

Recent Literature on the Writings of St. John.

SUPPLEMENT.

Note.—The first five volumes have been published since the survey of last month was printed. Mr. Gibbon's volume might have been included in that survey.

1. *The Expositor's Bible. The Gospel of St. John.* By MARCUS DODS, D.D., Professor of Exegetical Theology, New College, Edinburgh. In two volumes, Vol I. London: Hodder & Stoughton. Cr. 8vo, pp. xvi, 388. 1891, 7s. 6d.
2. *The Biblical Illustrator.* By Rev. JOSEPH S. EXELL, M.A. *St. John*, Vol. II. London: James Nisbet & Co. 8vo, pp. 687. 1891, 7s. 6d.
3. *The Smaller Cambridge Bible for Schools. The Gospel according to St. John, with Map, Introduction, and Notes.* By the Rev. A. PLUMMER, M.A., Master of University College, Durham. Cambridge: At the University Press. Small 8vo, pp. 160. 1891, 1s.
4. *The General Epistles of SS. James, Peter, John, and Jude, with Notes, critical and practical.* By the Rev. M. F. SADLER, Prebendary of Wells. London: George Bell & Sons. Cr. 8vo, pp. xl, 305. 1891, 6s.
5. *First Epistle General of St. John: Notes of Lectures to serve as a Popular Commentary.* By the Rev. CHARLES WATSON, D.D., Largs. Glasgow: James Maclehose & Sons. Cr. 8vo, pp. 534. 1891, 7s. 6d.
6. *Eternal Life: Notes of Expository Sermons on the Epistles of St. John.* Preached at Stamford Hill Congregational Church, 1889-1890. By Rev. J. M. GIBBON. London: R. D. Dickinson. Cr. 8vo, pp. 203. 1890.

The editor of the Expositor's Bible has perceptibly raised the rank of the expository discourse, and this volume by Professor Dods will maintain it at its highest. It does not demand exhaustive analysis. This is the work for which Dr. Dods is prepared, and he always gives himself to it.

This volume of the *Biblical Illustrator* carries us from chapter viii. to chapter xv. of St. John's Gospel, so that there still remains one volume. When it appears, we shall have the biggest quarry and the best for this gospel that modern times have produced.

The Smaller Cambridge Bible for Schools might have been called the Pocket Commentary for all. It is "a box where sweets compacted lie." And

not schools only but many private persons who have long since left the forms and the standards will find these little books instructive. Dr. Plummer's *St. John* is a miracle of judicious compression.

Prebendary Sadler has also the gift of compression (though he does not require to exercise it here so rigidly as Dr. Plummer), and he is able to furnish within this small volume a sufficiently full exposition of the whole of the Epistles of SS. James, Peter, John, and Jude, together with a workmanlike introduction to each of them. His purpose is practical, and the application is never lost sight of; but it is not often, if ever, allowed to draw the exposition after it. The writer has his own standpoint of course, which tells here and there. The critical notes are brief, but there is a candid and instructive note of considerable length on the three witnesses (1 John v. 8). When this volume is followed by the Apocalypse, which we hope speedily to see, Mr. Sadler will have furnished a complete Commentary on the New Testament, and erected an enduring monument to his own industry and spiritual ability.

In the expository discourse two things have to be considered—the exposition and the discourse. The former may be perfectly correct while the latter is altogether commonplace; the latter may be highly eloquent while the former is utterly worthless. Forty years ago, Dr. Watson tells us, these discourses were first delivered, and since then they have been twice re-written and preached. We therefore look forward to find that the exposition will be worthy, whatever the discourse may be. And so it is. Dr. Watson has, with most unusual self-discipline, confined himself to the words and thoughts not merely of the apostle but of the epistle. "There is much in the First Epistle of St. John which no man, apart from apostolic authority, could venture to say, and much left out of it which an apostle might have been expected to enforce. In writing upon it, therefore, the limits of this teaching must be strictly observed, and nothing given more or less than that which seems to be the meaning and force of the words of St. John." Such an aim, strenuously kept in view, almost marks a new departure in exposition. It deserves the highest commendation. But, further, as to the discourses. Is it unfair to wish that we had seen the first writing or heard the first delivery of them? The language here is chaste and forcible, the arrows are carefully polished, but we miss the sudden home-thrust that often finds its mark most surely and carries the deepest conviction.

