

## LOOKS INTO BOOKS.

## DRIVER'S INTRODUCTION TO THE LITERATURE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The popular estimate of this work is plainly indicated by the fact that this is the sixth edition of it which has been issued in as many years, and it may be said to be now the standard English book on the subject. It has also been translated into German, being one of the few English Theological Works to which that honor has been given.

The work is certainly one of the most painstaking and scholarly that has ever appeared in this department, and the information which it gives may be relied on at every point for its accuracy. As is well known Dr. Driver is one of the more moderate among the advanced Higher Critics, and by no means commits himself unreservedly to Kuenen, Wellhausen, and their school. He at any rate sifts the evidence for himself and presents it entirely from his own point of view. Yet judged by the old time traditional views his position is radical enough.

He accepts, for example, the late date and composite authorship of the Pentateuch, as well as of most of the other historical works. He accepts also the composite character of Isaiah and Zechariah, gives up the historical character of Jonah and Esther, and, while avoiding the extreme position of Cheyne, brings most of the Psalms down to a comparatively late date.

Notwithstanding these radical conclusions Dr. Driver is always reverent in his tone and in the clearest language expresses his conviction that the Old Testament writings are inspired and authoritative for religious purposes. He does not consider that this necessarily carries with it the authenticity of the history. On this point he takes much the same attitude as is now generally taken on the relation of the Bible to astronomy or geology. The historical accuracy of the narratives is not considered to be necessary to the validity of the religious teaching any more than the scientific correctness of the astronomy. The history in many cases consists merely of national legends that lend themselves to the purpose of religious teaching, just as Jesus used His parables without vouching for their truth. This is a position to which many will find it very hard to reconcile themselves, and even Dr. Driver would refuse to allow it to be applied to the New Testament history.

In the preface to this sixth edition Dr. Driver notices the claim, made by Dr. Sayce and Prof. Hommel, that the recent discoveries in archaeology prove the entire trustworthiness of the history and disproves the advanced critical hypotheses as to the date of the Old Testament histories. He maintains that they do nothing of the kind. He does not, however, discuss the evidence furnished by the Tell-el-Amarna tablets, for instance, in favor of the probability of definite written history being composed as early as, or even earlier, than the days of Moses. That discovery reveals to us such an advanced literary culture in Moses' time that we find no difficulty in attributing to his hand a good deal more than Dr. Driver is prepared to allow.

The volume is printed in good style and in every respect reflects credit on the publishers.

## CLARKE'S OUTLINE OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

Dr. Clarke's book is interesting to many as being written by a Baptist minister who rendered good service to his Church and to the cause of Christianity in both Montreal and Toronto. In the former city he was for some years pastor of the Olivet church; in the latter he was on the staff of MacMaster University. The book is, however, interesting for its own sake as being a presentation of theology from what may be called a modern point of view. The author discards altogether, or at least as far as he can, the special phraseology of theology on the ground that in the course of discussion many of the terms have become ambiguous and are apt to be misleading both to the writer and to his readers. This gives a freshness to the writing which otherwise it would not have, but occasionally it adds to the ambiguity by leading him to use an old theological term such as "guilt" in a purely popular sense, and so causing him to appear at variance with old conservative views when he is not so in reality. In many cases he avoids careful definition of his terms on the ground that they cannot be adequately defined or the things they stand for adequately understood. His aim everywhere is to keep clear of argument on the basis of definitions and to get as near to the living realities of spiritual facts as he can. He recognizes the limitations of theology, but he does not always

