

*πέτρος* is that which I shall choose on which to build my Church," is his instantly-declared decision.

A thought in part parallel to that here presented is to be found in Isaiah li. 1, 2: "Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you." Here "Abraham your father" is spoken of to the Jewish people as "the rock whence ye are hewn." Passing on to New Testament times, we learn from the teaching of our Lord and his apostles, that it is no longer those who merely trace their lineal descent from Abraham, but those who are partakers of the same faith, that are to be reckoned as his true children. He is "the father of the faithful" to whatever race belonging. Abraham the man of faith is as the quarry. It is a like faith that will bespeak stones taken from that quarry. It is by their faith that their solidarity with Abraham is to be discerned.

Now the two passages are so far similar that in both there is implied *πέτροι* and a *πέτρα*. They are dissimilar in this—that in the one case the *πέτρα* is quarried to furnish *πέτροι* for a building; in the other case the *πέτρα* in its entirety furnishes the foundation on which the building is to be reared.

The different use of the figure in each case is governed by the fact, that in one case attention is concentrated on the single individuality of Abraham, "I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him"; while in the other case, though Peter is singled out, it is not with any view that his position is to be as unique as that of Abraham—he is but one *πέτρος*; and it is the totality of such *πέτροι*, *coalescing in thought into the one πέτρα*, that will furnish a sure foundation for the Church that Christ will build.

In the one case the thought proceeds from the *πέτρα* to the *πέτροι*; in the other case from the *πέτροι* to the *πέτρα*; but the idea of the *πέτρα* is in both cases the same—the totality of "them that have obtained like precious faith" with Abraham and Peter (2 Pet. i. 1).

F. G. CHOLMONDELEY.

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### BRIEF NOTICES.

THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE, CHIEFLY TOLD IN HIS OWN LETTERS, *Edited by his Son, Frederick Maurice* (London: Macmillans). Biography hardly falls within our scope. Nor has this "Life" been sent to us for review. But it may be permitted to

one who gratefully remembers the years in which he learned more from Maurice than from most men, to say, that, rich as the last decade or two have been in valuable biographies, this surpasses them all; and that, noble and commanding as have been the characters revealed to us in these admirable works, yet, in his judgment, no thinker more noble and penetrating, no saint more pure and humble and loving, than the scholar and divine so clearly and faithfully reflected here, has served and enriched his generation. It is not unlikely that in the Christian annals he, who was once everywhere spoken against, may yet stand forth as the foremost teacher of his time, with the deepest insight, the most beautiful spirit.

Nor can it be alien to the function of this Magazine to remark that, in the "Life and Letters" now given to the world, the secret of one of the greatest of Biblical expositors is so transparently displayed, that even the wayfarer, with his hasty and often unsympathetic glances, may apprehend it, if he will. Ever since Maurice commanded any measure of public attention, there has been an outcry against the mistiness or obscurity of his utterances. Many intelligent and well-disposed persons even, who were, or who thought they were, very willing to learn whatever he could teach them, have professed themselves quite unable to grasp his meaning, to gain any clear and definite conception of his beliefs and aims. And, no doubt, to those who had neither habituated themselves to his manner of thinking, nor passed through certain stages of thought and spiritual experience which his writings presuppose, it must have been difficult to follow the workings of a mind so rarely gifted, so profoundly meditative and rich in experience. But in this "Life" there are many letters of his in which his views and convictions are so clearly and simply expressed, that this outcry must either cease or recoil on the heads of those who raise or repeat it. Nay, there is *one* letter—it will be found on pages 154-7 of Volume I.—addressed to his mother, which, if only it be read with common attention, will give such an insight into the very heart of his position as will bring his teaching within the reach of any man who cares to master it. Let any of our readers try the experiment; and if it fails with them, then we will confess that, to them at least, it is not given to know what one of the wisest and holiest of Christian teachers meant.

