.** BY DUNCAN CAMPBELL, B.D. (Edinburgh: *Douglas*. Crown 8vo, pp. xi, 151.) There are great texts and small texts, but no text is so small but you can make a great sermon out of it. Mr. Campbell is fond of the small texts, though he does not despise the great ones. He makes an effective sermon out of so simple a statement as this: 'And Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age.' 'Some one once said to Robert Browning that only in Italy was there any romance left. Browning, though he knew and loved Italy well, made quiet answer, "Ah well, I should like to include poor Camberwell."' And Mr. Campbell quotes the saying with the joy of appropriation, for he also loves to discover poetry in the common places—poetry and the need of salvation.

**REMINISCENCES OF ANDREW A. BONAR, D.D.** EDITED BY HIS DAUGHTER, MARJORY BONAR. (*Hodder & Stoughton*. Crown 8vo, pp. xx, 357.) 'The congregation that gathered round Dr. Bonar in Finnieston Church was attracted, not by the eloquence of his preaching, but by its simplicity, and the fresh light the preacher threw upon the Scriptures, making them appear to many like a new book.' And that is just what will gather a still larger congregation around him for many a day, as by this book he

being dead yet speaketh. It is a reflection of that which made his pulpit so attractive. It is full of fresh light upon the Scriptures. And then the man himself is here just as he was in the pulpit. It is the fresh light from his own lit-up and saintly countenance that we find, whether in the recollections of his friends, or in his own letters and sermons. The book is easy and delightful reading if you have no conscience to prick you; but if you have, it is, for a preacher at least, one of the hardest books that you ever tried. 'Coming out of church one Sabbath, Miss Bonar met an old woman weeping, and in great distress of mind, "Many of the sermons," she said, "had grippit her before, but none had grippit her so sair as this."' That is the way with this book. Other books have grippit us before, but none so sair as this.

**LIFE AND LETTERS OF JOHN CAIRNS, D.D., LL.D.** BY ALEXANDER R. MACEWEN, D.D. (*Hodder & Stoughton*. 8vo, pp. xv, 799.) If a biography is worth writing, it is worth writing well and fully. Indeed, it is only the full biography that is at all profitable or even possible to read. Think of those that have taken their place amongst us as literature—Johnson's, Arnold's, Kingsley's, Carlyle's, and all the rest—they are large books every one of them. While the few exceptions of the small books that have taken any hold are those that had only a fragment of a tale to tell, the story of some life cut off at the beginning.

So we rejoice that Dr. MacEwen has done his great subject justice in this great book. Surely if any man could claim a full biography, it was this man, whose life was so full of good works and whose soul was so full of nobleness. It will be a revelation to many, and of many things. The critics have cried out with one voice of amazement when they read that Dr. Cairns had been offered and had refused the Principalship of Edinburgh University. They rate Principalships too high, and Dr. Cairns too low. Why should he not refuse the Principalship of a University for the chance of preaching the glorious gospel of the blessed God? Well sure are we that St. Paul would not have once looked at it. And of the men of the last generation, so far as we have got access to their soul's aspirations, no one seems to have stood between Dr. Cairns and St. Paul. Yes, so great a man as that, and you never even

heard his name, or, at most, have the dimmest recollection of a book by a man of that name called *Unbelief in the Eighteenth Century!*

It is quite true that St. Paul's biography is shorter than this. But consider how much has had to be written by way of commentary on it before we could get the good that it contains. If this book is read through with prayer and thanksgiving, it will make its own impression, and no notes or comments will ever be required upon it. But it must be read through. In snatches and snippets you will make nothing of the book any more than of the man, and this is the best praise that Dr. MacEwen could desire.

THE EXPOSITOR'S BIBLE. THE SONG OF SOLOMON AND THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH. BY WALTER F. ADENEY, M.A. (*Hodder & Stoughton*. Crown 8vo, pp. viii, 346.) This is probably the first time in their history that the Song of Solomon and the Lamentations of Jeremiah have been expounded together. What concord they have with one another Professor Adeney does not attempt to tell us. No doubt we are commanded to rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep; but we had not understood it of one and the same moment, or within the limits of a single book. But it does not matter, and the reason, if not scientific, is at least not far to seek. Professor Adeney has done his work well. At least he has done the Lamentations well. He has not given space to the Song of Solomon. No doubt it was wise to spend his space upon the one that needed it most. But the Song is very attractive to us at present; many interesting things have been written upon it, and we should have welcomed a clear statement of where we stand, and what we are safe to find in it. Still it is the Lamentations of Jeremiah that have been most neglected. And Professor Adeney has made his volume valuable and most acceptable by the care and scholarship he has spent upon its exposition.

CONCERNING HOME MISSIONS. BY THE REV. P. BARCLAY, M.A. (Edinburgh: *Hunter*. Small 4to, pp. 124.) *Concerning Home Missions and Some Kindred Topics* is the complete title of Mr. Barclay's booklet. But he must intend to tell us about Home Missions in the next volume; this is all about the other topics. It is as entertaining

as a dictionary, and with just the same fault, that it is difficult to read consecutively.

