

“Let no one assume to take away your prize, delighting in ‘humility’ and worshipping of *the angels*—‘investigating’ idly ‘what he hath seen’!—being puffed up by ‘the Reason’ of his Flesh, and not holding fast *the Head*.” Thus we may attempt to render these few words of stern irony with which the Apostle tears the mask away from the face of the great Colossian mystagogue and arch-deceiver. Few his words are, because so full of compressed indignation; and obscure, it may be, just because they are so keenly pointed against this “spoiler”¹ of his Gentile flock, the precursor of that pack of “grievous wolves,”² who were afterwards to ravage and lay waste the Asiatic Churches. Here, in the Colossian heresy, he detects at the very hour of its birth the infant Gnosticism. With a quick and sure inspiration he seizes its inner principles, and discerns its deadly and yet fascinating nature—a compound, as it was, of intellectual pride, visionary pseudo-mystic spiritualism, and ritualistic fervour.

GEORGE G. FINDLAY.

BRIEF NOTICES.

It is so necessary to seem, as well as be, impartial in these Brief Noticés of Books, that I do not care to have my own works reviewed in this Magazine. But I may perhaps be permitted to announce that Messrs. Kegan Paul and Co. have recently published a volume of my sermons entitled “*The Genesis of Evil, and Other Sermons, Mainly Expository;*” and that the volume contains twenty-one discourses, none of which have appeared in print before, on The Origin of Evil (Isaiah xlv. 6, 7), The Heavenly Treasure and the Earthern Vessels (2 Corinthians iv. 7), God Unknown yet Known (Isaiah lv. 6-9), the Incredible Mercy of God (ibid.), All Things Ours (1 Corinthians iii. 21-23), The Too Great Promise (ibid.), Led by a Child (Isaiah xi. 6), The Living God of Living Men (St. Luke xx. 37, 38), Death an

¹ Col. ii. 8.

² 1 Cor. xx. 29.

Exodus (St. Luke ix. 30, 31), On Serving God with One Shoulder (Zephaniah iii. 9), Why we Suffer (Acts xxviii. 4), Aaron's Apology (Exodus xxxii. 24), The Parable of the Talents (St. Matthew xxv. 14-30), The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (St. Matthew xxv. 31-46), The Parable of the Ten Virgins (St. Matthew xxv. 1-13), and St. Peter's Sifting and Conversion (St. Luke xxii. 31, 32).

THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH: a New Translation, with Commentary and Appendices, by the Rev. T. K. Cheyne, M.A. (London: Kegan Paul and Co.) As yet we have only the first of the two volumes in which Professor Cheyne is to give us the results of his long and diligent study of the greatest of the major Prophets. This volume covers Chapters i.-xlvii., and is of course, or it could not otherwise have covered so large a field, exclusively exegetical. All the great critical questions suggested by this Scripture are relegated to Volume II.: but though not one of these questions is as yet discussed and decided, it is easy to see that Professor Cheyne has advanced much nearer to the traditional, or "orthodox," point of view during the ten years which have elapsed since the appearance of his previous work, *The Book of Isaiah Chronologically Arranged*. If he cannot yet admit—and this is one of the problems he holds in suspense—that we owe the last seven and twenty Chapters of the Book to the author of the first thirty-nine, it is quite clear that he more fully recognizes the presence of the predictive element in both sections of the Book; indeed, he expressly affirms that the horizon of Isaiah "was not limited by the Exile, but extends to the advent of the historical Christ, and even beyond." Gratified as we are by this advance to what we hold to be the true point of view by one of the foremost disciples of Ewald, we have endeavoured to weigh his exposition quite impartially. And, in our judgment, he has given us the most helpful and original exegesis of the larger part of Isaiah's writings we have yet received. The qualities, indeed, which strike us as most commendable in it are that it is so obviously an honest expression of the views of an able and thorough scholar, and that it is so entirely original, so utterly his own view which he gives us. He does not waste our time by reciting the readings and interpretations of all who have gone before him, although, where it is necessary, he never fails to discuss the readings of the leading critics who have preceded him; but contents himself, for the most part, with stating his own reading tersely and giving the reasons which compel him to prefer it.

Another good quality of his work is that he makes good use of the labours of the scholars who in recent years have set themselves to decipher and interpret the Assyrian Inscriptions—as, for example, in dealing with Chap. x. 5—Chap. xii. 6, where he is enabled by their aid to determine the invader of Judah, whose march Isaiah predicts, to be Sargon, and not, as has been commonly supposed, Sennacherib, thus clearing up many difficulties involved in the earlier interpretation.

The defect of the work, if with all deference we may attribute defects to work so good, is that, under the influence of Ewald's somewhat too arbitrary and impatient genius, Mr. Cheyne is still too apt to suspect the MSS., or to charge them with insertions, omissions, blunders, on quite insufficient evidence. He gives up Chap. ix. Ver. 5; for example, as an "intrusive marginal gloss," which has slipped into the text, mainly on the ground that "the false prophets being leaders of the people ought to belong to 'the head,'" whereas Isaiah denounces them as "the tail" of the body politic: but surely it is easy enough to see that, moved by righteous indignation against men who had wilfully abused the highest function and the highest gifts, the Prophet might naturally and intentionally assign them the lowest place, and say with bitter emphasis, "The prophet who teacheth lies, he is the tail." So, again, in Chap. x. Ver. 27, he "strongly suspects an error in the text," because it is "strange to say that the pressure of the fat of an animal will destroy the yoke," because, taken thus, the last clause of the Verse is "very difficult." But where is the difficulty? If Israel is here conceived as an "animal under the yoke," and days of prosperity, fulness, and returning strength are seen to be at hand, it is surely very natural that the Prophet, working out his own figure, should be led to speak of the captive and burdened beast as growing to a strength so robust as that it should snap and shake the yoke from the swelling muscles of its neck. There are many similar instances to shew that Professor Cheyne is somewhat too prone to violate the sensible and accepted rule once more laid down by Mr. Findlay only a few pages back: "*Subjective* correction of the text is a desperate remedy, only to be thought of, if ever, on the proved failure of every exegetical resource, and when no intelligible meaning can possibly be given to the reading attested by documentary evidence." With this single qualification of our praise, we have only to thank Professor Cheyne for the first instalment of a most valuable Commentary—learned, honest, original, and, in the best sense, devout.