SERMONS PREACHED AT IBROX, by *Joseph Leckie, D.D.* (Glasgow: Maclehose & Sons). A new—new to us at least—and original

preacher has appeared. There is a strange impress of power on these discourses, rudely constructed as some of them are when considered—as every great sermon put into print should be considered—as works of art. Occasionally their very roughness of construction and expression becomes an element of their power, and seems to betray a mind so occupied in thought, so quick with fervour, as to disdain the mere niceties of form and style. Probably, however, these literary defects arise from the fact that Dr. Leckie speaks, and does not write, his sermons, but has to gather them up from the imperfect notes taken by members of his congregation: for, with a certain indifference to literary form, his discourses combine a frequent beauty and finish of expression of the rarest kind.

Two “vital signs” disclose themselves even to the cursory reader of these sermons. The first, that Dr. Leckie shews his power and originality as a thinker not simply when he takes an out of the way topic, when he is dealing with unworn and striking texts. In dealing with these, indeed, admirable as his treatment of them is on the whole, he sometimes forces meanings from, or on, his texts which they will very hardly bear, as, for example, in that on *Plants and Corner Stones*. It is when he is at his simplest that he is at his best, when he moves along the beaten way that he moves most vigorously, when he is dealing with familiar words and familiar difficulties that he is most striking and impressive. Thus, in his sermon on Matthew xi. 25, 26, *Why God reveals to Babes*, he gives a better exposition of that difficult passage than we have met in any commentary, and a more satisfactory solution of the standing problem, How it comes to pass that God should disclose Himself to the childlike, and hide Himself from the learned and the wise—a solution which instantly commends itself at once to the judgment and to the heart. The second sign is, that he is familiar with the spirit of the time, and seeks to meet its needs and doubts with an earnest sincerity. He makes one aware that he has himself known these doubts and conquered them, felt these needs and found a full supply for them in the Gospel of Christ; that he is but translating into general terms his individual experience of the power of the truth as it is in Jesus to satisfy all the wants and cravings of the soul. And this we take to be the supreme sign, or note, of the true preacher, of the man who is called of God to teach and comfort his brethren.

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AN OLD TESTAMENT COMMENTARY FOR ENGLISH READERS, Vols. IV. and V., *Edited by Bishop Ellicott* (London: Cassells). We regret to report that this Commentary does not grow upon us as it proceeds. There is much fairly good work in it indeed, much also which is poor and indifferent, and a little which is very good; but nothing which is at all likely to supersede other and older commentaries. In our judgment, even the Speaker's Commentary stands considerably higher on the scale. We leave our readers to discover what is poor and indifferent in these volumes for themselves. Among the fairly good—which, however, might easily have been better, since better work is to be found in well-known commentaries—we may reckon Mr. Aglen's work on *The Psalms*, and that of Dr. Reynolds, Professor Whitehouse, Mr. Jennings, and Mr. Lowe, on *The Minor Prophets*. The best is that of Dean Plumptre on *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah*, though even he is evidently hampered for want of space. Both these expositions, however, are very helpful; and though Mr. Cheyne's work on *Isaiah* must still be placed high above that of any of our English scholars, yet, as a popular exposition, that of the Dean of Wells is likely to take and keep the first place. Of Dr. G. Salmon's work on *Ecclesiastes* it is difficult to know what to say, without seeming to fail in modesty and respect. His high rank, both as scholar and thinker, is universally admitted. And in this little commentary he shows his usual erudition, patience, and fairness in stating the many problems which the treatise of *the Preacher* suggests; but he neither solves, nor professes to solve, them. Such evenly balanced work is eminently suited to scholars, but is surely out of place in *popular* exposition. What the general reader wants is not a balancing of opposite difficulties till he seems to have lost everything save his balance, but such clear guidance and leading as can only be given by one who has reached decided views of the questions in hand, and is prepared to state them in a definite form, with whatever deference to those who hold opposite opinions.

On the whole, then, we cannot say that this Commentary fulfils the promise of its Preface. While, in parts, it is quite worth consulting by those who have many books at command, we cannot honestly recommend it to those who can afford but few commentaries, or only one.

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