

## At the Literary Table.

### THE BOOKS OF THE MONTH.

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

#### THE ARGUMENT FOR CHRISTIANITY.

By GEORGE C. LORIMER, D.D. (*Baptist Tract & Book Society*. Crown 8vo, pp. 480.) There is a defect which, once one begins to notice it, one finds surprisingly common in books of Apologetic. While they all aim at a defence of Christianity, they forget to say what Christianity is. The omission would be of no account, it would even be a wise economy of space, if we were agreed upon the definition. But that is just what we are not, and it is the source of nearly all our troubles.

Dr. Lorimer has boldly called his book *The Argument for Christianity*, and he has the sense to see that he must first tell us what he believes Christianity to be. He tells us this in a most interesting and amusing way, running over a list of the definitions of Christianity which he will have nothing to do with—Kant's, Schelling's, Fichte's, Hegel's, Matthew Arnold's, and the rest—and proving up to the hilt how very necessary it is that we should know what is the Christianity that is about to be argued for.

And when he has told us what Christianity is, and we have found that it is really worth defending, he arranges his arguments in a new, impressive order, illustrating every argument from a surprisingly extensive range of reading (which he owes to his wife, however, he tells us), and we are moved both to admiration of his skill and to belief in the power and permanence of the Christian Faith.

#### THE MINISTRY OF THE SPIRIT.

By A. J. GORDON, D.D. (*Baptist Tract & Book Society*. Crown 8vo, pp. xviii, 225.) We have waited long for the right handbook on the Bible doctrine of the Spirit, but we do think Dr. Gordon has given it us at last. It is his final gift to the world; it is his best gift; one even thinks it is the best thing in a convenient size on this subject we have yet received. It is very full, though quite moderate in size; it is also very clear and scriptural. There are some views we still call 'new,' which are here expressed with great emphasis, the emphasis of personal conviction, and of personal experience, such as the so-called

'Keswick' doctrine of the reception of the Spirit and Sanctification by Faith. But even if we must let such views mellow a little before we take them for our Christian nature's daily food, there is abundance here that is true and most convincingly expressed.

#### THE MORAL CONFLICT OF HUMANITY.

By A. C. KENDRICK, LL.D. (*Baptist Tract & Book Society*. Crown 8vo, pp. 270.) 'The Moral Conflict of Humanity' will be found described first in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and then in the first of a number of expository articles which Dr. Kendrick has written and his publishers have gathered into this volume. Dr. Kendrick seems to have no responsibility for the republication of the articles in book form, and his publishers expressly decline responsibility for the articles themselves. Both may take courage. The articles are perfectly safe and sound; the book is readable and welcome. Several of the same old baffling texts are here—'Accursed from Christ,' 'Baptized for the Dead,' 'Preaching to the Spirits in Prison.' Dr. Kendrick has no dream or vision of the night to communicate respecting them. But he has a wholesome belief in their credibility and common sense, and he has actually helped us to see that if some of the earliest and justly esteemed expositors had not gone wrong on these texts, and especially if our creeds had not stereotyped the error, we should have settled their meaning some time ago. 'Accursed from Christ,' for example. As if anyone could believe to-day that St. Paul could ever in sober earnest have wished such a wish, or prayed such a prayer!

#### THE PARCHMENTS OF THE FAITH.

By THE REV. GEORGE E. MERRILL. (*Baptist Tract & Book Society*. Crown 8vo, pp. 288.) If Dr. Schaff's *Companion to the Greek New Testament and the English Version* is out of print, as we believe, this book should take its place. It has the advantage of having Schaff to work upon, and it has other advantages besides that; especially a series of illustrations, reproductions of MSS. and

the like, done in the accurate artistic manner of the Americans. The book has a wider range, but of course much less detail, than Scrivener's *Introduction*. It takes in many subjects of interest which do not come into Scrivener's horizon. And as its manner is more popular, there is without question room for it and a welcome. One who reads this volume is nearly fit to understand what is meant by inspiration; one who does not know the things that are here does not know what inspiration means.

