

*SURVEY OF RECENT BIBLICAL LITERATURE.*

THE *Sermon Bible*, issued by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton, has reached its twelfth and concluding volume. The concluding portion of the New Testament, from 1. Peter to Revelation, is here treated. The anonymous compiler deserves the greatest credit for the manner in which he has discharged his laborious task. The writers from whom he draws his material are well selected, and the abstracts of sermons which he has drawn up retain more of the vital juices of his originals than such digests are wont to preserve. The *Sermon Bible* is easily first of its class.—*In the Days of Youth*, is a volume of sermons to boys and girls, by J. M. Gibbon (Elliot Stock), and can be cordially recommended to ministers who are in search of material for similar addresses. Mr. Gibbon is no prentice hand. He has the gift. He can make serious subjects interesting without having recourse to anecdotes or extravagance or sensationalism of any kind.

In *The Christian Certainties* (Isbister & Co.), Dr. John Clifford has given to the public a short series of "addresses in exposition and defence of the Christian Faith." The volume deserves a hearty welcome. There was room for it. The very excellence of some previous "apologies" has prevented them from becoming popular. They are too special, or too scholastic, or too philosophical. Dr. Clifford's is the preacher's apology. He recognises the craving for certainty which characterizes our time. "We want to be as sure of God in conduct and thought, in deed and idea, as we are of gases and minerals, of chemical tests and reagents, of the laws of motion amongst the stars, and the principle of gravitation on the earth: we seek the certitude of science on matters of religion and life." Dr. Clifford believes we can have it, and these addresses are an attempt to exhibit the grounds of this certainty. These grounds are the familiar ones: the Person of Christ, His appeal to human needs and instincts, and especially what Dr. Clifford calls "the fifth gospel," the record in history and experience of the work done by Christ since His Ascension in regenerating the world and the individual. These and other points are enforced with much freshness of illustration and with eloquence. The temper in which the assailants of Christianity are

met may be gathered from the following: "We do not condemn, we mourn. We do not denounce, but we do say it is unaccountably strange that the Lord Jesus should be doing amongst men to-day such marvellous works as we know He is, and men of proved ability and honesty of purpose should find no better occupation than disparaging His work and rejecting His claims." Much is adduced by Dr. Clifford in favour of Christianity which should tell on candid minds. Dr. Clifford is too busy a man to give his work time to condense and solidify; but considered as preaching, these addresses are of a high order.

A fifth edition of Dr. Dougan Clarke's *Offices of the Holy Spirit*, has been issued by Messrs. Partridge & Co. The little book is a simple, straightforward, and useful manual on the work of the Holy Spirit. It is practical, rather than scientific, and religious inquirers will find it helpful. The chapter on "Praying in the Spirit" is interesting, though perhaps one-sided.—*Sin and Redemption*, by John Garnier (Elliot Stock) is a long and somewhat heavily written theological treatise, in which there is evidence of a considerable expenditure of independent thinking. Without being at all imbued with the modern spirit, Mr. Garnier departs considerably from traditional views. There are true and important observations in his book, but if these are to reach the popular mind, they must be put in a more attractive form.

An address on *The Personality of the Preacher*, by the Rev. Joseph Dawson, of Halifax (Charles H. Kelly), is well worth the attention of those who are called to that function. It is written in a lively and incisive style, and brings into prominence elements in the success or failure of a preacher which are too often neglected.—*Life and Religion* is a small volume of sermons by Rev. H. Russell Wakefield, Vicar of Sandgate (Elliot Stock). The sermons are much above the average, and illustrate the main truths of religion from life.—The same publishers issue a small volume of hymns by J. R. Godfrey under the title *Lyra Bartonica*.

*Tools for Teachers* is precisely the book for which teachers of Bible classes and Sunday Schools have long waited. It is a judicious assortment of anecdotes and illustrations. They are chosen with exceptionally good taste from very various sources, and are skilfully arranged under different headings so as to be easy of reference. The volume is itself very entertaining, and parents in search of Sunday reading for their boys could not do better than

put it in their hands. Ministers who preach to the young will be grateful to the compiler, Mr. William Moodie, and to the publisher, Mr. Elliot Stock.

All lovers of literature are under obligation to Elizabeth A. Reed for her *Persian Literature, Ancient and Modern* (Chicago: Griggs & Co.). She not only gives us a clear account of the history of Persian literature from the most remote to the most recent times, but furnishes us with material for forming our own judgment by printing copious extracts from the various poets. The story of Sohrab and Rustem, the Shah Namah, the pathetic tale of Laili and Majnun, the works of Sadi, and many others, are here presented in most attractive samples. English readers who have not previously made acquaintance with Persian literature will be surprised and delighted with the vivacity and beauty, the noble ethical tone and the tender sentiment which it abundantly exhibits. Miss Reed has given us a charming and useful volume.

The Rev. T. P. Ring, B.A., Rector of Hanley, has published six addresses to working men on the Resurrection of Christ, under the title, *The Most Certain Fact of History*. The little volume will be useful to those who seek a plain and fair statement of the evidence for the Resurrection of Christ and of the nature of the risen body. It is in its second edition, and is published by Messrs. Skeffington & Son.—*The Master's Guide for His Disciples* (Elliot Stock), is a manual of all the recorded sayings of Jesus arranged topically for easy consultation. The three general headings are The Devout Life, The Practical Life, and The Intellectual Life. The classification has been made with considerable skill, and the small volume is strikingly pretty, and will prove serviceable both for study and for devotion.—In *Verses*, by Dora Sigerson (Elliot Stock) will be found a good deal of thought, poetry, and melody.

