

Short Notices.

A Manual of Introduction to the New Testament. By Dr. BERNHARD WEISS. Vol. I. The Foreign Biblical Library: Hodder and Stoughton.

"The main object of this work," writes Dr. Weiss in his preface, "was not to give a statement of my views, but to furnish a manual with the best methodical arrangement." Each day is showing in still clearer light the absolute necessity of a knowledge of the origin and growth of the New Testament Canon to Christian ministers and laymen alike. Literature, in which loose and erroneous theories on this subject are treated as absolute and well-established facts, has now obtained such an extensive circulation, that it is rather late for a clergyman to make his first acquaintance with these speculations, when he finds them accepted among his people as the latest results of scientific inquiry. Dr. Weiss's work will be found eminently practical and useful. In a well-arranged table of contents the subject is specified which each section treats of, and so any particular point can be looked up at a glance. This book differs from Dr. Salmon's masterly "Historical Introduction," inasmuch as it enters more minutely than is usual into an analysis of the train of thought of each particular writing and into the question of its religious peculiarity. In fact, it is not so much an apology in defence of, as a handbook to the study of, the New Testament, and it has most admirably fulfilled its purpose.

R. W. S.

The Home Hymn-Book. A Manual of Sacred Song for the Family Circle. 2nd edition. Novello, Ewer and Co.; Simpkin, Marshall and Co.

With this hymn-book as a whole we are much pleased. The selection of hymns is large and judicious, and the work in the musical portion is well done. A cheap edition has the hymns only.

Gospel Ethnology. By S. R. PATTISON, F.G.S. With Illustrations. Religious Tract Society.

A good idea; well worked out. An interesting book, which can hardly fail to do good service.

Studies on the Book of Psalms: The Structural Connection of the Book of Psalms, both in Single Psalms and in the Psalter as an organic whole. By JOHN FORBES, D.D., LL.D. Edited by the Rev. JAMES FORREST, M.A. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark. 1888.

An able and suggestive work.

In *Blackwood* appears an ably-written paper on Fiji, well worth reading. We quote a portion:

"Some shallow pessimist has said of beauty that it is only skin-deep, and you often hear the same thing said of the Fijian's religion. It does

“not, you are told, influence their lives. Well, I will not compare them with the people of our own highly moral little island ; Christianity has certainly not made them Englishmen, and it could not possibly have done so ; but I take it that the first hundred Fijians you might meet would be as good Christians as the first hundred Europeans—and what more could be reasonably expected ? Can we, indeed, reasonably expect as much, or anything like it ? Their ideas have not for generations been hereditarily leavened with the spirit of Christianity ; ours have, and ought therefore to shine greatly by comparison, which I am sure that they do. I mentioned the custom of evening prayers. Every night and morning in the village you hear the *lali*, a wooden drum, calling on the people to worship, and the sounds of praying and singing come from many houses. They are much puzzled and a little shocked at seeing so little of this among their white ‘Christian brethren,’ and it is not easy to explain the discrepancy to them. A native preacher invited me one day to the service in his church, a large airy building. Chairs were set in a prominent place for myself and a couple of companions ; the rest of the congregation, which was large, squatting on the floor, the men at one side, the women on the other, and a number of children in the middle. The people were certainly as attentive as a village congregation at home would have been, with three Fijian chiefs in full costume, or in none at all, sitting by the altar rails. The men, in fact, were decidedly attentive, but many of them were church-officers. The women were a good deal occupied in trying to catch my eye—so I flattered myself at least—and the children amused themselves in their own quiet way. The singing of English hymn-tunes was fair, and answers to a sort of catechism were chanted. The minister’s prayer was rather fast in delivery, but striking from its evident earnestness of tone ; in fact, one felt it to be impressive without understanding a word of it, and his preaching impressed me in the same way, his style being not unlike an Italian monk’s, the resemblance heightened by the likeness in sound of the language to a harsh Tuscan, but with hardly any gesticulation.”

We have received from Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton the second volume of the latest edition of the *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, by Dr. Delitzsch ; Ps. xxxvii.-lxxxix.

The C.M.S. *Intelligencer* contains the sermon preached in Westminster Abbey by Dr. Butler, Master of Trinity.