SCHOOL AND HOME LIBRARY. WASHINGTON IRVING'S CONQUEST OF GRANADA (2 vols.), AND CAPTAIN MARYAT'S SETTLERS IN CANADA. (*Blackie*. Crown 8vo.) Here is the fiction of the kind which is said to be highest fact. Which book has most fiction in it, which most fact it is hard to say. Both are classical. And oh for the touch of the fairy's vanished hand to make us young again!

A CONCORDANCE TO THE SEPTUAGINT. BY EDWIN HATCH and HENRY A. REDPATH. (*Clarendon Press*. 4to, Part IV., pp. 697-936.) Two more parts and Mr. Redpath's great work will be finished. Surely the University of Oxford will remember him for good. For no work of more true scholarship has ever son of Oxford undertaken and done. It is a delight to every scholar and every lover of a true book. Again and again we have weighed its accuracy and not once yet have we found it wanting. It will soon be seen that no student, either of the Old Testament or of the New, can do without it. Let everyone, then, who is, and everyone who hopes to be, a student, remember this, that it will never be bought so cheap as it may be bought now.

SOURCES OF NEW TESTAMENT GREEK. BY THE REV. H. A. A. KENNEDY, M.A., B.Sc. (*T. & T. Clark*. Crown 8vo, pp. x, 172.) Since Dr. Hatch's *Essays in Biblical Greek* we can recall nothing so attractive in its line as this little book of Dr. Kennedy's. It is not merely that it is an attractive subject and most attractively presented, it is found to be so immediately useful and actual a contribution to our knowledge of the New Testament language, and so welcome an aid toward the

correct interpretation of many a New Testament text and doctrine. Take a single random instance. Chapter viii. traces the influence of the Septuagint on the theological and religious terms of the New Testament. One of the examples that are given is—

κρίσις

I. In Classical Lit. = (1) judgment, in various senses; (2) trial; (3) condemnation; (4) quarrel; (5) event or issue.

II. In LXX. κρίσις is used in the vast majority of cases to translate Hebrew דָּשָׁן, meaning (1) judgment, sentence; (2) that which is according to law, right. And so we find it joined with δικαιοσύνη (often), ἔλεος (Ps. c. 1), ἀλήθεια (Ps. cx. 6), ἐλεημοσύνη. God is said ἀγαπᾶν κρίσιν. In one place it translates the Hebrew word for righteousness.

III. In the New Testament there is a class of passages where this sense must be adopted. These are in Matt. and Luke, e.g., Luke xi. 42: καὶ παρέρχεσθε τὴν κρίσιν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ θεοῦ; Matt. xxiii. 23, τὰ βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου τὴν κρίσιν καὶ τὸ ἔλεος καὶ τὴν πίστιν. Here evidently the word denotes a moral quality of God, namely, justice.

GAIN OR LOSS? BY THE REV. BERNARD J. SNELL, M.A., B.Sc. (*James Clarke & Co.* Fcap. 8vo, pp. vi, 158.) Under this questionable (?) title Mr. Snell has published five lectures, which he lately delivered at Brixton Independent Church. Their topic is 'Recent Biblical Criticism,' and their tone is fearlessly optimistic. Well, it is a wonderful thing that after all that has been said about the Bible, after all the nibbling, sniggering criticism of its foes and the magnanimous admissions of its friends, there is abundance left for us still to stand upon. Surely, if it is not the word of God, it is very like it, for of it also we may say it liveth and abideth for ever. Let us therefore give no one the impression that we are afraid to have it searched and seen. Mr. Snell is frank enough. Too frank, his readers will sometimes say. But that is the side to fall upon. Surely it is better that we should approach the Burning Bush with our shoes still on our feet, than that we should superstitiously draw a wide circle around it and never hear the voice that speaks out of its midst.

