

## Current Literature.

### New Books and Periodicals

THE BOOK OF KINGS. By F. W. Farrar D.D., F.R.S. Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Co.

THIS volume is one of a series of expository works by eminent scholars and critics on various Books of the Old and New Testaments. The author of this work is no stranger to our readers. His life of Christ, his life of St. Paul, and other works have made his name known throughout the English speaking world. Like his other works, this volume evinces great powers of research, independence of thought, a mastery of details and a determination to follow in the wake of truth regardless of consequences. He seems to be familiar with the most recent results of British and German criticism, and although he is very cautious in assenting to mere speculations he is not afraid to accept results which, in his judgment, are well established, even if they are not in accordance with popular belief. Some of his teaching, therefore, may wound the susceptibilities of some pious, sincere but timid Christians who are ready to tremble for the safety of the ark of their faith whenever it is exposed to intellectual breezes. The venerable Doctor assures such in the following words that there is not the slightest danger:

"There never has been an age of deep thought and earnest inquiry which has not left its mark in the modification of some traditions or doctrines of theology. But the truths of essential Christianity are built upon a rock. They belong to things which cannot be shaken, and which remain. The intense labours of eminent scholars, English and German, thanklessly as they have been received, have not robbed us of so much as a fraction of a single precious element of revelation. On the contrary, they have cleared the Bible of many accretions by which its meaning was spoiled and its doctrines wrested to perdition, and they have thus rendered it more profitable than before for every purpose for which it was admittedly designed."

He has the sincerest sympathy with those who are opposed to all changes in the doctrines and traditions familiar to them from their infancy and held by their fathers for generations, and he is not forgetful that Christ himself, with His consummate tenderness and divine insight into the frailties of our nature, made tolerant allowances for inevitable prejudices. "No man," he said, "having drunk old wine straightway desireth new; for he saith, the old is good." The Doctor nevertheless holds that the pain should be incurred when the cause of sincerity and truth demands it.

This attitude towards the Bible as a whole may be somewhat startling to those who have been in the habit of looking on it, that is, on the material book itself, with great veneration. He tells us that "Scripture is the sense of Scripture;" that the Bible is not, properly speaking, a book, but a series of books or rather fragments of a literature which grew up during many centuries; that it was never meant to be the sole teacher of mankind, and that we mistake its purpose and misapply its revelations when we use it to exclude the other sources of knowledge, and further, that we should not use the Bible as an amulet as the Mohammedan uses his Koran.

In consideration of the fact that the methods of interpretation have changed from age to age, he deems it to be the duty of the Church at the present day, not to repeat the assertions of ancient writers concerning the Bible nor what men imagined it to be, "but honestly and truthfully to discover the significance of the actual phenomena which it presents to the enlightened and cultivated intelligence." It is further held that in consequence of the great additions made to our knowledge of the history and true meaning of the Bible in our own age, "that a deeper and holier reverence for all eternal truths which the Bible contains, has taken the place of a meaningless letter worship."

Whether for good or for evil, the spirit of the "Higher Criticism" is entering the churches, even the most conservative. When it gains access it creates a commotion similar to chemical effervescence. The Free Church of Scotland is in this condition at present, but it is to be hoped that wise counsels will prevail and save that venerable body from the evils of secession. It is necessary that every new doctrine should be challenged, sifted and tested in every legitimate way, and, if it cannot make good its claims, rejected. This is what has been done in other instances.

Within the memory of men not yet very old, geology was denounced as a false and atheistic science, contrary to Scripture and subversive of revelation. When geology furnished proof of its facts and placed them beyond doubt all parties accepted them and neither revelation nor true religion has suffered the dire calamities predicted. Dr. Chalmers was the first among the clergy who had the courage openly to acknowledge the claims of geology.

The Book of Kings is evidently intended as a continuation of the Book of Samuel, although not written by the same author. It continues the history of David which was commenced by the writer of the Book of Samuel. From internal evidence it is inferred that it was

finished about the year 542 before the Christian era, although the greater part of the Book was written earlier. It deals with the transactions of a period of about four hundred and fifty years and is a compilation by an unknown author from materials written at different times from the reign of David onwards. Its great inspiring principle is, that God is the great controlling power, and sin the disturbing force among men and nations. This principle is shown to have been held by other nations as well as by the Jews, as when Homer speaks of the controlling power of the gods among the nations:—

"Such was the sovereign doom, and such the will of Jove."

