

Critic's Corner

Reviews this month by W. R. Taylor, Ph.D.

Ever since Strauss, in 1835, startled the theological world with his "Life of Jesus," the historicity of the Gospel narratives has been the center of intense critical interest. Between the extreme position of Strauss in 1848, that it was impossible to know anything more about Jesus than that he lived, taught and finally died on the Cross and the position of a student like B. Weiss, who finds no real difficulties in the Evangels, there are many mediating attempts at a solution of the problem. The latest important contribution is that of Schweitzer's, "The Quest of the Historical Jesus"—a work with radical conclusions. A timely article by Professor Garvie in the "Expository Times" of June clearly and admirably sets before us the goal to which extreme criticism leads us. To strip Jesus of the miraculous, to exclude the metaphysical and to level His conception of the Kingdom of Heaven to the mere eschatological hopes of decadent prophecy and apocalypse, is to show us pale, characterless form, insufficient to account for the origin of Christianity. But Christianity is a world fact that demands an explanation. We must, therefore, accept the Jesus of the New Testament with the miraculous and metaphysical, etc., or have recourse to some "*dens ex machina*" like the "Christ Myth of Western Asia and India." The professor concludes his articles by pointing out the significance of the problem for the basis of Christian faith.

We must preach more upon the great texts of the Scriptures, the tremendous passages whose vastness almost terrifies us as we approach them. These words of Jowett introduce the first volume of "The Great Texts of the Bible," the latest of the comprehensive works edited by Hastings. The scope of this new undertaking is suggested by the title. Only a few of the volumes have reached us, but an examination of these may suggest the character of the whole work. For a long time ministers have felt the want of a good expository treatment of Genesis which would employ the results of scholarship in a legitimate exegesis. It is regrettable that, in respect to the great texts of this work the want is still unsupplied. These early volumes promise a good compendium of illustration and poetry.