THE EXPOSITOR'S BIBLE. THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL. BY THE REV. JOHN SKINNER, M.A., D.D. (*Hodder & Stoughton*. Crown 8vo, pp. xi, 499.) Such an adjective as 'modern' applied to a volume of exposition is manifestly objectionable from its lack of colour. But it would require many adjectives and some long sentences to furnish its contents; and therefore it may stand as a sufficient description of what is unquestionably a reality, well marked and easily recognised. Of modern exposition, then, Dr. Skinner's *Ezekiel* is a fine example. It is thoroughly modern. You have seen Dr. Guthrie's *The Gospel in Ezekiel?* This differs as much from that as an express train differs from a caravan of camels. Not that Dr. Skinner reaches his journey's end so much sooner. As for that, Dr. Guthrie is the express train and Dr. Skinner the caravan. For they both aim at one destination, the revelation of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But while Dr. Guthrie heard Ezekiel deliver a direct evangelical homily on the doctrine of substitution, leaping the centuries between Chebar and Calvary with more than express agility, Dr. Skinner takes time to walk about Tel-Abib and go round about it. If we must reach Calvary, as indeed we must, let us reach it, says Professor Skinner, after the discipline of the journey has left its mark upon us, and we crave for the rest that remaineth. And surely it is better, and the shortest way in the end. To the older expositor there were not 'apostles and prophets,' for all were apostles, and the Old Testament was sore bestead to vindicate its continued existence. In Professor Skinner it is alive again from the dead, for Ezekiel is still the prophet Ezekiel and not the apostle John.

Within the long series of *The Expositor's Bible* there are more 'popular' works than this. There is nothing, however, more honest or more educative.

THE SCEPTICS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. BY E. J. DILLON. (*Isbister*. 8vo, pp. xvi, 280.) The sceptics of the Old Testament are Job, Koheleth, and Agur. The title is of doubtful application. To Job at least—whether hero or author—it is a manifest misapplication. For you have no right to call that scepticism which dissents from a rigidly narrow interpretation of God's ways, and seeks a larger vindication. Surely 'the *Heretics* in the Old Testament' would have been nearer the mark. But that title was felt perhaps

to be of too large an application, for manifestly almost all the prophets were heretics to the men of their day, and some of them suffered the heretic's doom.

But let the title go. Dr. Dillon, who is described as 'late Professor of Comparative Philology and Ancient Armenian at the Imperial University of Kharkoff,' has here offered us a most lively and piquant account of the things that were felt and said by certain 'advanced thinkers' among the Israelites. It is manifest that he is in pretty close touch with these advanced thinkers himself. Perhaps he even makes them more terrible than they were, and say more terrible things than they really did say. For one of the points of the book is that neither Job nor Koheleth nor Agur is allowed to speak to us according to the English versions. Their text is much amended and otherwise manœuvred. We all admit that this is necessary here and there, since it is almost certain that the men spoke intelligence, and the writers wrote it down. But none of us will admit that it was necessary to this extent. For many of the amended passages were intelligible enough already, and are less intelligible now. Nevertheless the book is a spirited survey of a most interesting period and certain most interesting personalities in Israel's history. It stimulates thought, and even when it rouses opposition, as it very often does, there is no sorrow added therewith. For Dr. Dillon is himself no sceptic with soft sneer, but an honest heretic, with warmth around his steps, and godly fear in his eye.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF BELIEF. BY THE RIGHT HON. ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR. (*Longmans*. 8vo, pp. viii, 356.) So many things, wise and otherwise, have been said about Mr. Balfour's book in the dailies and the weeklies that a formal notice is unnecessary. That it is a clever book is unquestionable—marvellously clever and adroit; but that it is convincing is not so manifest. It is not convincing. It is too alert to snatch an opportunity to be convincing. This is a trained fencer whose skill extorts your applause at every pass. But when you have a moment's space to think, you find that the very brilliance has made you doubt the fencer's seriousness, and wonder if he really wants final victory or only the glory of the moment. No doubt that is the misfortune of cleverness, which never has its own reward in this life. But ought not Mr. Balfour to have remem-

bered that, and been less clever, that he might be more convincing?