recognize the limitations of language, and sometimes objects to views that have long been held when the subsequent discussion shows that he holds them himself, in the only sense in which the older theologians ever held them. This attitude makes the book at first sight seem a great deal more radical than it actually is. On the subject of the atonement, for example, he repudiates the theory of penal substitution, but in other terms he holds all that is essential to that theory. His own mode of statement is interesting and well worth reading. It will be helpful to some just because it is a new mode of statement. But it is not really different from the old and is far less adapted for popular use. The discussions are everywhere assumed to rest on a Scriptural basis, but the author seldom introduces proof texts and seldom discusses the meaning of Scripture passages except when he has some special interpretation of his own to present. These discussions by no means always carry conviction, and some of them would have been better omitted. The tone of the work throughout is reverent and humble even when the writer seems to differ most widely from received opinions. The conciseness of the statement is apparent from the fact that apart from the index the book contains only 482 pages and yet covers all the leading themes except the Church and the Sacraments. It is a relief to find one Baptist book on theology that does not so much as mention baptism once. The work is printed in Scribner's best style and is worthy of a place in the library of any student of theology, clerical or lay.

## ITS SEVENTY-FIFTH YEAR.

The current issue of our esteemed contemporary, the *New York Observer*, is just to hand. It is very much enlarged, handsomely illustrated, and contains a more than ordinarily interesting series of articles upon the live topics of the day, and the Church's life and work. The occasion of this special edition is the seventy-fifth anniversary of this publication, which was established in May of 1823 by Sidney E. and Richard C. Morse, sons of a New England clergyman, the Rev. Dr. Morse. We congratulate our contemporary upon having attained its Diamond Jubilee.

THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN. By Rev. Louis Albert Banks, D.D. Price 75 cents. New York: Funk & Wagnall Co.

Dr. L. A. Banks has gathered a series of addresses to young men. They cover in a fresh and pertinent fashion the familiar thoughts which an earnest pastor desires to present to the young men of his acquaintance about noble and Christlike living, and they are adapted to win popularity and do good. It is full of illustrations in the way of charming anecdotes most happily told, and even the dullest will read between the lines of these that which will strengthen and make a better and a stronger man of him.

COMPANIONS OF THE SORROWFUL WAY. By John Watson, D.D. (Ian Maclaren). Price 75 cents. Chicago and Toronto, F. H. Revell Co.

Some students of the Gospels make the Sorrowful Way begin with the betrayal and arrest. Dr. Watson takes for the starting point the agony of Gethsemane and, from Gethsemane on to the burial of the Master in another garden, walks beside Him and watches those who touch Him, in nine chapters of great beauty and expository skill. Passivity is the distinguishing mark of the Sorrowful Way. For thirty-three years Jesus had been doing the will of God most diligently. "When for a single day He meekly drank the cup His Father put into His hands, He broke the dread power of sin, that in Him we all might stand victorious. So much He did for us and the eternal law in His passion." What wonderful diversity in the folk who, during that great, sad day, were in His company—by no choice of their own! For the "companions" do not count amongst their number Judas, or the priests, or the Jewish mob, or Pilate, or the soldiers who scourged and crucified the Lord. But amongst His comrades on the Way were some who loved Him: John, Peter, and James in Gethsemane, the owner of Gethsemane, "the daughters of Jerusalem, who benailed and lamented Him," those who buried Him; some who came in contact with Him almost by accident; Simon of Cyrene and the Roman officer who declared Him a righteous man, a Son of God; one noble lady (Pilate's wife), drawn to Him she knew not how, and never forgetting Him in her after way of sorrow; and the first convert made by the Cross, the malefactor who died beside the crucified Nazarene, and saw in Him his Redeemer and his Lord. Of all of these this volume discourses with rare insight, filling in the story with a bold but devout imagination, applying the incidents of the way to modern life with searching hand, and (it goes without saying) abounding throughout in picturesque felicities of style. The chapter on "The Owner of Gethsemane" is the most novel; Dr. Watson believes he was Lazarus of Bethany, and gives strong grounds for the conjecture. No woman or child ever amongst Christ's foes or mockers; that is the keynote of tender pages on the daughters of Jerusalem. But the chapter which holds us most is that on Simon of Cyrene, "for a brief space the substitute of Jesus."

\*An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament. By S. R. Driver, D.D. 6th edition. New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons. 1897. \$4.50 net.

†An Outline of Christian Theology. By William Newton Clarke, D.D., Calgate University, Hamilton. New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons. \$2.50 net.