

At the Literary Table.

THE BOOKS OF THE MONTH.

PART II.

JESUS THE POET. BY THE REV. J. REID HOWATT. (*Elliot Stock*. Crown 8vo, pp. xii + 279). *Jesus the Poet*—it is a bold title. But have we not had Jesus the Man of Science long enough? Have they not told us, till we are weary of the telling, that He was just a little in advance of the science of His day, having knowledge of 'a few simples,' and so healed the sick (and raised the dead), and the innocent Galileans called it a miracle? *Jesus the Poet* is better than that. And if you dower the poet as Tennyson dowered him, with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn, the love of love, then Jesus is *the* Poet of the world. Mr. Reid Howatt finds the poet more easily, however, in the metaphors and similes which the Gospels preserve for us. He catches them up as they fall from the Saviour's lips, expounds and expands them, and seeks to send their moral meaning home. The idea is happy, and it is very pleasantly worked out.

THE ADMIRING GUEST. BY S. A. TIPPLE. (*Stock*. Crown 8vo, pp. 225.) 'The Admiring Guest' is the title of the first sermon in the book: and it is a very common proceeding to name the book by its first sermon. But it is extremely doubtful if the sermon is accurately named. Was the man, who at the Pharisee's feast broke into the conversation with the remark: 'Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God,' an admiring guest? Mr. Tipple is by no means sure of it himself. Nevertheless it is an interesting episode, and Mr. Tipple writes an interesting sermon on it. And that is the note of all the sermons. They are neither overwhelming eloquence, irresistible logic, nor impassable appeal: they are only full of interest.

GEMS OF ILLUSTRATION. BY THE REV. G. COATES. (*Stock*. Crown 8vo, pp. viii + 248.) There is always room for illustrations, for whole volumes of them. For there is not a teacher or a preacher but could use up a volume in a year, and nobody be any the worse for it, if only they were

good. Alas, good illustrations are as rare as Mazarin Bibles. Witness the repetition and resurrection of the few that *are* good, year after year and decade after decade. In this volume there are old friends (and foes), but also there is a very honest sprinkling of new—new, at least, to us. Taste their quality by random quotation:—

Tennysoniania.—The late Lord Tennyson once consulted an 'eminent Scotch surgeon and professor' about some affection of the lungs, and some years afterwards went to him again on the same errand. On being announced, the poet was nettled to observe that the surgeon not only did not remember his face, but did not even recognise his name. He mentioned his former visit. Still the surgeon failed to recall him. Then the surgeon put his ear to the patient's chest. 'Ah!' he said, 'I remember you now. I know you by your lung.'

Now which of our readers will discover the text or topic of which that is the illustration?

CARDINAL MANNING. BY STANLEY ROAMER. (*Stock*. Crown 8vo, pp. 283.) It is a curious business, a curious business from first to last. Cardinal Manning in his biography is so different from Cardinal Manning in his life, that it takes time to adjust oneself to the change. It is like the death of a friend. He is dead; but we have to prove it by the evidence, we have not yet got hold of it by our consciousness. Mr. Roamer will help us to receive it. In this volume, the Cardinal Manning we remembered in life is dead indeed. And more than that, if all this is true, and there is not another side to it, other things are dead with him: the very system he stood for is dead. 'With Epaminondas rose and fell the Theban power.' With Manning rose and fell the ecclesiastical politics of Rome in our land. It is a book that one can easily read, almost too easily, for one has an uneasy conscience in reading it.

RELIGION IN COMMON LIFE. (*Stock*. Crown 8vo, pp. 168.) A new and cheap edition of a very good volume of social sermons.

PLAIN TALKS ON PLAIN SUBJECTS. BY FRED A. REES. (*Stock*. Fcap. 8vo, pp. 146.) Also a new and cheap edition. And neither book is cheapened because it would not sell, but just because it did, and that it may now sell better.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM. (*Stock*. Fcap. 8vo, pp. 92.) Yet another new and cheap edition. It is a handier edition than the others, and more attractive than the old and dearer was. There are five sermons by five great preachers. Advent sermons on social subjects, swelling the pulpit literature of sociology, which has already reached some bulk.

THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST. BY CHARLES L. MARSON. (*Stock*. Fcap. 8vo, pp. xv+199.) The last of Mr. Stock's new and cheaper editions, and the daintiest of them all. Marson's *Following of Christ* is one of the finest of our books of devotion. It deserves all the beauty and all the cheapening that the publisher can give it. It deserves all the reading and the prayer that we can spend upon it.

THE DEAD PRIOR. BY C. DUDLEY LAMPEN. (*Stock*. Crown 8vo, pp. 221.) A clever story, though the incidents are old. The wily doctor and the guileless dean, the buried treasure and the love-lorn maiden—they are all old, but it is a clever story, for the weaving is the author's own.

