

I am far indeed from regarding myself as infallible. Rather am I firmly convinced—and every day contributes to force this upon my attention—that my deciphering is in many points of detail merely ephemeral, and that in course of time much of it will crumble away. But that is not only excusable, it is a matter of course. I am but human. If one has the courage to think and to form combinations, he must frequently and in many ways fall into error. But when Hommel applies to what he cannot accept of the results I have reached by a severe process of thought the name ‘absurdities,’ he presents them in a light in which it seems to me they do not deserve to appear, even if Hommel’s own views were correct. I believe, however, that the author of *Ancient Hebrew Tradition* and other works, not to speak of the critique with which I am dealing, is hardly the man to judge of what is absurd, and has no right to speak of the conclusions of his colleagues as ‘absurdities.’ ‘He who sits in a glass house ought not to throw stones.’

I have replied to Professor Hommel more fully than I am accustomed to do on other occasions when I am wantonly assailed by him or others. Silence is in such cases generally the most effective defence. But as I am concerned that in England as well as in Germany the true state of this important question should be learned once for all, I have felt compelled to make an exception in this

instance, and have gladly availed myself of the kind permission of the editor of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES to express my views on Professor Hommel’s article.

Having reached in my deciphering a point from which I daily gain deeper insight into the inscriptions, it strikes me as almost comical that even yet I should have to fight for my life. I can only wish that Hommel may continue to follow his own method of decipherment, disdaining to the uttermost my results, and reaching such conclusions, e.g. as that a sign, which occurs some dozen and a half times in the Lion inscription, instead of being a ‘word-closer’ (*Wortbeschiesser*), or the like, stands for ‘son.’ That is the surest and the shortest way to discover that when in the main points he abandons my methods he will find himself on a dead track; and as Hommel professes to have at heart only the victory of the truth, he will thus be brought to see and to confess that the inscriptions in the main can be deciphered only in the way in which I have done it.

I may say beforehand that I do not intend to notice any rejoinder Professor Hommel may choose to make. The above must suffice by way of answer to anything he may still bring forward against me, unless, instead of mere baseless assertions, he should adduce substantial arguments, showing that he at least knows the inscriptions, which as yet he does not.

At the Literary Table.

THE BOOKS OF THE MONTH.

THE QUEST OF FAITH. BY T. B. SAUNDERS. (*Blackwood*, 8vo, pp. 191. 7s. 6d.)

NOT everyone who set out in quest of the Holy Grail found it. Mr. Saunders sets out in quest of Faith and finds it not. What he finds is that religion is a product of the human spirit. The loftier minds, the men of genius, have attained a loftier view than is granted to common humanity. And that loftier view is heaven. For a moment Mr. Saunders seemed to pause, content with ‘an additional factor,’ willing to describe it as ‘Fate, Unknown Power, God, or whatever other term.’ But even that was dismissed as needless. The human spirit alone engenders the tendency towards

higher moral and social relations, which we call religion. But, in truth, Mr. Saunders does not set out in quest of Faith. He sets out to criticise all the recent popular books that handle matters of faith, and to show them unable to establish it. He criticises cleverly, and for the most part convincingly. But his own position is the most open to criticism of them all.

RECENT ARCHÆOLOGY AND THE BIBLE. BY THE REV. THOMAS NICOL, D.D. (*Blackwood*, 8vo, pp. xii, 333. 9s. net.)

There are few things more urgently needed at present than a survey of recent Biblical Archæ-

ology. No one is able to keep pace with all the work unless he gives himself specially to it. No one is able to disentangle conflicting statements and detect immature theories unless he has all the facts at his finger ends. No one, in short, has any satisfaction at the present moment in using the results of exploration; they are too multifarious and too indefinite. We need a brief, capable survey, and Dr. Nicol has furnished it.

Dr. Nicol's volume contains the Croall Lectures for 1898. In their delivery these lectures attracted distinct attention. Since they were delivered Dr. Nicol has both travelled in the East and read most extensively in the relevant literature. The book is really much richer than the lectures were, they have had a wider field to cover, for even within a year there have been important finds, and they have been set at the point of view of the most recent scholarship. To those therefore who heard the lectures and drank them in, the volume will be welcome, at once corrective and informing.