But with all its cleverness it is far too great a book to pass in a paragraph. We must get back to it and consider it in another way.

**SERMON SKETCHES.** BY THE REV. W. H. HUTCHINGS, M.A. (*Longmans*. Crown 8vo, pp. xxii, 324.) Canon Hutchings has here republished the short sermons which he contributed last year to *The Thinker*. They are good, and it is most difficult to make this kind of thing good. For a sermon has both words and thoughts, but a sermon sketch has generally to give up either the one or the other. Now thoughts without words are unreadable, while words without thoughts are not worth reading. It demands gifts and experience to retain both and be only a sketch. And Canon Hutchings seems to have received the gifts and acquired the necessary experience.

**THE ORIGIN OF THE CANON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.** BY DR. G. WILDEBOER. (*Luzac*. 8vo, pp. xii, 182.) The first thing to notice in this book is the translation. This is how a book ought to be translated. For it is edited as well as translated. That is to say, the author who wrote not merely in his own tongue, but for his own people, is made to speak, first of all, idiomatic English, which is the translator's work, and next for the English people, which is the editor's work. His references and allusions are put into a shape which Englishmen can understand and verify; his native literature is supplemented with important English works; and altogether his book is offered to us as nearly as possible as if he had written it directly in our behoof. Yet there is no confusion made between author and editor, for the new matter, whether in the text or the notes, is carefully enclosed in brackets.

Who is the translator? A capable linguist and critic, the Rev. B. W. Bacon, D.D. And the editor? A yet better known Old Testament scholar, Professor Moore of Andover.

Now, as for Dr. Wildeboer and his book, less need be said than may be supposed; for it has already attained a second edition and a glad acceptance in his own land, and been translated into German. Let this suffice, that it is a student's book, written for students. It must be used, not read merely. Like the Old Testament Scriptures

themselves, it is profitable for instruction. It does not supersede Buhl, it scarce touches Ryle, but it is itself, independent, painstaking, far-seeing.

**THE CANON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.** BY HERBERT EDWARD RYLE, D.D. (*Macmillan*. Crown 8vo, 2nd edition, pp. xxiii, 316.) Simultaneously with the issue of the first edition of Professor Ryle's *Canon*, there appeared almost to a day the translation of Buhl's *Canon and Text of the Old Testament* (T. & T. Clark), and again, simultaneously with the issue of Dr. Ryle's second edition, there appears almost to a day the translation of the other great German work on the subject, Wildeboer's *Canon of the Old Testament* (Luzac). These are the books on this subject worth consulting, and there is room for all three. Dr. Ryle has proved that there is room for even a second edition of one of them, and that within three years of the issue of the first. We do not hear of Buhl having reached that honour yet, though it is an extremely able work, well worthy of the successor of Franz Delitzsch. For Dr. Ryle has this advantage, that he not only writes as an Englishman for Englishmen, but that he writes a healthy vigorous English style.

The text of the new edition is substantially unaltered. And yet Dr. Ryle gives manifestation that he has read the things which have been written about his first edition. But the text stands because his critics would either have none of Dr. Ryle or have him all in all.

The text stands, but one of the excursus has been rewritten, and an Appendix has been added on the Samaritan Pentateuch, most timely and most considerate.

**POEMS.** BY CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI. (*Macmillan*. Crown 8vo, pp. xiv, 450.) Till we get a complete edition of Miss Rossetti's poems (which may Messrs. Macmillan be led to give us in their delightful green-backed series), we must rejoice in this volume as the next best. It is beautifully printed, and it is worth printing beautifully. The earlier and more human Christina Rossetti is here—how is it they put it?—

'Not too bright and good  
For human nature's daily food.'