In this month’s *Good Words* appears a very able and interesting article on “Darwinism as a Philosophy,” by the Duke of Argyll. We quote with pleasure the opening paragraph, as follows :

“The private letters of Charles Darwin, now published in his Life with all their frank and memorable confessions, will accelerate and complete the reaction which has already begun against the acceptance of his philosophy. They not only reveal, but to some extent they explain, the contrast between his greatness as an observer and his weakness as an interpreter of the facts which he observed. All that was special in his hypothesis rested on one idea, and that idea was a bungle. The phrase in which it was expressed—Natural Selection—was not only a metaphor, but it was a mixed metaphor embodying a confusion of alien and incongruous conceptions. It personified an abstraction. This is a resource which may, indeed, be harmless if only the abstract idea which is personified be a clear one and not a muddle. But Natural Selection personified in the sense in which Darwin used it was, and is, a muddle. It was essentially the image of mechanical necessity concealed under the clothes,

“and parading in the mask, of mental purpose. The word ‘natural’ suggested Matter, and the physical forces. The word ‘selection’ suggested Mind, and its powers of choice. Each element in the mixture commended itself to hazy and indiscriminating recognition. But the elements of meaning in it which made it most acceptable were precisely the meanings which its author did not intend it to convey. All this is now confessed. Darwin himself found it so difficult of explanation in the only sense in which he meant it, that within a year after the publication of the ‘Origin,’ he wrote to Lyell that if he had to begin again, he would avoid the phrase altogether, and substitute ‘Natural Preservation.’¹ This would have been a change indeed. It would have eliminated, no doubt, all reference to the work of mind; but it would have eliminated also all reference to the processes of artificial breeding, these being the only physical causes to which the hypothesis appealed. Nor is this confession of Darwin the only, or the greatest, blow which his formula has received. Mr. Herbert Spencer, the ablest apostle of evolution in its wider applications, and one of the earliest disciples of Darwin, has lately turned upon ‘Natural Selection’ the light of close analysis, and, as the result, has been obliged to condemn it as not representing any true physical causation whatever. He abandons along with it his own almost more famous amendment, ‘Survival of the Fittest,’ as involving the same confusions of thought, and as equally incapable of reducing biological facts to any satisfactory explanation.”

The first volume of the *Gleaner Pictorial Album* (Church Missionary Society) is very attractive and full of information.

Sermons for the Christian Year (Rivingtons) is a judicious selection from the Quebec Chapel sermons of Henry Alford; an interesting and helpful book. Many will welcome a second volume of a similar cast.

In the new *Quarterly Review* the article which will be most generally read at the present moment, probably, is “The National Finances of the last Twenty-five Years.” One of its closing paragraphs runs thus: “Mr. Gladstone has denounced, and no one more strongly, the ill-effects arising from the continuation of the mode of raising the public Revenue with the Income Tax as the pivot on which all the system turns, but he has perpetuated that method. He has concentrated the source of supply on a few large heads, though an arrangement of that description is condemned by the soundest authority. The system, which has come into force through his acts and his example, is one which, even in comparatively easy times, is completely wanting in elasticity, so that a small addition, when further supplies are needed, is almost unattainable without alterations which would amount nearly to complete reconstruction. It is a system which, in a period of acute pressure, would have to be abandoned entirely. It might not be ill-suited to easy times, with a condition of increasing prosperity and stationary expenditure; but it is a pregnant source of national danger in difficult days when prosperity is at a standstill, or waning, while expenditure is increasing.” Another admirable article is “The Difficulties of Good Government.” What the *Quarterly* tells us about Garden Farming is really interesting, and has lessons for the present time. Another well-written and very

¹ “Life,” vol. ii., p. 346.

practical paper, on Friendly Societies, opens thus : "It is just a hundred years since the necessity of wise legislation, to further the measures of self-help adopted by the industrial classes, began to be urged by Sir George Rose and others. In 1793 the first Friendly Societies Act was passed. Its avowed object was to protect and encourage societies of good fellowship, formed for the purposes of the mutual relief and maintenance of the members in sickness, old age, and infirmity, and the relief of the widows and children of deceased members, and effecting those purposes by means of the voluntary subscriptions of the members. Later Acts have enlarged this definition, but the keynote of all legislation in this country with regard to such societies is struck by that Act. It affirmed that this protection and encouragement would be likely to be attended with very beneficial effects, by promoting the happiness of individuals and at the same time diminishing the public burthens. This prediction has not been falsified, though it has been fashionable to assert that Friendly Societies by failure have caused misery and pauperism, and to overlook the vast benefits they have conferred on their members. The facts are that the hundred years have been years of continuous progress for Friendly Societies, and that they are now in a sounder and healthier condition than ever before." Other *Quarterly* articles are "Keats," "The National Portrait Gallery," "Kaspar Hauser," and "The Monarchy of July and its Lessons." The paper in this number, to our own mind, is on the Apocrypha. It reviews the noble work just published by Mr. Murray, edited by Dr. Wace. It is clear and full. We cannot refrain from quoting a specimen portion. The *Quarterly* says : "Venerable as the Apocryphal books are, nearly the whole of them being unquestionably older than any part of the New Testament ; and considerable as is their value, whether for historical and critical uses, or in a less degree for religious edification ; they are not Holy Scripture, and are severed from it by an impassable line of demarcation. Their range of excellence is a wide one, ascending from very low depths in the additions to Esther and Daniel, to a fine height in Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom. Yet even of the last-named book, which in the Commentary before us Dr. Farrar calls 'in many respects the most valuable of the Apocryphal writings,' he ventures also to affirm, and we think with justice, that 'the book of Wisdom is, as a whole, far inferior to the humblest of the canonical writings.' And this being so, we cannot but admit that for ordinary readers, amidst the hurry and pressure of the modern conditions of life, the Bible placed in their hands for familiar use is well rid of the encumbering element of the Apocrypha. The canonical Scriptures alone make up a very large volume, and are, as Jerome says, a 'sacred library' in themselves. They certainly are sufficient to engross as much leisure, and satisfy as much desire, as the majority of busy Christian people have for devotional reading ; and it would be at the expense of the Divine Word, if the Apocrypha besides, which is equal in length to nearly five-sixths of the New Testament, were commonly bound up within the same covers, to offer itself as a rival candidate for the unlettered reader's attention. No one could wish that the fountain of living waters should, in any degree, be forsaken for broken cisterns that hold no water. Moreover, as Dr. Salmon has remarked in his 'General Introduction,' in estimating the value of a