Dr. Nicol covers the whole field of Biblical Archæology. For that we are thankful. It is a survey, a fireside handbook, we need, not a scholar's discussion or explorer's exhibition of some minute corner. We need to see where we are, both as to facts and tendencies. What can we believe as to the extent and value of the discoveries of past years? What must we believe as to their relation to the Old and New Testament? These are the questions Dr. Nicol has answered. We have verified his statements on some of the most critical matters, and find him both cautious and firm. We have followed the flow of his narrative from beginning to end with increasing attention and interest. The time may come, it may not be far off, when this volume will be ancient history. But it is history, and will always remain history; it will mark a stage in our knowledge of this great subject; and for the present it will at least be a fine opportunity for what Canon Butler calls 'holy self-indulgence' as we turn its fascinating pages.

THE ASCENT THROUGH CHRIST. BY E. GRIFFITH-JONES, B.A. (*Bowden*. Crown 8vo, pp. xxvi, 469. 7s. 6d.)

The title is probably a reminiscence of Drummond's 'Ascent of Man'; the sub-title is

more luminous, 'A Study of the Doctrine of Redemption in the Light of the Theory of Evolution.' The first thing that occurs to one to say about the book itself is that both the author and the publisher have evidently resolved to do their best by it. If this is not a good book, I cannot write a good book, the author seems to say, I have put my best into this one; and the publisher seems to add, I too have done my best by it. So it is a book that at once arrests. We begin to read it prejudiced in its favour.

And it never loses that first impression. We see that the author is not the very highest authority either in Evolution or in the doctrine of Redemption. We see that he has not that catching felicity of style which carries everything before it. But all through we feel that we are in competent hands, and in touch with an extremely candid and considerate mind. Nay, we find at the close that Mr. Griffith-Jones has actually written the book that was waiting to be written on this subject. There is the sufficiency of authority, and there is the open-mindedness that were needed. There is also the unflinching faith that was as much needed as anything. If Mr. Griffith-Jones had failed to show that Evolution preserved the doctrine of Redemption, we should not have been disturbed. We know it is true whatever comes of Evolution. But it is at least of intellectual interest to know that a modest theory of Evolution finds place for both the Fall and the Incarnation.

THE INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY.
THE THEOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.
BY GEORGE BARKER STEVENS, PH.D. DD. (*T. & T. Clark*. 8vo, pp. 617. 12s.)

Whilst we wait for Professor Davidson's *Theology of the Old Testament* there comes its companion volume. It is only a master of the subject that can gather the theology of either Testament into one lucid volume. Professor Stevens has had experience. His volumes on the Johannine and the Pauline theology have been, since their recent issue, the New Testament student's constant guide and friend. In this volume there are the same features of fulness, clear statement, sane judgment. There is also the same distinct sense of ownership. The judgments are sane, not because they express the average, but rather, as it seems to us, because the author has waited to find them work.

First, he carefully gathers the facts,—not passages merely, but also characteristics,—and then, stating his conclusions, he shows how they have worked themselves out in the lives of the men who reveal them, and in his own life also. The book seems to us therefore to be more than a safe guide to the New Testament theology, it is an impressive encouragement to newness of personal life.

Messrs. James Clarke & Co. pursue the issue of their 'Small Books on Great Subjects.' The new volume contains five evangelical doctrinal sermons by the Rev. H. Arnold Thomas, M.A., under the title of *The Way of Life* (pp. 119, 1s. 6d.) The sermon on 'Saved by His Life' is full of correction for all unscriptural and mechanical methods of sanctification.

The Chair of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of Aberdeen has in our time been occupied first by Professor Bain and then by Professor Minto. And now there comes from its present occupant, Professor Davidson, a manual of *Christian Ethics* (R. & R. Clark). It is a sign to this generation. First antagonism, then agnosticism, then a hearty desire to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God. And Professor Davidson has put his talents into the little book. It is full and scholarly.

Mr. Brooke and Mr. M'Lean are making steady progress with the great Cambridge Septuagint. Meantime Professor Swete has revised the third volume of his manual edition, and issued it anew (Cambridge, University Press, 7s. 6d.) Besides the correction of errors that had crept into the edition of 1894, it contains the Greek fragments of the Book of Enoch and a revised text and apparatus of the Psalms of Solomon; the apparatus to Isaiah and Ezekiel has been compared with the facsimile of Q, and the more important readings of the Syriac text of 4 Maccabees have been added to the Appendix.

MY TOUR IN PALESTINE AND SYRIA. BY F. H. DEVERELL. (*Eyre & Spottiswoode*. 8vo, pp. 269, with Map and Illustrations.)

A new eye sees ever new things in Palestine as well as everywhere else. Mr. Deverell has the seeing eye. The actual additions to our topo-

graphical facts are not great. How could they be after this time by a wayfarer? But the old facts and scenes are set in new lights, and there are texts of the Bible that have a little more of their riches quarried out of them. The book is well worth reading by even the experienced in Palestine travel, and it is certainly easy to read.

