

## BRIEF NOTICES.

THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH, A New Translation, with Commentary and Appendices, by *the Rev. T. K. Cheyne, M.A.* (London: C. Kegan Paul & Co.). Vol. II. Of the first volume of Mr. Cheyne's Commentary we have already spoken in high, but well deserved, terms of praise. Honest, able, original, are epithets which are sure to rise in the mind of every competent reader of his work. And while the critical and exegetical notes of this second volume are to the full as valuable and instructive as those of the first, it gathers a still greater value and interest from the illustrative essays appended to it; for it is in these essays that most of the problems suggested by the prophecies of Isaiah are worked out. Of all these eleven essays it may be said that, whether we agree or disagree with the conclusions which the learned author has reached, critics of every school must be impressed by the studious honesty and fair-mindedness by which they are marked, and can only venture to differ from him with reluctance and diffidence. Two of these essays—the one on “the Christian element in Isaiah,” and the other on “the Servant of Jehovah”—are indeed of commanding interest, and go as near to an adequate and final solution of the questions they raise as, under present conditions, we can hope to get. And of these two, again, the former has the additional interest of being virtually a chapter in the author's mental biography. He assures us that it was “with some reluctance” that he has said so much of the course and development of his own train of thought; but it is well for his readers that he conquered that reluctance. It is long since we read anything of equal interest with the pages in which he describes how he was “surprised” into accepting “a definitely *Christian* interpretation of the Old Testament,” compelled to believe that the Psalms and the Prophets contain a distinctly predictive element pointing to the historical Messiah, now foreshadowing special circumstances in the life of Christ, and now giving “distinct pictures” of Him who suffered for our sins.

We have not space to discuss the principles laid down and the conclusions reached in this fine Commentary; but we heartily and emphatically commend it to our readers, and especially advise them to master the Essays with which it concludes.

*M.A.* (Edinburgh: Macniven and Wallace), which has recently issued from the press. It is, I believe, the first of a series of small primers, edited by Professor Salmond, of Aberdeen, and may be had for a few pence. There are many who, if they had undertaken a work so slight, would have been content to write it without much labour or study; but it was Mr. Thomson's habit to do well and thoroughly whatever he did at all. And it is very pleasant to see how much real labour and ability he has thrown into a task which many would have thought neither very exacting nor very urgent. It is obvious that he had prepared himself for it by translating both from the Hebrew and the Septuagint the scriptures which record the life of David; that he had carefully studied the geographical facts involved in it, with whatever would enable him to delineate with full and accurate knowledge the strange eventful story he had taken in hand. And yet he has told that story in the simplest language and the briefest compass, so that even the children in a Sunday School class may read it with understanding and without weariness, while even the most accomplished scholar will find hints in it which will be welcome and helpful to him. The perusal of it cannot fail to quicken a deeper regret at the loss we have all suffered in losing him. And if the other primers of this series approach the mark which he here touches, they will be invaluable to the very large class for whom they are intended.

Is it asking too much to demand in these days that, before any man rushes into print, he should at least have mastered the simplest rules of grammar? If that is not too high a standard to set up, may not a reviewer fairly hold himself released from any further examination of a book in which those rules are frequently and glaringly violated? In the introduction to *JESUS CHRIST'S MODE OF PRESENTING HIMSELF TO THE WORLD, A PROOF OF HIS DIVINE MISSION AND SUPERNATURAL WORK*, by the Rev. John Cooper, (who claims on his title-page to be the author of several previous works), the following sentences occur, the first of which, it will be seen, "never finds earthly close":—

"It was otherwise, however, with Christianity, which being the manifestation of the infinite depths of the Infinite Essence in a personal appearance of the essentially Divine, making atonement for the world in a stupendous deed of self-sacrifice."

And, again:—

“ Whence this tendency of all mere human philosophising? Is such rational, dutiful, loyal to truth, beneficial to man, or filial to God? Is it not the outcome of the spirit of self-assertion, the very essence of selfishness, in direct opposition to the self-sacrifice of God by the self-will of man? ”

When our readers have mastered these singular constructions, and, above all, when they have discerned what is meant by “the self-sacrifice of God by the self-will of man,” it will be time to trouble them with further extracts from an author who, though not without some power of thought, seems denied the power of literary expression.

It may be doubted whether *THE INCARNATION OF GOD, AND OTHER SERMONS*, by the Rev. Henry Batchelor, is excluded from the benefit of review by the rule just laid down; although it is brought perilously near to exclusion by such a sentence as this:—

“ We are assured,—and which lies at the foundation of all else—that God created man in his own image.”

But when questionable taste is added to questionable grammar, as in the following passage, the case grows clearer:—

“ Have you watched over some loved one, when you were convinced that the dreaded end had come? Did the unnameable languor of death appear to have fallen upon the fainting sufferer? Did drops, cold as November rain, *crawl* on breast and brow? ”

It may be inevitable that such sentences as these should occur in sermons “thrown off at the end of the week, in the midst of the toils of a laborious pastorate and an exacting public life.” And it may be equally inevitable that sermons so composed should shew few signs of thought and care except in the mere outlines. But, if such sermons must be preached, it does not follow that they should be printed: and to us it seems high time that at least the *publication* of such sermons as these were seriously discouraged.

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