"book or a sermon for edification, more has to be taken into account than
 "its bare contents. What is profitable in one stage of thought or know-
 "ledge may, in another, very seriously fail of its intended effect. The
 "authoritative ruling of the 35th Article respecting the value and use of
 "the Homilies has been utterly ineffectual to prevent them from be-
 "coming obsolete, and being banished from our pulpits. The critical
 "spirit which is in the air of modern life is quick to perceive absurdity,
 "where the simplicity of ignorance found nothing but a wholesome
 "lesson; the keener sense of the ludicrous renders it impossible now to
 "listen without unseemly amusement, to stories in which unreflecting
 "acquiescence was unconscious of anything grotesque or provocative of
 "derision. What English congregation of the present day would be
 "likely to derive benefit from listening to a great deal that is to be met
 "with in the shrewd, cynical maxims of Ecclesiasticus, or the rhetorical
 "exaggerations of Wisdom; to say nothing of the grim exploit of Judith,
 "the grotesque experiences of Tobit, and the fables about Bel and the
 "Dragon so foolishly restored to the Anglican Lectionary at the Savoy
 "Conference, for no better reason, it would seem, than to spite the
 "Puritans? We ask this with the less hesitation, because the voice of
 "the Churches is with us. The tendency to relegate the uncanonical
 "books to the background is unmistakable. No sooner had the Church
 "of Ireland acquired the right of self-government, than it expunged the
 "Apocrypha entirely from its calendar of lessons. The Protestant
 "Episcopal Church of the United States of America, when in 1789 it
 "moulded the Anglican Prayer-book to its own use, discontinued the
 "reading of the Apocrypha in the daily course, and retained only the
 "twenty-six special lessons for holy-days: but it has lately assimilated
 "its Lectionary in substance, though not in every detail, to the new
 "Anglican Lectionary, by striking out twenty-two of the special lessons,
 "and reinstating lessons from the Apocrypha for nineteen days in
 "November. What most nearly concerns us is the recent change in our
 "own Church, which has also been adopted by the Scotch Episcopal
 "Church. In the revised Lectionary of 1871, the period of the daily
 "reading of the Apocrypha was reduced from eight weeks to three, and
 "the number of special lessons taken from it for holy-days from twenty-
 "six to four. Nor do these figures express the entire reduction. Tobit,
 "Judith, Susannah, Bel and the Dragon have disappeared from the
 "Calendar; and the lessons still read from Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, and
 "Baruch are so much shorter on an average, as well as fewer in number,
 "than the Apocryphal lessons in the old Calendar, that the total portion
 "of the uncanonical books now appointed to be read from the lecterns of
 "our churches is less than one-fifth of that to which our forefathers for
 "many generations were accustomed to listen. It will be recollected,
 "however, that besides the lessons ordered by the Calendar, two portions
 "of the Apocrypha are permanently imbedded in the Anglican Book of
 "Common Prayer: namely, a portion of the 'Song of the Three Children'
 "as an alternative canticle to the *Te Deum*, and three verses on almsgiving
 "from Tobit in the Offertory Sentences. The mention of 'Thobie and
 "'Sara,' which stood in the marriage-service of King Edward's first book,
 "'was afterwards expunged, to make way for 'Abraham and Sara.'"

