

NEW WORK BY PROF. McFADYEN.

This "Introduction" does not pretend to offer anything to specialists. It is written for theological students, ministers, and laymen, who desire to understand the modern attitude to the Old Testament as a whole, but who either do not have time or the inclination to follow the details on which all thorough study of it must ultimately rest. These details are intricate and often perplexing, and all but innumerable, and the student is in danger of failing to see the wood for trees. This "Introduction," therefore concentrates attention only on the more salient features of discussion. No attempt has been made for example to relegate every verse in the Pentateuch to its documentary source; but the method of attacking the Pentateuchal problem has been presented, and the larger documentary divisions indicated.

It is obvious, therefore, that the discussions can in no case be exhaustive; such treatment can only be expected in commentaries to individual books. While carefully considering all the important alternatives, I have usually contented myself with presenting the conclusion which seemed most probable; and I have thought it better to discuss each case on its merits, without referring expressly and continually to the opinions of English and foreign scholars.

In order to bring the discussion within the range of those who have no special linguistic equipment, I have ever cited Greek or Hebrew words, and never in the original alphabets. For a similar reason, the verses are numbered, not as in the Hebrew, but in the English Bible. I have sought to make the discussion read continuously without distracting the attention—excepting very occasionally—by footnotes and other devices.

Above all things, I have tried to be interesting. Critical discussions are too apt to divert those who pursue them from the absorbing interest of the Old Testament. Its writers were men of like hopes and fears and passions with ourselves, and not the least important task of a sympathetic scholarship is to recover that humanity which speaks to us in so many portions and so many ways from the pages of the Old Testament. While we must never allow ourselves to forget that the Old Testament is a voice from the ancient and Semitic world not a few parts of it—books, for example, like Job and Esther are as modern as the book that was written yesterday.

But, first and last, the Old Testament is a religious book; and an introduction to it should, in my opinion, introduce us not only to its literary problems, but to its religious content. I have therefore usually attempted briefly, and not in any homiletic spirit—to indicate the religious value and significance of its several books.

There may be readers who would here and there have desiderated a more confident tone, but I have deliberately refrained from going further than the facts seemed to warrant. The cause of truth is not served by unwarranted assertions and the facts are often so different to concatenate that dogmatism becomes an impertinence. Those who know the ground best walk the most warily. But if the old confidence has been lost, a new confidence has been won. Traditional opinions on questions of date and authorship may have been shaken or overturned, but other greater things abide; and not the least precious is that confidence, which can now justify itself at the bar of the most vigorous scientific investigation, that, in a sense altogether unique, the religion of Israel is touched by the finger of God. Considering Prof. McFadyen's reputation as an Old Testament scholar and popular expositor it is scarcely necessary to add that the character of the book fully justifies the statement of the preface, given above. Behind these 37 chapters there is severe

work and accurate scholarship but the treatment is kept as free as possible from technical discussion. One feature which will be particularly welcome to a large class of readers is the paragraph at the close of each chapter which explains in a sympathetic spirit the religious interest of the book. As an example of this we may take the following paragraph that deals with the book of Genesis:

"The religious interest of Genesis is very high, the more so as almost every stage of religious reflection is represented in it, from the most primitive to the most mature. Through the ancient stories there gleam now and then flashes from a mythological background, at the intermarriages of angels with mortal women, vi. 1-4, or in the struggle of the mighty Jacob, who could roll away the great stone from the mouth of the well, xxix. 2, 10, with his supernatural visitant, xxxii. 24. It is a long step from the second creation story in which God like a potter fashions men out of moist earth, ii. 7, and walks in the Garden of Paradise in the cool of the day, iii. 8, to the first with its sublime creation (i). But the whole book and especially the prophetic section is dominated by a splendid sense of reality of God, His interest in men, His horror of sin, His purpose to redeem. Broadly speaking, the religion of the book stands upon a marvellously high moral level. It is touched with humility—its heroes know that they are not worthy of all the love and faithfulness which God shows them, xxxi. 10; and it is marked by a true inwardness—for it is not works but implicit trust in God that counts for righteousness, xv. 15. Yet in practical ways, too, this religion finds expression in national and individual life: it protests vehemently against human sacrifices (xxii.) and it strengthens a lonely youth in an hour of terrible temptation, xxix. 9.

