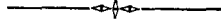


place of the Most High, and is abiding under the shadow of the Almighty, will have a power and an influence that will draw men from far and near, away from the world, away from sin and self, to the rest and the peace and the safety to be found at the foot of the Cross.

Are we setting too high a value on the ordinance of preaching? Nay, that is impossible.



Notices of Books.

Monumental Facts and Higher Critical Fancies. By A. H. SAYCE, LL.D., D.D., Professor of Assyriology in the University of Oxford, etc. London: The Religious Tract Society. Pp. 127. Price 2s.

Archæology has been called "the avenger on the track of rationalism." This is not an inapt description, considering the nature of the facts which the spade of the excavator has brought to light. One theory which it has effectually demolished is the old contention that the Israelites were unable to read or write, and that a mature literature, such as we find in the Old Testament, could not have come into existence at an early date. Professor Sayce has put together a concise account, which ought to be in everybody's hands, of the principal discoveries bearing on the age and authenticity of the Old Testament Scriptures. For the purpose of history, philology can only be of service accidentally, being concerned merely with the linguistic sense of the record, not with the historical circumstances it embodies; and the delusive character of the philological method relied upon by modern critics is clearly shown by Dr. Sayce in his first chapter. "Time after time," he observes, "the most positive assertions of a sceptical criticism have been disproved by archæological discovery; events and personages that were confidently pronounced to be mythical have been shown to be historical; and the older writers have turned out to be better acquainted with what they were describing than the modern critic who has flouted them." After explaining the use and value of archæology as a test, the author describes the revolution effected in our conceptions of the antiquity of literature by the Tel-el-Amarna tablets and other finds, proving that the age of Moses, and even the age of Abraham, was almost as literary an age as our own. One of the most valuable chapters in the book is devoted to an account of the confirmation of Gen. xiv. supplied by Babylonian monuments, from which we now learn that the political situation presupposed in the narrative corresponds exactly with the actual requirements of history, though only a few years ago it was declared to be an "impossibility." Even the names of several of the Kings mentioned there have been recovered. "The Laws of Amraphel and the Mosaic

Code" is the title of another important section to which attention may be directed, where it will be seen that the laws in question throw also no small light upon certain incidents in the life of Abraham. Dr. Sayce tells his story in perfectly simple language, and the clergy might do much good by bringing the volume under the notice of their parishioners. While we fully believe that the Bible carries with it its own credentials, not needing to be buttressed up by external supports, at the same time the evidence accumulated by archæological research seems to be almost a Providential answer to the cavils of unbelief.

The Golden Book of John Owen. Passages from the Writings of the Rev. JOHN OWEN, M.A., D.D., sometime Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford and Dean of Christ Church. Chosen and edited, with a study of his Life and Age, by JAMES MOFFATT, B.D., D.D. (St. Andrews). London: Hodder and Stoughton. Pp. xx + 244. Price 6s.

Dr. Moffatt is entitled to cordial thanks for this selection from Owen's writings, to which he has prefixed a full and interesting introductory sketch. The works of the great Puritan divines appear to be better appreciated in Scotland than in England at the present day, and we are afraid that they are too much despised by English Churchmen, the majority of whom seem unaware of the depth of thought and spiritual insight that distinguish them. Many of these forgotten books were in their time "living forces, helping to form character, to regulate conduct, and to shape public action." Owen himself was a voluminous author, but was best known to a later generation through two or three practical treatises written after his retirement from active life. The son and grandson of Oxfordshire country Rectors, he had been driven into Nonconformity by the policy of the Laudian party, yet retained throughout his career such a tender regard for the Church of England as to draw from a partisan witness like Anthony Wood an acknowledgment of his fairness. The selections in the present volume are arranged in three divisions, under the heads of "Discussions and Meditations," "Passages of Exposition," and "Sentences and Aphorisms," illustrative parallels from contemporary or recent writers being occasionally appended in footnotes. Dr. Moffatt's task in the formation of this choice collection has evidently been a labour of love. We must leave our readers to make acquaintance with it for themselves, but room may be found here for one striking example of Owen's style, taken from his exposition of Ps. cxxx. On the subject of "Forgiveness" he wrote: "Reason's line is too short to fathom the depth of the Father's love, of the blood of the Son, and the promises of the Gospel built thereon, wherein forgiveness dwells. Men cannot by their rational considerations launch out into these deeps, nor draw water from these wells of salvation. Reason stands by amazed, and cries: 'How can these things be?' It can but gather cockle-shells, like him of old, at the shore of this ocean, a few criticisms upon the outward letter, and so bring an evil report upon the land, as did the spies. All it can do

is but to hinder faith from venturing into it, crying: 'Spare thyself; this attempt is vain, these things are impossible.' It is among the things that faith puts off and lays aside when it engageth the soul into this great work. This, then, that it may come to a discovery of forgiveness, causeth the soul to deny itself and all its own reasonings, and to give up itself to an infinite fulness of goodness and truth. Though it cannot go unto the bottom of these depths, yet it enters into them and finds rest in them. Nothing but faith is suited to rest, to satiate and content itself in mysterious, bottomless, unsearchable depths."

Forty Outline Lessons on the Prophets for Bible-Classes. By ALICE C. J. HORNE. With Prefatory Note by ROBERT SINKER, D.D., Librarian of Trinity College, Cambridge. London: The Church of England Sunday-School Institute. Pp. viii + 128. Price 1s.

These lessons, compiled by a lady who has had much practical experience in teaching, cover the whole sixteen prophetic books of the Old Testament. Dr. Sinker's recommendation is a sufficient guarantee of the soundness of the contents, and nowadays it has become more than ever necessary that caution should be exercised in the choice of books for religious instruction. The lessons seem to us to be drawn up with much care, especially the two series on Isaiah and Daniel, but more space should have been given to Zechariah. The thirteenth lesson, entitled, "Isaiah, the Evangelical Prophet," contains a useful summary of New Testament references.

Text Studies for a Year. By the Rev. A. R. BUCKLAND, M.A.; the Rev. F. BAYLIS, M.A.; the Rev. W. R. BLACKETT, M.A. London: Hodder and Stoughton. Pp. xxiv + 283. Price 6s.

The above volume provides sketches of two sermons for every Sunday in the year, as well as for Christmas Day, Good Friday, and Ascension Day. The outlines are chosen from those which have appeared during a considerable period in the *Record*, most of them being based on texts in the Gospel or Epistle for the week, or in the evening first lesson. A little more "unction" would be acceptable, and there is a distinct avoidance of anything like an appeal to the emotions; but we presume that this is to be supplied by the preacher who uses the notes. Many men find it a real difficulty to address the same congregation year after year, and in such cases a book like this will help to suggest new thoughts.

