

ject. Dr. Douglas admits that the current of critical opinion runs strongly in the opposite direction from the view which he has taken; but he deserves all the more credit for chivalrously undertaking to champion an opinion which, to use his own phrase, is not "fashionable" among the foremost biblical scholars of the time, especially when he does so from a conscientious conviction that its opposite "confuses and injures the exposition of the book." No one who desires to master the question of the authorship of this the first and greatest of the prophetic books of the Bible can afford to leave Dr. Douglas' book unread. The publishers deserve credit for the admirable manner in which the work has been brought out.

*The Distinctive Messages of the Old Religions.* By the REV. GEORGE MATHESON, M.A., D.D., F.R.S.E., Minister of the Parish of St. Bernard's, Edinburgh. Second edition. New York: F. D. Randolph & Co. Toronto: William Briggs. 12 mo; pp. 342.

This book is not entirely unknown to the readers of the CANADIAN METHODIST REVIEW. When the first edition appeared it was very fully noticed in these pages. The appearance of a second edition affords us an opportunity to call the attention of our readers to it again. Though not in form it is in reality an important contribution to the science of comparative religion. In the account which the learned author gives of it himself, he says: "By the distinctive message of a religion, I mean not an enumeration of its various points, but the selection of the one point in which it differs from all others. My design, therefore, is more limited than that of some other volumes of equal size. I do not seek the permanent elements in religion with the Bishop of Ripon, nor the unconscious Christianity of Paganism with F. D. Maurice, nor the moral ideal of the nations, with Miss Julia Wedgewood. I seek only to emphasize the dividing lines which constitute the boundary between each religion and all beside. In the concluding chapter, I have tried to reunite these lines by finding a place for each in some part of the Christian message." It will be readily seen that Dr. Matheson could not do all this without doing more. Neither the analysis or the synthesis described in this quotation could be intelligibly made without a comprehensive survey of the entire field of religion in general, as well as of the religions specially treated. Hence, in the introductory chapter he deals with the *nature* and the *origin* of religion. This is a long chapter of about one hundred pages, and will amply repay careful perusal, though there is probably more in it to raise questions in the mind of the reader, and to call forth criticism than in any other part of the volume. It is not necessary here, however, to anticipate the judgment of the reader. What Dr. Matheson has written will be found stimulating and helpful, even by such as may not be able to see eye to eye with him in all his conclusions. This chapter, however, is designed to clear the way to the discussion of the distinctive features of the old religions which, as the title indicates, is the main object of the book. The religions, which in subsequent chapters are passed in review, are the religions of China, of India, of Persia, of Greece, of Rome, of the Teutons, of Egypt and of Judea. Such a sketch by such a master of language and literary style as Dr. Matheson, and one, moreover, possessing the historical imagination in such a remarkable degree, to say nothing of his soundness of judgment and eminent critical ability, the reader will naturally conclude must be one of considerable interest, and as such it may be very confidently recommended to the reader.