And this would be the volume to choose for one who has yet to make her acquaintance.

THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE. BY THE REV. JOHN MACNEIL, B.A. (*Marshall Brothers*. Crown 8vo, pp. 137.) There is another evangelist of this name, but with a different spelling, and the degree of M.A., who is fully as well known amongst us as is this Australian evangelist, who has nevertheless been much blessed in his work. This book would not have been written by the other Rev. John McNeill—perhaps could not. For it emphasises, and indeed is wholly occupied with, a subject which he rarely handles apart. It is the blessing of the Spirit as a separate additional gift, a gift given after and apart from the new birth, a gift that may be given to a believer and may not, but which will not be denied to any believer in Christ who asks it in faith: a gift, moreover, which, when given, fits the believer for God's work as he cannot be fitted without it. In short, this book is the clearest and best statement you are likely to find of the one essential 'blessing' men and women go to Keswick for, and having found it, call their friends and neighbours together when they return home to rejoice with them. It may be found away from Keswick no doubt. Plainly it may be found in the Antipodes. The book contains many things that are worth knowing, and they are mostly very well expressed.

LIFE AND TIMES OF WILLIAM LAUD. BY C. H. SIMPKINSON, M.A. (*John Murray*. Post 8vo, pp. viii, 307.) The only objection one has to this, the latest and the greatest of the books which the recent Laudian anniversary has produced, is (if the expression may be allowed) that it is too laudatory. Mr. Simpkinson practically admits that. He seeks to estimate Archbishop Laud as he estimated himself. And if it is true that his enemies have had their estimate before the world all these years, it is but fair that his own best friend should be allowed a hearing now. Moreover, the book is original in investigation and well written. If it is the Archbishop's own opinion of himself it is also as well expressed as he himself could have expressed it. No doubt the question arises whether biography is not history, and ought to be strictly impartial. Surely it ought to be. But we all know very well that biography is rarely written so. And just as the proverb *Nil nisi bonum* is reckoned a sufficient justification for saying the best things about the recently dead, it may be fairly argued that time

makes no difference in its application. Mr. Simpkinson has so argued. He has written with the most tender sympathy. And we cannot but admit that his folly leans to virtue's side. Moreover, Mr. Simpkinson is in touch with Laud's desires and aims. He does not need to do aught there but lovingly speak the truth as he has come to receive it.

THE PSALTER, WITH A CONCORDANCE AND OTHER AUXILIARY MATTER. BY W. E. GLADSTONE. (*John Murray*. 16mo, pp. 260.) It is, of course, the Psalter according to the version of the Book of Common Prayer. Besides the Concordance, there is a good deal of most useful auxiliary matter, as the subjects of the Psalms, a selection for devotional reading, alternative renderings from the A.V., R.V., Vulgate, and LXX.; and much besides. The Concordance was done fifty years ago. It is altogether a most useful and acceptable little book, and Mr. Murray has published it in an attractive form.

SILVER WINGS. BY THE REV. ANDREW G. FLEMING. (*Oliphant, Anderson, & Ferrier*. Fcap. 8vo, pp. 191.) Messrs. Oliphant, Anderson, & Ferrier's 'Golden Nails' series is one of the happiest of recent enterprises in book-publishing. It is a series of volumes of sermons to children, attractive, modern, and evangelical. Every volume has had a good reception, and every new volume increases one's admiration for the enterprise. We have always felt that if three things were made imperative—freshness, truth, and cheapness—there was a great field for children's sermons. For we knew that there were children and children's preachers who were hungering and thirsting after them as after righteousness itself.

The latest volume of the 'Golden Nails' series is as happy as its happy title. It is worthy of its place.

