

## Notices of Books.

THE BOOK OF JOB. By James Strahan, M.A. *T. and T. Clark.* Price 7s. 6d. net.

In his previous book on Genesis entitled "Hebrew Ideals" Mr. Strahan proved himself to possess powers of exposition and character-study far beyond the ordinary. In his new work he has given us the riper skill and greater delicacy of touch which the deeper problems of his subject demanded. His subtle analyses of mood and motive and his graphic delineation of character and view-point are altogether admirable. The book is full of word-pictures and epigrams; it is studded with quotations whose range is as wide as their selection is wise. Above all, it does not lack the touch of modernity.

The author regards the book as a psychological drama, "since it is not so much in the development of a problem as in the history of a soul . . . that the supreme interest lies." Its purpose was plain—viz., to clarify and purify the theology, the theodicy, and the morality of the nation. It packs "a campaign of centuries" into "a single decisive battle." It is "a protest against absolutism in theology" and "a plea for a reasonable service based on the moral affinity and mutual understanding of God and man." It inculcates principles of action which are inseparable from national greatness—viz., "to love and serve God for His own sake as man's moral and spiritual Ideal, and thereby to quench the accusing spirit of sceptical cynicism." That it was the product of an age of ripe culture appears to the author indisputable not only from its problem, but from its plot—a conference of sages to debate the Divine government of the universe."

Still it is not all of one age. The Prologue and Epilogue suggest that they were taken over entire from an original pre-Josianic folk-tale of Job, of which the kernel has been displaced for the present dialogues. As further additions to this rewritten drama come the Elihu speeches, inferior in literary and poetical power, but having an intrinsic value as contributing "revised and amended views on the enigma of suffering," and having an extra interest as "the criticism passed by a new age . . . on the original drama."

Moreover, the writer believes that the original beauty and symmetry of the third cycle of speeches (chaps. xxi.—xxvii.) have been damaged by a disturbing hand—that of an advocate of orthodoxy, who by a process of suppression and substitution softened the daring outspokenness of the original to a milder conformity with traditionalism. This may be; but we fail to appreciate the author's logic by which he asks us to regard chap. xxviii.—the great poem on the Quest of Wisdom—as an independent fragment introduced by a reader who failed to find in the rest of the book light on the mystery of God's government, and who therefore inserted this poem, "which teaches man to acquiesce in a reverent agnosticism." We are tempted to linger over the author's bold portraiture of the *dramatis persona*; they are so skilfully painted. But to reproduce fragments and outlines would fail to do justice to the finished pictures, and there is the commentary to claim our attention. Its general scheme is attractive.

The book is treated sectionally, each section being printed from the Revised Version text and followed by a critical survey and searching analysis of the argument. Then each verse comes under the microscope. Here and there are met with striking departures from the Revised Version translation and acceptances of LXX and Syriac readings which contribute new life and meaning. Indeed, the author's own dictum prepares us for somewhat drastic treatment of the text. "In the Book of Job," he says, "the more daring reading is always likely to be the right one. The later toning down is easily understood." As an exegete, Mr. Strahan shows on every page a rare sensitiveness of touch and richness of expression. It is difficult to make a selection from 320 pages so uniformly good. We confine ourselves to two illustrations. In treating of xxxviii. 7, "When the morning stars sang together," reference is made to Ezra iii. 10, 11, when the laying of the foundation of the Temple was hailed by praise from the choir of singers and shouts from the people. "And when God laid the corner-stone of the earth, His household of star-spirits—pre-existing sons of the Elohim—raised a shout of joy. In particular, the 'morning stars,' which daily see the earth emerge from the darkness of night, then saw it rise out of primeval chaos, and at the amazing sight sang in ecstasy together." Almost naturally we turn to chap. xix. to seek for fresh light on that great passage, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," etc. We find it described as the evidence of a miracle of faith, "a creed which is, in a sense, the creation of his own spirit, the emanation of his own character, but at the same time a revelation from the heart of God." And this is the process of its fashioning: "In a passionate desire to escape from a tragic and hopeless present, his mind makes a series of lightning-like flights of faith, glancing hither and thither through space and time, rising from earth to heaven, descending beyond the tomb and returning, and finally rending the veil of flesh, that he may stand in imagination, as he shall one day in reality, face to face with God, satisfied, not with this or that attribute—wisdom, justice, or even love—but with a beatific vision in which all attributes are forgotten." The translation "Redeemer" is regarded as legitimate so long as it is defined as the Redeemer of one's honour—*i.e.*, Deliverer from undeserved wrong, not from sin; but "Vindicator" is the nearest equivalent to the Hebrew, *Gôêl*. The ambiguous expression "from my flesh" is interpreted as meaning "away from my flesh"—*i.e.*, as a disembodied spirit. "If there is logical process, a gradual evolution of ideas in the drama, what Job expects is not only a posthumous vindication, but his own recall to hear it and to see his Vindicator." In xiv. 14 *et seq.* the possibility of a future life fascinates Job, but it is not entertained. In xvi. 18 *et seq.* Job's faith rises to the idea of an Advocate who will espouse his cause after death. But here "he expresses the conviction that not only the claims of ideal justice, but the human heart's deepest longing, will be satisfied by the summoning of the injured dead back to life, to be present at his own vindication." When he says, "Whom I shall see for myself," he is expressing the "everlasting individualism of faith"; and when he adds, "not as a stranger" (Revised Version, margin), he is expressing the conviction that his vindication will be complete and his deepest yearnings fully satisfied, because God will be "no longer estranged and hostile, but a Friend."