EXPERIENCE. BY THE REV. WILFRID RICHMOND. (*Sonnenschein*. Fcap. 8vo, pp. iv+64.) What a pity that the word *Gnosticism* has been misappropriated! We have to deal with *Agnosticism* in these days. With all its apparent humility, it is a most pretentious and persistent science. And we are handicapped that we cannot place against it the science of *Gnosticism*, and then destroy the first by establishing the other. That is what Mr. Richmond does. He proves that we can know, and do know; that the really humble and the truly scientific person is not an Agnostic but a Gnostic in its modern meaning. It is an attractive little volume, clear in thought, and choice in language. It will certainly help to keep us steadfast and unmovable.

RELIGIOUS FAITH. BY THE REV. HENRY HUGHES, M.A. (*Kegan Paul*. 8vo, pp. xvi + 337.)

We do not know if any work since Vinet's *Vital Christianity* has entered so systematically upon the subject of Saving Faith, and has explained it so ably and accurately as this substantial volume by Mr. Hughes. We seem, indeed, to have passed away for a long time from the right atmosphere, not to speak of the right attitude. Other sides of Christian truth came nearer, and seemed more urgent. It is a very favourable omen that this subject has come round again. It is likely to do good work, and to stay with us till it has done it. The new study of Faith will differ from the old. It will be more philosophical; that is, it will attach itself more fairly to the whole round of truth. It will also be more ethical. It will enter more easily, and to more manifest purpose, into our individual life. And especially it will be more social. These things are not yet expressed in this volume. Mr. Hughes is occupied with the biblical doctrine of Faith. But they are silently prophesied. Further, biblical doctrine is dealt with, not as a timber-post driven separately into the soil to serve its use and rot, but as a tree having feelers that search and take hold of things, to serve ever more and greater uses, and to grow. In the new study that is before us, this is the subject to begin with. And this, we think, is the book.

THE BOOK OF GENESIS IN HEBREW. BY THE REV. C. J. BALL, M.A. (*Nutt*. 4to, pp. 120.)

THE BOOK OF DANIEL IN HEBREW. BY A. KAMPHAUSEN, D.D. (*Nutt*. 4to, pp. 43.) It is not disparagement of the text and its colours to say that the most valuable part of the 'Rainbow Bible' is its notes. We do want to see the text purified and portioned out. But we want still more to have a competent scholar's notes upon the text, such as we find in these volumes before us. We do not care for comparison. Mr. Ball's task was far the easier, but he has shown that even yet Genesis demands study and will repay it. Professor Kamphausen's task was very difficult indeed. To be preceded by so great a piece of textual scholarship as Professor Bevan's *Commentary on Daniel*, certainly made the task easier, and Dr. Kamphausen is well aware of it. But there was difficulty enough left over. Well, the first knowledge of a Book of Scripture is the knowledge of its text, and nowhere better than in these volumes can the knowledge of the text be gained.

ELEMENTS OF RELIGION. By A. H. MONCUR SIME. (*Alexander & Shephard*. Crown 8vo, 2nd edition, pp. 108.) Is it not possible—the question was asked in these pages a month ago—is it not possible to reach a conception of the Bible which would stand against every discovery of science? We all (or almost all) believe that the Bible is an ‘impregnable rock,’ but we are rarely bold enough to say ‘this rock shall fly from its firm base as soon as I.’ Is it impossible to get a standing on the rock as secure as the rock itself? Mr. Sime would lead to that. He does not a little to give us that. He separates truth from opinion; and furnishes a touchstone by which we may make the separation ourselves. For the Bible and the thirst for the living God are both ours, and both are outside the range of the longest telescope.

THE CHRISTIAN PICTORIAL: Vol. vii. (*Alexander & Shephard*. 4to, pp. 308.) Besides the editor’s expository work, which is always fresh and reliable, the feature of the *Christian Pictorial* which gives it the widest welcome is that it watches every great religious event, and, as a rule, gives us the best illustrated account of it we anywhere can find.

A CONCISE MANUAL OF BAPTISM. By J. HUNT COOKE. (*Baptist Tract and Book Society*. Fcap. 8vo, pp. 128.) To write on baptism and be nothing but historical is possible, perhaps, to a Harnack or a Gwatkin. The rest of us feel that our business is to give a reason for the faith that is in us. The faith that is in Mr. Cooke is faith in adult baptism, and he gives his reasons here impressively.

