

## Short Notices.

*The Witness of the Epistles.* A study in modern criticism. By the Rev. R. J. KNOWLING, M.A., Vice-Principal of King's College, London. Pp. 446. Longmans, Green and Co. 1892.

THE writer of this book is, we believe, as yet unknown in the republic of letters, but we are much mistaken if the publication of it does not at once place him in the forefront of English Biblical scholars. The extensive knowledge of his subject and his wide familiarity with the literature of it are remarkable in so young a writer, and are the unmistakable fruit of earnest and persevering study, while the copious richness of his margin affords ample testimony to both. The argument of the writer is one of increasing importance, and also one that it can never be possible to dispense with. In days when the traditional estimate of the Scriptures is assailed right and left, and any refusal to bow down before the arbitrary assumption of every ambitious critic is ascribed to the influence of panic, it is refreshing to meet with one who is willing and competent to survey his position on every side, and to bring the diverse and conflicting opinions and statements of others to the judgment of calm and dispassionate reason.

The object of Mr. Knowling's "study in modern criticism" is to estimate the weight of evidence afforded by St. Paul's Epistles to the historic facts of the life of Christ, and with this in view he has been especially careful to examine the arguments that have recently been advanced for the rejection of the commonly received *Hauptbriefe*, and the conclusion at which he arrives is that "the description which Weizsäcker gives of the two Epistles to the Corinthians may not unfairly be extended to the four great Epistles of St. Paul: they are, he says, in an eminent sense historical, they deal with a whole series of facts and circumstances in such a way as to compensate for an historical description; for many things they are the only, and for others, at any rate, the best, source; and if we possessed nothing else than these Epistles, they would be sufficient to afford us a representation of the oldest form in which the Christian religion developed itself on Græco-Roman ground." As the book is professedly a study in criticism, it is naturally more critical in its character than definite and substantive in its personal statement; but it is a wide and exhaustive review of the opinions of German and French critics, and estimates with commendable fairness their relation to each other, and the effect of their combined weight upon the body of Christian belief. After seeing the gratuitous results of the treatment by Pfeiderer and others of the plain and straightforward statements of St. Paul, it is a relief to come back to the simple testimony of the Apostle, and the childlike witness of the Gospels, and the frank confession of St. John: "These things are written that ye might believe, and that, believing, ye might have life." The perusal of Mr. Knowling's book goes a long way to show that the difficulties and perplexities of critics are of their own creation, and arise in no small degree from their inability and unwillingness to surrender themselves to this essential condition of St. John.

Of the two volumes of Professor Wendt's work, *The Teaching of Jesus*, now translated into English, and published by Messrs. T. and T. Clark, the first volume is before us. The learned author, in his English preface, writes thus: "The question, how much of the component elements of the Old Testament revelation has permanent value for the

Christian Church, must ever be decided by the agreement or disagreement of the Old Testament ideas with the teaching of Jesus." Again: "The Holy Scriptures are not directly and indiscriminately the highest standard for our Christian doctrine; but the real touchstone is the teaching of Jesus, which is borne witness to in the Holy Scriptures." And we must seek to know the "pure form" of the teaching of Jesus; pure, says the Heidelberg Professor, as unmixed even with "the apostolic system of doctrine." These are the leading principles of Dr. Wendt's work. One more sentence may be quoted here. "In regard . . . to such a weighty point of doctrine as the resurrection and eternal life of individual saints, Jesus has decidedly taken part with the teaching of later Judaism, as it had been developed in opposition to that of the older prophets."

From Messrs. Isbister and Company we have received two volumes, each in its own way excellent: the Bishop of Winchester's *Questions of Faith and Duty*, and the Archdeacon of Westminster's *The Voice from Sinai*, sermons on the Ten Commandments preached in Westminster Abbey, of high value for young men. Bishop Thorold's papers "were mostly composed during the enforced leisure of the Sundays of the past year, when to write the Gospel seemed the next best thing to preaching it." There is a delightful mellowness about them.

The Rev. James Neil, whose works on the Holy Land are so well known and so much valued, now appears as a poet. His *Bridal Song*, based upon the Song of Solomon, shows much grace and insight. The volume is a most tasteful wedding gift (Lang, Neil and Co.).

The Archdeacon of London's Second Charge, we gladly note, is published in pamphlet form, printed in large, clear type (Elliot Stock). *The Church: Invisible, Visible, Catholic, National.*



## THE MONTH.

THE reports of the proceedings at the Ulster Convention have been full of interest. The Demonstration was a complete and unequivocal success. The *Times* says:

In no doubtful or faltering accents the men of Protestant Ulster placed on record their solemn and unalterable resolution not to recognise or submit to the schemes of politicians who, under the seductive name of Home Rule, would impose upon them a hateful tyranny such as their forefathers fought against to death in 1689. No political demonstration in our time has afforded any parallel to the vast representative gathering which met at Belfast to give utterance to the pent-up feelings of Ulstermen. Nearly 20,000 persons, it is estimated, were assembled in the pavilion erected for the purpose, and of these some 12,000 were delegates chosen after full and free discussion in every electoral district throughout the province. . . . The Belfast Convention was intended to make the voice of the people heard, and in this it was entirely successful. The delegates who moved and supported the resolutions that had been adopted by their constituents represented every interest, every sect, every shade of opinion in Ulster. Landlords and tenant-farmers, great employers of labour and working men, manufacturers and merchants, Episcopalian, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, and Unitarians, even Roman Catholics and Orangemen, agreed to sink all minor differences of interest and opinion.

The Duke of Abercorn, having taken the chair, called upon the Lord Primate of all Ireland. His Grace said: "Brethren, with one heart and soul let us ask God's blessing on this our undertaking," and then read an appropriate prayer. The Rev. Dr. Brown, ex-Moderator of the General Assembly, requested the assembly to sing the 46th Psalm (Scotch version):

God is our refuge and our strength,  
In straits a present aid.