BUNYAN CHARACTERS. First Series. New Edition. BY ALEXANDER WHYTE, D.D. (*Oliphant, Anderson, & Ferrier*. Crown 8vo, pp. 281.) It is with Bunyan's after all that Dr. Whyte's name is to go down to farthest posterity. And it is not Bunyan that is to carry Whyte down, but also Whyte that is to carry Bunyan. For if the days are coming upon us, as they say, in which sorrow for sin will only be found in books, it

is not to Bunyan alone that men and women will go to find it and wonder, but to Bunyan as Whyte has made him known to us. Moreover, Whyte's Bunyan will keep back these evil days of coldness and curiosity. Many thousands of this book have been sent through the land, and many more are ready to go. The thoughts of many hearts will be revealed by it. And then 'the broken and the contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.'

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LIFE-POWER. BY ARTHUR T. PIERSON, D.D. (*Passmore & Alabaster*. Crown 8vo, pp. 214.) The title is most promising, but the work barely lives up to it. Dr. Pierson can write most forcibly when he is at his best. He is as good here as some men's best, but not as good as his own. Those who come for inspiration will not be altogether disappointed, for there is inspiration in a strong believing man's words always.

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IN THE TIME OF JESUS. BY MARTIN SEIDEL, D.D. (New York: *Randolph*. Fcap. 8vo, pp. 192, xxiii.) The revived interest in the Gospels reminds one of the title of one of the late E. P. Roe's stories, *He Fell in Love with his Wife*. We have had them with us all these days and have not seen their beauty nor felt their grace. But now at last our soul is awake. And there is nothing that is read with so much pleasure to-day as the books that make the Gospels their subject of discourse. Dr. Seidel may count upon a good hearing. He has written a commendably short and most commendably clear account of the ways and thoughts of the Jewish people in the time of Jesus. And thus it will be easier for us to understand the things which Jesus said to them, and why he said these things.

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A POPULAR HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION AND MODERN PROTESTANTISM. BY THE LATE G. T. BETTANY, M.A., B.Sc. (*Ward, Lock, & Bowden*. 8vo, pp. 512.) A 'popular' history—and it has all the elements that we have been taught to associate with the adjective, except indifference to fact. Mr. Bettany should not have written 'popular' books; he was too painstaking and precise. Or perhaps he was raised up to remove the stigma from that word. It would have been a worthy mission. For surely

of all books the 'popular' should be faithful to truth, since the reader of popular books cannot verify his references or detect misstatements. The pity is, therefore, as the publishers say, that Mr. Bettany, who was doing so good a service, should have passed away so early. But let us welcome this his last work. It is much adorned with illustration and very handsomely produced in every way.

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#### LITERARY AND PERSONAL NOTES.

Dr. George Wallace of Hamilton has just published, through Messrs. Macniven & Wallace, a lecture on Professor Drummond's '*Ascent of Man*,' to which he gives the title of *Christianity and Evolution*. To be so well informed, so able a handling of the book, it is marvellously courteous. But it is all the more convincing.

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The Scottish Universities have been granting their degrees, and among the rest may be noted a D.D. from Glasgow to Mr. James Kidd, the author of the Kerr Lectures on *Morality and Religion*, and to Dr. James Denney, the author of *Studies in Theology*; from Edinburgh the same degree to the Rev. R. G. Balfour, the author of *Central Truths and Side Issues*; and from Aberdeen a D.D. to Professor John Skinner of London, and an LL.D. to Professor George Adam Smith of Glasgow.

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Dr. Kidd's book (surely the irresponsible reviewer will no longer confound him with Mr. Benjamin Kidd of *Social Evolution*) has been one of the few successes of the spring. A copy has just been presented to each of the theological students attending the college of his own Church.

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We have been requested to draw attention to the Lectures to Clergy to be delivered at Oxford in July. The programme (which will be sent to any Church of England clergyman on application to the Secretary, the Rev. Ll. J. M. Bebb, M.A., Brasenose College, Oxford) is a most appetising one. Dr. Sanday, Dean Paget, Canon Gore, Canon Bright, Dr. Wace, Mr. Illingworth, Mr. Ottley, and the Bishop of Colombo are the lecturers.