GRAVEN IN THE ROCK. By THE REV. SAMUEL KINNS, Ph.D. (*Cassell*. 8vo, 2 vols., pp. xxx. + 432, x + 271.) This book has a very great purpose, no less, indeed, than the recall of men of science to a firm belief in the Bible, and it seems to have greatly succeeded in its aim. It has passed through several thousand copies; and now the author has issued a library edition in these two handsome volumes. There are those who set out to defend the Bible, and begin by surrendering all its distinction and its worth. Dr. Kinns is none of these. His ‘theory of inspiration’ is almost too severe for ordinary acceptance

and proof. Yet he seems to make it good; for he has a large and available knowledge of the recent Oriental discoveries, and endless resource in their application. The book is popularly and even profusely illustrated.

1. THE POETICAL WORKS OF LORD BYRON. 2. THE POETICAL WORKS OF ROBERT BURNS. (Oxford: *At the University Press*. Crown 8vo, pp. 924, 634.) The outward aspect of the ordinary editions is surely academically severe; the ‘India paper’ editions are unapproachable in outward and inward charm. But the feature of the Oxford Poets is their completeness. Now, curious and unaccountable as the desire may be, we all desire to have our poets complete. Have not fabulous sums been paid for old editions of Tennyson even, and all because they contain some poems of moderate merit which the poet himself suppressed?

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE. By WALTER F. ADENEY, M.A. (*Clarke*. 12mo, pp. 151.) Reading the Bible is like preaching it: no man can lay down the method to another. Nevertheless the greatest preachers have been voracious readers of books on preaching; and the best Bible readers read all the books on Bible reading that come within their reach. They will read Professor Adeney’s gladly. It is one of the best. For Professor Adeney has made this subject almost his own. And they who read the little book will know not a little about the Bible, and especially how well worth reading the Bible is.

PROTESTANTISM. By EDWARD P. USHER, A.M., LL.B. (*Gay & Bird*. 8vo, pp. 440.) That Christianity is not the Church is Mr. Usher’s argument. And in that argument he says some plain and piercing things that had better make us think. That Christianity *is* the Church—that, he says, is the mistake so many people make, and throw Christianity behind their back, to their own great loss and misery. Is it possible Mr. Usher is right? We all deplore the rejection of Christianity. We feel for those who cast it away as keenly as even Mr. Usher does. Is it possible that the vast defection is due to the creeds and the clericalism of our churches? It is a most earnest, modern book. It is liberal to excess we almost all should say. But what if we ought to be as liberal?

THE PREACHING OF ISLAM. By T. W. ARNOLD, B.A. (*Constable*. 8vo, pp. 388, with maps and a chart.) This is probably the most sympathetic history of Islam that has ever been written from without. It is far too sympathetic for the naked truth to be seen. Nevertheless, with all the risks in view, we think that this was the side to err upon. On the other side, we have had books enough and a few to spare. Besides, we have learned at last (though not from the religion of Mohammed) that the easiest way into the temple of truth is by the door of appreciation. If Mr. Arnold had not appreciated the worth of Islam, he had not been able to write its history. There is no fear of exalting Mohammed above the Christ. And if the professing followers of the Christ have to look upon the followers of Mohammed, and sometimes learn a lesson in sobriety and in truthfulness, it is not the followers of the Christ that lose by that.

But it is not Islam, only the propagation of Islam, that Mr. Arnold writes the history of. And the wonder is all the greater that he finds so much to admire there. For we had popularly supposed that the sword was Islam's only missionary. Indeed the popular histories say so still. But it is not so. Mr. Arnold has clearly shown that it is not so.

The book is of very great importance. And perhaps its most important feature is the extensive and accurate array of authorities it furnishes for every step of its progress.

THE PREACHER'S HOMILETIC COMMENTARY. 1. ST. MATTHEW. BY THE REV. W. SUTHERLAND LEWIS, M.A., AND THE REV. HENRY M. BOOTH. (*Funk & Wagnalls*. 8vo, pp. 679.) 2. ST. MARK. BY THE REV. HENRY BURN, B.D. (8vo, pp. 673.) 3. ST. LUKE. BY THE REV. J. WILLOCK, B.D. (8vo, pp. 646.) 4. ST. JOHN. BY THE REV. W. FRANK SCOTT. (8vo, pp. 620.) Of the books of the Bible no man can be more than an editor now. But these men are editors of editors. They do not amend the text or the translation themselves; they do not write the reflections; they search the books that other men have written, and choose their best and print it. The occupation is not reckoned so high as even ordinary editing. But it is not so easy, and therefore not so despicable, as some have been found to call it. For our

own part, we would write the notes on almost any book of Scripture sooner than search the notes which other men have written and be expected to select what's readable. It demands a special faculty indeed. It is a gift; and we are not sure but the Homiletical Commentary-taster is as much 'born not made' as any poet ever was.

These are great volumes in size. And whatever the average quality of their contents may be, there is no doubt that they contain very many things that were both worth saying and were well said. They deal with their passages in a many-sided way,—somewhat after the manner of the Great Text Commentary,—and do not spare either their authors or themselves, if anything can be found and quoted that will make your sermon more acceptable. And there is one great merit that must not be omitted, the books that are quoted from are modern. How often has the 'homiletical help' been a hideous hindrance because the language of every extract was suitable only to the generation that is dead.