SABBATH NIGHTS AT PITCOONANS. BY THE AUTHOR OF 'SANDY SCOTT'S BIBLE CLASS.' (*Hodder & Stoughton*. Crown 8vo, pp. 95. 1s. 6d.)

'Sandy Scott' preaches the gospel as he has learned it—in broad Scotch. Some there are to whom the good Samaritan speaking Aberdeenshire (or the like) is either comical or irreverent. But no doubt the good Samaritan spoke the vernacular of his day, and so it is merely a matter of translation. And no one will deny the reality, or even the pathos of these Bible-class conversations.

TRUE LIMITS OF RITUAL IN THE CHURCH. EDITED BY THE REV. ROBERT LINKLATER, D.D. (*Longmans*. Crown 8vo, pp. xvi, 250. 5s.)

Dr. Linklater has found seven High Churchmen, and himself the eighth, to write an eirenicon. They are pronounced High Churchmen all. They do not refuse to write an eirenicon. But they know what an eirenicon means. The wolf and the lamb must lie down together, but the only method of accomplishing it is for the lamb to lie down inside the wolf, and they even make their invitation with a growl. The true limits of ritual are of course the boards of the Prayer Book. But the Prayer Book is susceptible of the most wonderful wealth of interpretation. Our eirenicon is that you must interpret it in our way or you are anathema.

Dr. Linklater is disappointed of one of his papers, so he writes the introductory essay himself. He first disposes of the difficulty 'which fair English minds must necessarily experience, in accounting for the united and sustained opposition at the present moment, of all sorts and conditions of men against the High Church clergy of the Church of England.' And he disposes of it easily. The High Church clergy are the followers of the Lord, all the rest are the 'world.' 'We remember certain utterances of our Divine Lord and Master by which He prepared His disciples for the opposition of the world, and warned them that they must expect to be treated as the world

treated Him.' That settles the matter at once and satisfactorily.

And then Mr. Wylde of Leeds enters 'A Plea for Reasonableness,' and shows how reasonable is even the veneration of the Cross, of which one part consists in worshippers 'kneeling before the representation of our Crucified Lord, and kissing the feet of the figure.'

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY OF BISHOPS IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. BY THE REV. A. T. WIRGMAN, D.D., D.C.L. (*Longmans*. Crown 8vo, pp. 292. 6s.)

Provost Wirgman has worked through the history of the Church from the Apostolic Age to the Council of Chalcedon in 451 for the purpose of discovering the position and authority of the Bishop. That has been his sole search, and he has not missed many particulars. The book is therefore valuable, apart from its conclusions, for the fulness of its information. It is a textbook on this great vexed matter, with the judicious use of which any student may reach his own conclusions. But Dr. Wirgman's conclusions are also a weighty portion. He is transparently honest. He is severely scientific. No doubt the intellectual prepossession is there in spite of him; but it is not consciously there. And then it may always be discounted, the materials themselves being provided.

INSTRUCTIONS ON THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN. BY THE REV. CRESSWELL STRANGE, M.A. (*Longmans*. Crown 8vo, pp. xx, 331. 6s.)

It is painful to think that with all our progress in biblical interpretation, one still opens a new book on the Apocalypse with misgiving. For still is it the happy hunting ground of the bitter sectary or the visionary saint, though he has been driven out of every other Scripture. But then, when the book is found to be credible, the relief is very pleasant. Mr. Strange is credible. He is modern and restrained. He is full of instruction and help. If the average student would read this book first and then the Apocalypse itself, passing all other introductions by, he would receive a grounding in the meaning of this marvellous writing that would stand him in good stead for ever. The scholarship is as accurate as the illustration is felicitous.

UNIVERSITY AND OTHER SERMONS. BY H. M. BUTLER, D.D., LL.D. (Cambridge: *Macmillan & Bowes*. Crown 8vo, pp. 350. 5s. net.)

We are all familiar with the phrase, 'an enlightened self-interest,' and we are not very fond of it. But what shall we make of the expression, 'a holy self-indulgence'? Dr. Butler recommends it to the modern preacher. And what he means is, that the modern preacher should let his desires go out to the reading of history and biography, and then preach what he has read. Dr. Butler seems to think it is a holy penance to read the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Psalms, and preach them to the people. It is indulgence to read the life of Francis Xavier or the story of Waterloo. Let it be preached as it is read, he says; it will then become a *holy* indulgence. Whereupon, says Dr. Butler, 'he will be the better for it himself, and his people will share the benefit. In the noble phrase of Robert Hall, he will have enlarged their intercourse with heaven.' Dr. Butler himself preaches so. The first half of the book is occupied with simple discourses on Scripture themes; the second, with discourses on historical persons and events. We find the Funeral of President Garfield, the Battle of Waterloo, and Balaclava Day.