THE AGE AND AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH. BY THE REV. WILLIAM SPIERS, M.A., F.G.S., F.R.M.S. (*Kelly*. Fcap. 8vo, pp. xviii, 395.) If Mr. Spiers had been an Old Testament scholar the 'general' reader, for whom he writes, would have accepted his conclusions more heartily. He is a scholar; but it is physical science, not the Old Testament, that is his field. And perhaps the thing that will strike the general reader as strangest in his book is the marvellous lack of Old Testament scholarship supporting him. 'The mass of men,' as he truly says, are with him, and they are 'confident in the issues of the conflict.' But when he goes on to rejoice that 'happily, we may be sure that scholars like Hengstenberg, Havernick (*sic*), Baumgarten, Tholuck, Keil, Reginald Stuart Poole, Sayce, Roberts, Westcott, and Ellicott, to mention only a few, do not bear hardly a comparison with declared rationalists like Kuenen, extreme theorists like Wellhausen, immature writers such as Robertson Smith,—cut down ere he reached his prime,—or copyists like Cheyne and Driver,'—then the 'general' reader wonders, not so much at the descriptions of Robertson Smith and the rest, as at the names Mr. Spiers mentions on the other side. For Hengstenberg, Hävernicks, Baumgarten, Tholuck, and Keil are all of the last generation; Reginald Stuart Poole and Sayce are archaeologists; Roberts (if it is the St. Andrews professor, and not a slip for Robertson) has never even touched the subject; while Westcott and Ellicott are New Testament scholars.

But Mr. Spiers' book is better than that. It is, indeed, a clever book, the work of an able man, though not his best work.

RELIGIOUS DOUBT. BY THE REV. JOHN W. DIGGLE, M.A. (*Longmans*. Crown 8vo, pp. 371.) It was said by a scholar who died a few days ago, and who was driven into revolt at the beginning of his career by a narrow interpretation of the ways of God to man, that if he had had to begin his career to-day instead of fifty years ago, things would have been very different with him. It is quite true. No doubt there always will be offences, and we learn to remove them only after God's 'little ones' have stumbled and fallen. But this

offence, at least, has been taken out of the way. 'I have sought,' says Canon Diggle, 'to persuade believers to treat Religious Doubt with large-mindedness and in a Christian temper.' And believers are actually ready to be persuaded. What they are to do now with the text 'He that believeth not is condemned already,' Canon Diggle does not say. No doubt they will be persuaded to take it along with its large-hearted context. And so this new 'Short Way with Infidels' is much more hopeful than the old one. Canon Diggle has found it actually quite successful. Read his book. It may drive some infidelity out of your own heart, and especially if there is unbelief in the existence of 'honest doubt.' His great method with the exultant unbeliever is to show him how much harder it is to believe his own unbelief than to embrace the Christian faith.

THE FINAL PASSOVER. BY THE REV. R. M. BENSON, M.A. (*Longmans*. Fcap. 8vo, pp. xxv, 550.) It is held by some expositors that when St. John said the world could not contain the books that would be written if everything which Jesus did had been recorded, he had all the commentaries that would be written upon these things in his mind, and included them in his statement. Well, here are six thick volumes all written by one man, and all on the limited period of the Passion. Who knows what might have been?

But the wonder is not that so much can be written, but that it can all be read so easily. This is no doubt the volume of deepest interest. For though it is the last in order of production, it is the third in order of event, and covers the final discourse and great high-priestly prayer. It is a subject of inexhaustible wealth and interest. And Mr. Benson's method is at once so simple and so reverent that all will be profited and none will be offended.

A LENT IN LONDON. (*Longmans*. Crown 8vo, pp. x, 239.) Again the London Branch of the Christian Social Union has organised a series of Sermons on Social Subjects, and again the sermons have been issued to a wider audience. Let the effort grow from more to more. It is on the right lines, and there is much hope in it. There is utmost variety in the volume. But 'in face of the intricacy and the complication of the vast social problem which Christianity is called upon to handle,' many men must express themselves, and they must have freedom, as here, to do it in their own way. Some of us have not yet discovered that Christianity has this problem to handle. Persistent preaching will help us to realise it. Some of us doubt if Christianity is capable of handling it successfully. Here are three-and-twenty preachers who all tell us that Christianity is just the living Christ, and *He* is able to do it exceeding abundantly.

## The Women of the 'Divina Commedia.'

BY ELEANOR F. JOURDAIN.

### I.

THERE is a marked difference in this poem between Dante's portraiture of men and women. The men were nearly always broadly touched, strikingly individual, whether in Hell, Purgatory, or Paradise.<sup>1</sup> We are not indeed surprised to find the shades in Purgatory human in their thoughts and actions, mixed of good and evil like ourselves; for, of the three kingdoms, that of Purgatory is

<sup>1</sup> So much so that it is difficult to remember sometimes that these shades differ in any respect from living men, and Dante is obliged to remind us continually that the words which we hear, the signs of human passion that we see are illusive, and that the spirit is impalpable to the touch.

most nearly akin to our present world. But in Hell, too, the sinners are for the most part still human, and we often lose the sense of their sin in compassion for their misery. Even in Paradise the saints, though purged of sin, retain their individual characteristics.

But Dante's women<sup>2</sup> are in all three kingdoms alike tender and gentle. Take Francesca in the Hell of the carnal sinners. She suffers, but her suffering arouses a feeling of deep pity even in Dante's breast; we feel as we read her beautiful apostrophe to Love, that her error lay in weakness

<sup>2</sup> The portraits of women are very rare compared with those of men.