May I remind New Testament students that in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* they will find much that bears upon their studies. In the October number, for example, a new translation of the Book of Jubilees is begun by the Rev. R. H. Charles, an elaborate article by Prof. Büchler investigates the triennial reading of the Law and the Prophets, and there are several reviews of theological works, one by Mr. Upton of Principal Fairbairn's *Christ in Modern Theology*, all written with unusual *verve* and intelligence.—Issued by the same publisher, Mr. David Nutt, is another monthly magazine, the *Babylonian and Oriental Record*,

in which hints on Biblical matters from time to time appear, drawn from recondite sources.

It may also be worth while to remind our readers that they will find frequent references to New Testament study in the *Classical Review*, published by Mr. Nutt. Besides the reviews of commentaries which occasionally appear, and the discussions of points in grammar and in lexical usage, there are sometimes contributions on ancient customs, and notices of inscriptions which vividly illustrate passages in the New Testament.

It may be allowable to trespass into the domain of Old Testament literature so far as to note the appearance of two exceptionally thoughtful volumes on the Psalms. The one is the second volume of Dr. Alexander Maclaren's contribution to the *Expositor's Bible*, dealing with Psalms xxxix.-lxxxix. His translations of the Psalms are themselves a commentary, and his expositions abound in the fresh insight, the devout imagination, and the eye to life which have endeared him to English-speaking Christendom.—The other volume belongs to the excellent series of *Books for Bible Students* issued by the Wesleyans, and is entitled *The Praises of Israel: an Introduction to the Study of the Psalms*, by W. T. Davison, M.A., D.D., Handsworth College, Birmingham (Charles H. Kelly). It would be difficult to imagine a book better suited to its purpose, or written in a healthier spirit, and with more complete mastery of the subject. It is to be hoped that laymen as well as professional students will avail themselves of this attractive guide to a region of knowledge which it is most interesting and most necessary to explore. No one will read this small volume without feeling that he owes to Prof. Davison many fresh ideas and much stimulus.

From America there reaches us a volume of considerable utility. The American Society of Church History, at its annual meeting held in the city of Washington three years ago, took the bold step of resolving to prepare a series of denominational histories which would together constitute an American Church History. The first fruits of that resolution now appear in a large volume issued by the Christian Literature Company of New York, giving a statistical account of the numerous ecclesiastical bodies in the United States. This volume has been prepared by Dr. H. K. Carroll, and as it contains not only statistical tables of membership and so forth, but also a brief description of the beliefs which

distinguish the various bodies of Christians, it is likely to find interested readers on this side as well as in America —To a somewhat similar department belongs Prof. Gumlich's *Christian Creeds and Confessions*, translated by L. A. Wheatley, and published by F. Norgate and Co. In this small volume of little more than one hundred pages are contained a brief account of the chief creeds of the Greek, the Roman Catholic, the Lutheran, and the Reformed Churches, an exposition of the doctrines delivered in these various creeds, and an account of the most important sects and their tenets, such as the Old Catholics, the Stundists, the Society of Friends, the Baptists, the Swedenborgians, the Irvingites, and so forth. There was room for such a volume, and many who have not access to or time to consult larger books will be thankful for Dr. Gumlich's brief account.

A new volume of *Sermons* by Prebendary Eyton is issued by Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., and will be welcomed by many. The characteristic of Mr. Eyton's preaching is its ethical strength. In appealing to the conscience, and setting before his hearers the significance of this or that spiritual condition and the real value of life, he has few equals. One of the sermons here published is a severe but instructive criticism of the Salvation Army schemes.

Mr. William Dearing Harden has published with Messrs. G. P. Putnam's Sons *An Enquiry into the Truth of Dogmatic Christianity*, under the impression that if he frees our religion from the errors which have disfigured and maimed it, "Christianity will arise from the ashes of dogmatism purified, glorified." Mr. Harden has been born a century and a half too late, and his attempt to revive a crude Deism cannot now be looked upon with favour. It is a pity that so much acuteness and so much power of expression should be rendered nugatory by ignorance of the real questions at issue. Mr. Harden should have studied the best Christian Apologetics instead of engaging in controversy with a Roman Catholic bishop. There are clever things and useful things in Mr. Harden's book, but it cannot weigh in the great controversy.

It has long been felt that a selection from the writings of the first Christian centuries might profitably be used in schools and colleges. Indeed several attempts have been made to supply this desideratum. But whether because printed on blotting-paper or because not presenting quite the most suitable passages, none of

these has come into general use. The task of selecting appropriate extracts could not have been entrusted to better hands than Mr. Gwatkin's.<sup>1</sup> The passages which appear in this volume are, with one or two exceptions, precisely those with which the student should be familiar. The arrangement might perhaps be improved. Why separate the passages on the Neronian persecution? Might it not have been better to adopt either a chronological or a topical order: either to arrange the passages rigidly according to their date, or to classify them under such headings as Imperial Edicts, Narratives of Persecutions, The Canon, Ecclesiastical Government, and so forth? And, if the book is to be used in the class-room, the fact that a translation is given on the opposite page may give rise to difficulties. But the book as it stands is a most valuable addition to the student's apparatus.

MARCUS DODS.

<sup>1</sup> *Selections from Early Writers illustrative of Church History to the time of Constantine.* By Henry Melvill Gwatkin, M.A., Dixie Prof. of Eccl. History, Cambridge. (Macmillan & Co.).