The third volume of the 'Eversley' *Shakespeare* is out. It contains 'Much Ado,' 'All's Well,' 'Measure for Measure, and 'Troilus and Cressida.' The Introductions are not historical only, there is also exposition of structure and character; but all is short as short can be. The plays make up the volume.

The third volume of Dr. Joseph Parker's *Studies in Texts* has been published by Mr. Horace Marshall. It contains ten long sermons which bristle with sharp points, many prayers, a narrative of the history of the Institute of Homiletics, and eighty pages of 'Phases of Texts,' which are sermons either in their first or second childhood, we cannot tell which. But there is in the volume from first to last at least a year's great discourses, if you can draw them out of it.

Messrs. Marshall Brothers are the publishers of a promising book for preachers by the Rev. Robert Tuck, B.A., entitled *The Hour before Holy Communion*. It contains collects, hymns, and meditations. They also issue a cheaper edition of Fox's *Victory through the Name*.

Messrs. Methuen are running so many series at present that one has to walk warily not to get lost among them. One of the series is 'The Library of Devotion,' and the first volume of it we have seen is Keble's *Lyra Innocentium*, edited by Professor Walter Lock—the greatest of Keble editors. It is a taking little volume; its paper just a little too thin and transparent; its editing irreproachable.

ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. BY C. GORE, M.A., D.D. (*Murray*. Crown 8vo, pp. 326. 3s. 6d.)

Canon Gore has caught the ear of the religious reading world, and he is determined to use his opportunity. A nobler ambition than the ambition to make known the Epistles of St. Paul to this busy generation a man could scarcely have. This generation is impatient of St. Paul. It neglects him, and even disowns him, and no wonder that things are not going well with this generation. Canon Gore is actually bringing it back to St. Paul. And although his St. Paul is not wholly yours or mine, it is a great achievement and a great gain. The present volume is the first half of *Romans*. It is most invigorating reading.

Messrs. Nisbet have just put out a new edition of Mr. Reid Howatt's *The Children's Pew*, one of the few classical books of children's sermons, at the very reasonable price of half a crown.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER. BY THE REV. JAMES ROBERTSON, D.D. (*Oliphant*. Crown 8vo, pp. 184. 3s. 6d.)

There is no subject on which so many good books are written as on Preaching. That is because we have not yet recognized its greatness. We do not reckon it great enough to endow Preaching Chairs in all our Colleges. So we appoint lecturers. When they have delivered their course they can publish, for the lectures will not be required again. And readers are at once found for every new volume as it comes. These volumes differ, but they are all read. They differ in aim as well as in execution. Dr. Robertson's aim is characteristically modest. He is a man with experience behind him; he would pass it over to younger men, that they may do less harm than young preachers generally do, and begin sooner to do good. It is no volume of systematic homiletic therefore. It is a fine volume of systematic good sense. There are some who read all

the books on Preaching that are published, there are some who select the best. This is one to be selected.

THE CULTURE OF CHRISTIAN MANHOOD. EDITED BY W. H. SALLMON. (*Oliphant*. Crown 8vo, pp. 309. 3s. 6d.)

The sixteen sermons in this volume were preached in the College Chapel of Yale University by sixteen of the best known preachers of America. They are addressed to young men. The young men are taken to be intelligent and in earnest. The earnestness is believed to be not far from the kingdom of God. And the way of entrance as well as the life within are described with clearness of thought and warmth of personal attachment. These sermons are as near an approach as one will find to the 'pattern in the mount' of sermons to young men.

AMONG THE WILD NGONI. BY W. A. ELMSLIE, F.R.G.S. (*Oliphant*. Crown 8vo, pp. 319. 3s. 6d.)

Dr. Elmslie has written a simply fascinating book. The traveller with no interest in Christian missions, the Christian with no interest in travel, both will find it fascinating. And it is true. It is strictly true, and under rather than over drawn. For Dr. Elmslie is a Christian himself with a Christian conscience. It would have been easy to have made it a much more pretentious book, and then it would probably have had a greater circulation. But it is well done, and full of accurate graphic illustrations.