The Book brings the history down to the exile, when the glory of Israel had departed, and when the nation was in the deepest despair and perplexity. The promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and renewed to David with special and additional details seemed to have been forgotten as the nation appeared on the verge of extinction, but the writer, or rather compiler, clings to the promises with all his soul and hopes against hope. His faith has been justified. For although they have no land which they can call their own, they still exist as a nation dwelling among other nations and exerting greater influence on the affairs of the world than they could if they were dwelling under their own kings in Palestine. When we contemplate the terrible sufferings and persecutions of this people from the time of David till the present day, we cannot but regard the bush burning but not consumed as a true emblem of the nation.

CHRISTIAN THOUGHT for August is a heavy number, containing weighty deliverances on such subjects as "Gold and Godliness," by President E. Benjamin Andrew; "Woman's Indebtedness to Christianity" by Rev. George Francis Greene; "The Growth of Jesus," by Prof. M. J. Cramer, A. M., D. D.; "Kant's Theory of Causation," by Rev. C. R. Burtick, A. M.; "What is Sin? Is God responsible for Original Sin?" by Samuel W. Serell; "The Bible and the Republic," by the late Arthur Mitchell, D. D., and other well-written articles. The publisher is Wilbur B. Ketcham, New York.



F. W. FARRAR, D.D., F.R.S.

THE Review of Reviews for August has, for one of its features of vital interest, brief communications from twelve prominent professors of political economy and finance upon the present monetary situation. The letters were written in response to the editor's request for the opinion of these gentlemen upon the best course for Congress to pursue in the extra session regarding silver. The twelve writers are President Francis A. Walker, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Prof. William W. Ellwell, of the University of Minnesota; Prof. F. W. Taussig, of Harvard University; Chancellor James H. Canfield, of the University of Nebraska; Professors Seligman and Richmond Mayo-Smith, of Columbia College, New York; Prof. Henry C. Adams, of the Michigan University; Dr. Sydney Sherwood, of the John Hopkins University; Chancellor Rogers, of the Northwestern University; Prof. J. Macy, of Iowa College; Prof. John R. Commons, of the Indiana State University, and Dean Judson, of the Chicago University. It happens that every one of these gentlemen distinctly declares for the immediate repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act. Beyond this their points of view are quite various, and their discussion is extremely interesting. No recent contribution to the discussion of monetary problems is so pithy and compact as this group of admirably written letters from well known economic thinkers.

THE Methodist Book & Publishing House announce the issue about the 20th of this month of a Life of the late Senator Macdonald, under the title of "A Merchant Prince." The material for the volume has been prepared by the Rev. Dr. Johnston, formerly of this city, now of Washington, D. C., an assurance, to say the least, of the literary excellence of the work. Photogravure portraits and illustrations will enhance the appearance of the book. Dr. Johnston has had ample material at his command in the incidents of a life so active in the field of commerce, politics and practical philanthropy. The publishers have wisely decided to issue a popular edition selling at one dollar.

AMONG a number of books received for notice from James Bain & Son, Toronto, is the little treatise on "Scriptural Baptism," by Professor Withrow. Few simple works on the subject are as interesting and valuable to the young student as this handy, well arranged work. Bible-classes and teachers will find it an easy and lucid guide. Other works of the bundle, which can only be named but which have lost none of their freshness, are: "The New Testament Elder," by the same author; "The Millennial Reign," by Rev. Andrew Brown; and "The Young Man and the Churches."

THE BOOK BUYER, (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York) for August gives a good portrait of Mrs. Oliphant as a frontispiece, followed by an interesting sketch of the life of the voluminous and famous writer. The number does not fail in short articles and facts of special interest to the literary student and to the general reader.

THE MISSIONARY HERALD for August has been received, bringing, as usual, a rich dish of news of the doings of missionaries all the world over. We heartily recommend this interesting monthly messenger.