

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_churchman\\_os.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php)

from any of these methods. Peace will be restored when the Reformation and its work are more cordially appreciated in the ranks of the clergy, and when attempts, like those of Lord Halifax, to exclude or eliminate genuine Protestant principles from the Church are frankly and finally abandoned. The disquiet of the laity will never cease until they are assured that the clergy of the Church, as a whole, are loyal to the principles of the Reformation, or—which is the same thing—to the principles of the Church of the first few centuries, before medieval and Roman abuses obtained a hold in doctrine and ceremonial. Everything else is, at the best, a mere palliative, and it only remains to hope that the authorities of the Church will realize that the only way to maintain the confidence of the English nation is to assert by all their influence that which is the only true “Catholic” position, the position, namely, of the English Reformers, and the authority of the Church during those centuries when it was really Catholic.

---

### Notices of Books.

---

*History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe.* By GEORGE SAINTSBURY, M.A., Hon. LL.D. In three volumes. Vol. II: “From the Renaissance to the Decline of Eighteenth-Century Orthodoxy.” Edinburgh and London: Blackwood and Sons, 1902. Price 20s.

Some time back, when criticising the first volume of this work in the *CHURCHMAN*, we called attention to one grave fault—the frequent uncouthness of its style. We much fear Professor Saintsbury, despite his encyclopædic learning, is in that point incorrigible, for the same uncouthness crops up again in the present volume; and, indeed, some of the sentences do not appear to be constructed on the usual grammatical principles. If Professor Saintsbury’s work were intended for a work of art—which it is not—such a stricture would be serious indeed; as it is, however, the uncouthness aforesaid matters less, because the book, if found valuable at all, will be valued for its vast array of facts, and its varied and interesting sidelights on critical history—or, perhaps we should say, on the critics. As a storehouse of erudition, Professor Saintsbury’s work is not likely soon to be rivalled; as a history from the outside it is exceedingly useful; but of the true inwardness of literary criticism the Professor does not seem to us to be entirely cognisant. Nor is it too much to say that one may learn more of the right relation between literature and life from a single essay of (for example) St. Beuve than

from all the ponderous pages of this literary colossus. It may seem somewhat ungracious and ungenerous to say this with Professor Saintsbury's two volumes in our hands; but it is, we think, necessary to emphasize where, in our estimation, the work falls short. There is one section of the work in which (*ni fallimur*) Professor Saintsbury's peculiar powers seem to do themselves full justice—we mean the section devoted to Renaissance critics, Scaliger and the rest. It would be a pious work if the Professor would write a life of Scaliger—on the whole the greatest scholar of whom we have any record—worthy to be put beside Mark Pattison's "Casaubon."

Nothing has struck us more in glancing through the pages of this volume than the immensity of the field covered; yet the author moves with singular confidence over this field, and apparently has read—if he has not always assimilated—everything great and small that in any way bears on his subject. *Audaces fortuna juvat*. We shall look forward with uncommon interest to the concluding volume of this work.

*The Way, the Truth, the Life.* By A. G. GIRDLESTONE, M.A. London: Elliot Stock.

Mr. Girdlestone has won distinction in other fields than those of authorship. The "King of Zinal" is known not only in his favourite French-speaking valleys of Switzerland, but wherever climbers most do congregate. We notice that he dates his preface from Arolla, and begins it with a parable drawn from his Alpine experiences. We wonder if it is fanciful to think that his forty summers in the Alps have helped to give his book the breezy and bracing atmosphere of devout common-sense that is its great characteristic. Perhaps it is not altogether unreasonable to think so. Mr. Girdlestone claims that his handbook for Confirmation classes is practical. It is eminently so in its arrangement, its treatment, its method, and even in its printing. Only one side of each page is used, so that, as Mr. Girdlestone serenely observes private censors can cut out any parts they may reject. But we really think that very little of that need be performed by anyone; it is more likely that here and there the blank pages would be used to supplement Mr. Girdlestone's condensed extract, for we must not be thought irreverent, but complimentary, if we remark that this little book is a very Bovril of Confirmation teaching.

Mr. Girdlestone asserts that his volume "is written on frankly Reformation principles, especially in reference to the Church, the Bible, conscience and the Sacraments. Beside a tendency, especially among the clergy, towards the superstitions of Rome, there is at present, even among many Christians, a general 'shakiness' about the very foundations—the reality—of Christianity, along with a microscopic attention to points of little or no importance to it. The vigorous manliness of the great Reformers has become decrepit. New thoughts, as then upon the Church, so now upon the Bible, Nature, and other religions, unsettle men, and we need

more than ever to stand fast upon the higher solid ground, 'I believe in the Holy Ghost.'

Mr. Girdlestone here strikes the right note, and defines, as we think, the only way of meeting the vague agnosticism which is prevalent among rich and poor, each in their widely different manner of expressing it, which lies in teaching experimental Christianity—that is, belief in a Person, and guidance by the action of a Person upon the conscience. Having this principle in view, he treats his different subjects in a manly and reverent spirit, with a refreshing absence of that vague use of shibboleths which is often employed to obscure a real difficulty. We like very much, *e.g.*, his remarks on the Bible in Paper XV. ; the Holy Trinity, in Paper IX. ; on Christian Prayer, in Paper XVIII. But it is all good ; and even if, as we have said, from limitations of space, one or two topics seem to require a little amplification, that can very easily be supplied by an experienced teacher. We certainly think that Mr. Girdlestone's book conveys the right teaching of the *essence* of Christianity, and, as a practical handbook, is in advance of anything we have previously used.