A third volume has been issued by Messrs. Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier of Dr. Whyte's *Bible Characters* (crown 8vo, pp. 241, 3s. 6d.). The characters are taken as before in the order in which they lie in the Bible. The first is Ahithophel, the last Nehemiah. And, as before, every study is an arrest, both of the 'character' and of the reader. For a half-hour or more, Ahithophel is held there, and the very soul of him is turned out till you can see the motives that are written across it. It is a terrible time for Ahithophel. And it is no less terrible for you. For Ahithophel's soul becomes yours. It is your motives and your soul the congregation is seeing and reading.

The Boys' Brigade is associated in many minds with the name of Mr. Herbert Reid. If Mr.

Reid has not the literary skill of the late Professor Drummond, he has more knowledge. The book which he has just published—*Private James Fyffe* (Oliphant, 1s. 6d.)—is not a connected story, but a series of incidents. It owes its interest to the close contact it always keeps with the character and capacity of the average Brigade boy. Mr. Reid hears the Saviour say, 'Suffer the growing boy to come unto Me, and encourage him with all your might.'

In *Foretokens of Immortality*, by Newell Dwight Hillis, which Messrs. Oliphant have also published, there are many striking ideas (though they are clothed in somewhat gorgeous array of language). To those who drop upon 'the hour when the immortal hope burns low in the heart,' the little book will carry a message.

LETTERS FROM A MYSTIC OF THE PRESENT DAY. BY ROWLAND W. CORBET, M.A. (*Stock*. Crown 8vo, pp. xx, 211.)

We have often wished we could fall in with a genuine mystic of the present day, just as we are ready to enjoy any new and sinless sensation. And he has come. At least we find in Mr. Corbet's letters the impenetrable darkness which is said to be inseparable from genuine mysticism. And since we discover the most luminous commonplaces in other pages, we are ready to admit that the darkness is in our own minds, as all true mystics affirm. Again we find in Mr. Corbet's letters the most glaring heterodoxy that could be transferred to paper. For instance, there is no sin. What seems so, is ignorance. Jesus said, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins have been done away.' He called the man 'son,' for 'He is speaking to him as to a child of God, and tells him, without any solicitation on his part, an eternal fact, viz. that his sins have no existence as in the mind or eye of God.' And the Lamb of God came to take away—sin? no, but the mistake of thinking that God ever reckoned sin against any one of us. Now, once more, we submit that the heresy is ours. For in one of the letters we read: 'I had a great happiness the other day. A friend, who was led at one time to estimate me as a heretic, wrote: "The matter which had so troubled me has burst upon me in clear, bright vision, and all is transfigured in its redeeming light."' So we have found our modern

mystic, and found him most piquant, though not progressive, reading.

There is no work on earth so happy as foreign mission work when it is successful, the good done is so unmistakable and so unmixed. Miss Sophia Cooke spent forty-two years doing mission work in Singapore; it was uninterruptedly successful, and she was one of the happiest women on earth. The narrative which Mr. Elliot Stock has published (*Sophia Cooke*, by E. A. Walker) has just one fault, it is too short. Still, the best work has least to say of itself.

Mr. Frank Mundell has published through the Sunday School Union a small volume of sea stories—*Stories of Sea Adventure* is its title—which the younger members of the Sunday School will take to greedily and find good in.

A GEM OF ORTHODOXY. BY S. L. MARSDEN. (*Fisher Unwin*. Crown 8vo, pp. 360. 6s.)

If orthodoxy is the belief of the greater number, it has a certain presumption on its side. Mr. Marsden recognizes that. He therefore takes great pains to show where orthodoxy went wrong, and why. He spends half his book on that. Then he comes to the point. The point is in these words of St. Paul, 'God was in Christ.' Orthodoxy has said, 'God was Christ,' or at least 'Christ was God,' which Mr. Marsden counts to be practically the same thing. St. Paul said, 'God was *in* Christ.' And so Mr. Marsden holds that all the doctrine of Christ's deity is a mistake. God was in Christ as He is in you and me (in less measure, no doubt); and if Christ was God, then are we all Gods, or ought to be. It is a book to be read. It is a sign of the times. This is no public-park orator, but a refined special pleader, well equipped with historical facts and well fitted to turn them to quiet controversial account. This is the latest form of denial that Jesus is the Son of God. Surely the end is near.

The sixth volume of the English translation of Harnack's *History of Dogma* has been published by Messrs. Williams & Norgate. Its translator is the Rev. W. M'Gilchrist, B.D., and he seems to have done his work—it is as difficult a bit as any—with great care and skill. Another volume completes the translation.