

that the men who had followed Christ for years, utterly failed to catch the infection of that worldwide philanthropy, revealed not alone, or even chiefly, in words, but in looks, tones, actions, general bearing, in everything, in short, by which spirit is manifested? We cannot believe it. That the Companions of Jesus were in after days narrow Judaists is as incredible as that they were cowards; and both are alike incredible for the same reason, viz., because "they had been with Jesus."

A. B. BRUCE.

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### BRIEF NOTICES.

THE CAMBRIDGE BIBLE FOR SCHOOLS has been enriched by a *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* from the pen of Dr. Plumptre. It is not perhaps the most suitable class-book for boys and girls, for it deals with the most "questionable" of Scriptures in a most ingenious and speculative spirit; but of that surely those of us who are no longer boys or girls need not complain. *Students* of Ecclesiastes will be charmed to find Dr. Plumptre adopting the hypothesis of Hitzig and Tyler, and contending, with an originality which makes the hypothesis his own, that Koheleth was an Alexandrian Jew, familiar with the Epicurean and Stoic philosophies, who lived and wrote in the second century before Christ. And though I myself still hold to the Persian rather than to the Greek hypothesis of the book, and believe that Dr. Plumptre has claimed for the Epicurean or the Stoic philosophy many phrases so natural and inevitable that they were the common property of most schools of ancient thought, I am bound to admit that there are many passages in *The Preacher* which favour his view, and that he has illustrated them with an erudition and ingenuity which give them their full weight, and will compel every future commentator to deal with it. His critical and expository notes, too, are most valuable, whether his main hypothesis be accepted or refused; while the dissertations which precede or follow them gather up almost every conceivable illustration of the thoughts and spirit of the sacred writer from the literatures both of the ancient and of the modern world. In short, this little book is of far greater value than most of the

larger and more elaborate commentaries on this Scripture. Indispensable to the scholar, it will render real and large help to all who have to expound the dramatic utterances of *The Preacher* whether in the Church or in the School.

MERCY AND JUDGMENT, by *Rev. Canon Farrar* (London: Macmillan & Co.) is a supplement to *Eternal Hope*; but, though it handles the same theme, it handles it in a different way. Not that the Canon, as some have alleged, has shifted his ground or modified his tone. He would still, I apprehend, base "the larger hope" on the teaching of Scripture, and still cherish that hope as confidently as ever. But Dr. Pusey's strictures on his earlier work have induced him to come down for a time from the high ground of Scripture, in order to deal with the authority of the Fathers of the Church; to shew, as he does very conclusively, that many of the Fathers held and taught the very views for which he himself has been called in question; and so to prove that the doctrine of everlasting punishment cannot be "of the faith." To the general reader a long catena of patristic quotations, however choicely culled or brilliantly illustrated, cannot possess the interest of a stream of argument drawn from the clear fountains of Scripture; Nonconformist readers attach less weight to the decisions of these ancient Fathers than to those of modern scholars; while even the student, to whom their interpretations are most instructive, will be apt to conclude that the preponderant weight of authority must inevitably dip the scale on the orthodox side. It is the more necessary to point out, therefore, that *Mercy and Judgment* is not wholly taken up with the argument from "authority," but also recurs to the argument from Scripture. Every one who takes an interest in the most momentous theological question of modern times should study the chapters in which Canon Farrar deals with the eschatology of the Jews at the dawn of the Christian era, turns the argument so often drawn from the writings of Josephus against those who employ it, and once more sets forth the real teaching of Scripture on the doctrine of Future Retribution and the true principles of Scripture exegesis; for these chapters alone suffice to give a permanent value to his work.

*Editor.*

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