The Free Press suggests Mr. George L. Orme as one of a class of men from whose entry into civic life the city of Ottawa would greatly benefit. Our contemporary is quite right. It would mean much for the Dominion Capital if a majority of the aldermen for next year, and succeeding years, could be composed of men with the large business experience and sterling moral qualities of George L. Orme.

The British Weekly, edited by Dr. Robertson Nicol, is the leading non-conformist journal in England, and is well-known throughout Britain and the colonies for the ability with which it is conducted, the breadth and catholicity of its spirit, as well as for the number of distinguished writers brought to the front in its columns. Through the efforts of Mr. J. M. Robertson, of the Upper Tract Society, Toronto, we are glad to know that the British Weekly has now over 500 subscribers in Ontario. Mr. Robertson will send a sample copy to any one asking for it.

Some people are very much agitated over "religion by law," as they are pleased to call the enforcement of the Sabbath law, says a contemporary. The purpose of law, however, is not to make men good, but to protect society in its rights and to punish those who have no regard for the convictions of the majority. The purpose of a Sabbath law is not to make men religious, but to protect an institution which God has established and which inheres in the very nature of man. The purpose of a prohibitory law against the sale of intoxicating liquors as a beverage is not to make men sober, but to protect society against the crimes and misdoings of drunken and lawless men. Law looks farther than the individual; although in the blessing of society the individual is himself blessed. One of man's God-given rights is that of self protection against evil-doers.

LITERARY NOTES.

A most valuable article in the November Blackwood's (Leonard Scott Publication Co., New York) is one by the Right Hon. Sir Herbert Maxwell, M.P., on British Woodlands, as they are and as they ought to be. This article is to some extent a review of Dr. John Nisbet's recently published work called "The Forester, a Practical Treatise on British Forestry and Arboriculture for Landowners, Landagents, and Foresters." At the present time when the problem of where the world's supply of timber is coming from in the future, anything on the subject is most timely. We quote a few lines:—

"It is a common thing to hear travellers on their return from the United States and Canada, deploring the wastefulness of the lumber trade, which denudes vast tracts of their timber without making adequate attempt at re-afforestation. But it is beginning to dawn upon our people that of all the spendthrifts upon God's earth there is none worse in the matter of wood management than the British Government and the British landowners, and that if we do not mend our ways there is all likelihood of a timber famine, or, at least, such a rise in price as will tell seriously upon our leading industries."

In the November number of "Current Literature" (The Current Literature Publishing Company, New York) is reviewed a book which will doubtless be read by many—so ready are we to grasp the chance of knowing all the details of the lines of those of high position. The book referred to is "Private Lives, of Kaiser William II. and His Consort and Secret History of the Court of Berlin, by Henry W. Fisher. The article is called "Emperor William Without any Halls." "His Imperial Majesty comes forth from the inquisition imperious rather than imperial, and far from majestic. He is presented to the world as without courage, without strength, without chivalry, and possessing only the talents of imposture and only the knowledge needed to assist them. He has, as we are told, the meanness of souls, the least worthy of appetites, the most pettily spiteful of dispositions and the weakest of characters."

The Christmas number of the Cosmopolitan (1879 Broadway, New York) is a bright attractive one, opening with a short article by Julia Maud Malone on "Best Christmas Gifts to Our People." H. G. Wells has a new serial started in this number, "In the Days of the Corner"; by Booth Tarkington, called "Easley and the Hunchbacks" which is altogether charming.

The table of contents for the November Fortnightly (Leonard Scott Publication Company, New York) is a varied one, including articles on the following, among other subjects: France and the Equipoise of Europe; The Irish Land Purchase Deadlock; George Farquhar; The Situation in South Africa; Tenting in Palestine; and the Austrian Occupation of Macedonia.

Individual readers or magazine clubs, in making up their lists of periodicals for 1906 will do well to give consideration to The Living Age. This magazine occupies a field peculiarly its own. It gives sixty-four pages every Saturday of selections from the best and most popular English periodicals, and is almost indispensable to any one who wishes to keep informed upon public affairs and current discussion. The sources from which its material is taken represent an annual cost price of nearly two hundred dollars. Fiction, essays, travel sketches, poetry, critical and biographical papers, literary and art articles, and much else besides will be found in the magazine, for the range of its selections extends all the way from the stately quarterlies to Punch. The subscription price is six dollars a year, but a trial subscription of three months, thirteen numbers, may be had for one dollar. The Living Age Company, 6 Beacon street, Boston, Mass.