We have already transgressed the limits of our space, but we must find room for a word of thanks to Mr. Strahan for his illuminating and inspiring exposition. We look forward to the new translation of Job which he hopes soon to give us.

W. E. BECK.

COMPARATIVE RELIGION. By Dr. F. B. Jevons. *Cambridge University Press.*  
Price 1s.

This is the second contribution of Professor Jevons to that excellent series of "Cambridge Manuals of Science and Literature." It will add to the reputation of the author and of the series. It was no light task to combine comprehensiveness with conciseness within the narrow limits of 150 pages, but Dr. Jevons has done it with conspicuous success.

The Introduction and seven chapters on Sacrifice, Magic, Ancestor Worship, Future Life, Dualism, Buddhism, Monotheism, are a worthy contribution to a fascinating and far-reaching branch of scientific study.

GOD'S APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST. By Philip Mauro. London: *Morgan and Scott.* Price 2s. net.

This exposition is based on Mr. Mauro's conclusion that there are three "eras" in our Lord's ministry. In the first era, now past, He was the Apostle, or Sent One. In the second, now present, He is High Priest, of the type of Aaron. In the third era, yet to come, "He will be the King-Priest, fulfilling the type of Melchisedec." We are told that although He has already the *title* of "Priest after the order of Melchisedec," He has not yet entered the *office* of "Priest upon His throne"—though how this can be is not made clear. Mr. Mauro discovers these same three eras in several other passages—for instance, in Heb. ii. 7 and xiii. 8. In the latter passage he takes "yesterday" to refer to "His lowly service as God's Apostle, now ended." "To-day" he regards as "the day of His service in the heavenly Sanctuary," while "for ever" stands for the "age to come." Again, in two familiar passages—Heb. ix. 24-28 and Phil. ii. 6-11—the same periods are traced, and in the three divisions of the book these thoughts are expanded and the significance of these "eras" expounded with lucidity and force. The first part—"The Apostle of our Confession," revealing the Father's name, doing the Father's works, speaking the Father's words and, finally, giving to the Father an account of His ministry as the Sent One—is a delightful exposition. The author is one of those who fearlessly leave the beaten track, and even if one cannot always accept his interpretation, his earnestness and fidelity to the Word of God give him a claim to be heard.

S. R. C.

THE NARROW WAY OF HOLINESS. By the Rev. R. Wood-Samuel. London: *S.P.C.K.* Price 1s. net.

In this little volume the author discourses upon Sanctification—its nature and necessity, its demands, its helps, its hindrances, and its completion. Those who long after that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, will find here much to help them.

S. R. C.

COMMUNION WITH GOD. London: *C. J. Thynne.*

The fourth edition of a helpful little manual of private prayers. Happy are those who require no staff to lean upon, but not all are able to walk

without assistance, and as the Rev. J. Dawson says in the preface, "there are times when communion with God is difficult, when words flow with sluggish pace, and when the needed words refuse to come. At such seasons as these, help is especially required." The clergy are often wanting such a manual of devotion to put into the hands of their young people, and we can with confidence commend this one to their notice. S. R. C.

HIS SANCTUARY. London: *Marlborough and Co.* Price 1s.

A devotional treatment of the Lord's Prayer, each sentence being illustrated by Scripture passages, with occasional verses of hymns. There are pages for manuscript references, etc., and the whole is conveniently arranged and nicely printed. It is a book of private devotion.

ROME, TURKEY, AND JERUSALEM. London: *Thynne.* Price 1s.

A reprint of sermons by the late Canon Hoare based on the prophecies in Revelation and Daniel. Rome is the "little horn," and its approaching destruction heralds the Second Advent. Turkey is the "Euphrates" whose "drying up" means its withdrawal from Europe and Africa. Jerusalem's time of captivity is nearly ended, when the Jews will again possess it and Christ will return.

THE HAND OF GOD AND SATAN IN MODERN HISTORY. By Albert Close. *Protestant Truth Society.* Price 2s. 6d.

Mr. Close's words are vigorous and definite. The Pope and the Sultan are "Satan's Commanders-in-Chief in Eastern and Western Europe." The Revelation is "History written beforehand." Waterloo was a "triumph of Protestant over Papal and Infidel" forces. Present-day movements in the religious world indicate a "Satanic Revival," and Higher Critics are "the Devil appearing as an Angel of Light." Socialism is "Satanic," but the Labour Movement is "Divine." The author thinks it "foolish and short-sighted to condemn a peaceable and orderly strike for a living wage," but with regard to what he calls "the Devil's own movement of Women's Suffragism," he gives forth no uncertain sound. "They behave like the pigs in Christ's day which, when the devils entered into them, rushed madly in herds down to their own destruction." W. HEATON RENSLAW.

THE PASSION HYMNS OF ICELAND. Translated by C. Venn Pilcher, B.D. *Robert Scott.* Price 2s. net.

The field of Icelandic hymnology was practically unexplored till Mr. Pilcher began his pioneer work. This book embodies some of the results of his exploration. The translations are made mainly from the work of the two greatest singers of the northern island, Hallgrim Petursson and Bishop Valdimar Briem. The former is pre-eminently the poet of the Passion, and draws his inspiration from the Cross of Christ and his own experience of its power; the latter draws his message from the rugged natural charms of his island home and from the Gospel pictures of the ministry of Christ among men. The author's introduction is delightful reading. He makes us breathe the air of Iceland, and live amongst the scenes, and think the thoughts which stirred to sacred song the poets who have endowed and enriched the spiritual life of a Church so nearly related to our own.