1. THE LEISURE HOUR FOR 1896. (*R.T.S.* pp. 812.) 2. THE SUNDAY AT HOME FOR 1896. (pp. 812.) 3. THE BOY'S OWN ANNUAL FOR 1896. (pp. 824.) 4. THE GIRL'S OWN ANNUAL FOR 1896. (pp. 832.) With all the successes that the R.T.S. has won, the greatest successes are its monthly magazines. These four are not all; but they are the best known and the biggest. They are, we fancy, the most successful. In the matter of literature for boys and girls, they are unapproached and probably unapproachable. For always as our taste improves, the *Boy's Own* and the *Girl's Own* are yearly improved to meet it. These two magazines have set an example to all publishers of children's magazines, and, for that matter, of children's books as well. Full of spirit, there is not a mean suggestion or brutal picture from beginning to end. For they have solved the difficulty, and appealed to our boys and girls to make them better. These magazines for the home, by all means, for Christmas presents, for school libraries, or whatever else you will.

THE CHILD, THE WISE MAN, AND THE DEVIL. BY COULSON KERNAHAN. (*Bowden*. Fcap. 8vo. pp. 82.) Preaching, like prophecy, does not descend from father to son. It is a

calling; it is the voice of God that calls. And it does not depend on the laying on of hands—not even of the hands of the presbytery. What a sermon is this! He says it may be neither literature nor theology. It may not; but it is preaching, and that is better; for it is of the preacher of the everlasting gospel that it was said: ‘How beautiful upon the mountains are their feet,’ and so fine a thing was said by God of no one otherwise engaged. Mr. Kernahan has not taken advantage of the Clerical Disabilities Act, and if there were a Clerical Abilities Act he would not mind it: he has no recognition except from his fruits. But that will do. For no one will read this ‘sermon out of church’ and lightly speak evil of the Christ again.

GOD'S GREAT SALVATION. BY THE REV. ALEXANDER BROWN. (Aberdeen: *The Author*. Crown 8vo, pp. x. + 287.) By his *Great Day of the Lord*, a study of the Apocalypse that will endure while so much is forgotten around it, Mr. Brown is already well known. This is a study of the Hebrews. The lecture form of its first de-

livery is retained. That is no serious loss to the reader; for the Hebrews, with all its long-linked argument, is capable of division into portions, and brings separate lessons to us as few of the epistles do. But Mr. Brown's great strength, we think, is in the exposition. He has a special gift of that, so that those who cannot hear the living voice, and even those who do not need the practical application, will find this book a rich storehouse of large-minded, scholarly, wholesome exposition.

AMONG THE MENABE. BY THE REV. GEORGE HERBERT SMITH, M.A. (*S.P.C.K.* Fcap. 8vo, pp. 112.) ‘And where are the Menabe?’ Well, it is the first question Mr. Smith answers. They are one of the divisions of the much-divided Sakalava tribe, which covers the western side of Madagascar. Mr. Smith spent thirteen months among the Menabe, not too long for missionary success, but long enough for scientific observation. So it is to the geography, history, and social habits of the people Mr. Smith gives himself in his little book.

What the Bible Teaches about the Human Body.

BY PRINCIPAL THE REV. DAVID BROWN, D.D., LL.D., ABERDEEN.

If there is one thing more than another in which the Religion of the Bible differs from all other Religions, it is in the view which it gives of the *human body*. In many heathen countries the common people believe that the body is a mass of matter which at death becomes part of the dust of the ground, and they themselves are no more. The better races, especially of the Northern regions, believe in an immortality, which they shape according to what they believe will be the perfection of happiness; while in the East it is believed that consummate bliss will consist in absorption into Brahm, which, whatever it may mean, certainly means the extinction of our personal identity. In the schools of Greek philosophy the body was regarded as an encumbrance on the soul,—its cage or prison-house which at death will set the spirit free; for the spirit is the man. In short, wherever heathenism reigns, *life* is either regarded

as at an end altogether, or it will be a life in which the body will have no part. In both these respects the religion of the Bible stands absolutely alone.

If it is asked what the Old Testament teaches on this subject, the question is not easily answered, for its teaching is chiefly indirect. It is there, but it is in the background; for it was reserved for Christ Himself, the Resurrection and the Life, to bring life and immortality to *light*. But we have our Lord's own authority for saying, what devout Israelites might know from their own Scriptures, that the dead are to rise. ‘Now that the dead are raised,’ said He to the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection of the dead, ‘even Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; for he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto Him’ (Luke xx. 37, 38). And, in the Psalms, have we not clear enough