Mr. Gibbon has not described his work either as a commentary or as an exposition, for it is neither. "Notes of Expositions" is the correct title. Most men would have counted the discourses themselves good enough to print in full, but this is better than the full discourse. They are not disjointed reflections however, sentences with their heads

removed or their tails cut off. Nor are they skeleton sermons, all head and tail together. The short sections into which the work is divided may be recommended as admirable for family reading, for you have the Word itself and the exposition with it, and all most readable and instructive.

The Great Text Commentary.

THE GREAT TEXTS OF FIRST CORINTHIANS.

I COR. XIV. 20.

"Brethren, be not children in mind: howbeit in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men" (R.V.).

EXPOSITION.

"*Brethren.*" This address is fitted to bring them back to the feeling of Christian dignity which had been singularly weakened in them.—*Godet.*

There is a tone of gentleness in the address as well as of censure.—*Ellicott.*

"*Be not children.*"—*Become not* (*γίνεσθε*), not so harsh as *be not*. They were childish; but he only urges them not to *become* such.—*Edwards.*

They were becoming childish, inasmuch as, through their increasing craving after glossolalia, they lacked more and more the power of distinguishing and judging between the useful and the useless.—*Meyer.*

"*Babes.*" There are three grades spoken of in the original—infants, children, full-grown men. Their conduct in exalting these "tongues" is a proof that they are yet children in knowledge; they ought to be full-grown. The only thing in which they ought to be children is evil, and in that they cannot be too young, too inexperienced; they should be merely infants.—*Shore.*

"*Men.*" Literally *perfect*, i.e. of ripe age. Cf. I Cor. ii. 6, Phil. iii. 15, Heb. v. 14.—*Lias.*

METHODS OF TREATMENT.

I.

THE MANLINESS OF THE GOSPEL.

By the Very Rev. C. J. Vaughan, D.D.,
Dean of Llandaff.

St. Paul is speaking of divine gifts, and yet he says that there may be a childishness in the use of them. It is not enough to be able to plead that

the thing for which you are fighting is true. The gift of tongues was a real and a supernatural sign. St. Paul knew and felt it to be so; yet he counts it no irreverence to put it in its place. He does not consider either himself or his readers precluded from estimating, from comparing, or from controlling it. He boldly declares even spiritual influences, even divine operations, to be subordinate, in the person acted upon, to considerations of propriety, of expediency, of common sense. He assumes that the Holy Spirit of God is working, and yet he says that these inspirations themselves are subject to the man inspired with them. The influence of God Himself, even in a miraculous form, is not a compulsion—it is a suggestion; and God expects that His superadded gift, of tongues or of prophecy, shall be brought to the bar of His original gift to the same person, of conscience and judgment, of reason and will.

There are two classes of subjects upon the treatment of which St. Paul throws a guiding and comforting light in the weighty maxim before us—*Doctrine and Duty.*

1. Revelation is above reason, since God would not reveal what intellect could discover. But only when the divine origin of a revelation is attested (as alone it can be) by evidences of its being worthy of the divine Author in all these features of holiness, wisdom, power, and love, which together form, to our instinct, the very idea and definition of God, only then does it speak on each point which it touches with authority. Again, revelation passes through human hands in its transmission. The correctness of that transmission is, in each particular, a question for the understanding. Then there remains the weightiest matter of all, which is the interpretation of doctrine by the comparison of Scripture with Scripture. Many and varying views may be taken of a text, of the genuineness of which there is no doubt; and though we all feel that only the Spirit, given in answer to prayer, can feed the soul out of it, or even satisfy the devout mind as to its interpretation; yet instrumentally, even here, that mind must be employed, if satisfaction, if edification is to come to the student.