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# The Bible Student

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Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

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# The Bible Student.

CONTINUING

## The Bible Student and Religious Outlook.

Vol. II., New Series.

JULY, 1900.

Number 1.

It is not without significance that the chapter on Holy Scripture stands

**The Vital Question for Bible Students.**

first in the Westminster Symbols. Its position indicates the fundamental relation existing between one's doctrine of Scripture and the other articles of his faith. Perhaps the most vital question at present confronting the student of the Bible is—What think you of the Scriptures themselves? Our attitude towards the Book can hardly fail decisively to affect our attitude towards its several statements. Unquestionably one who regards it as a *revelation of the mind of man* concerning himself, the world, its author, its origin, and its destiny, may still find the Bible an interesting, and even a very important book. But, obviously, he will, in the very nature of things, take up towards it an attitude wholly different from one who esteems it to be a *revelation of the mind of God* upon these several points. Even as a record of what men have believed concerning God, and what duties they have conceived themselves as owing to God, the Bible will always occupy a conspicuous place in the history of the development of the human mind, and partic-

ularly of the so-called religious instincts of man.

Viewed in this light, however, the Bible at once takes its place alongside of other similar

**An Effect to be Considered.**

records. Its statements are at once stripped of the element of finality—except for those who think that in religious matters the human mind reached the acme of its development some two thousand years ago. Further, its statements will have only a relative value, and command only a qualified assent and reverence. A stream cannot rise higher than its source. If the Bible be a revelation of the minds of its various authors, it will command assent and reverence only in proportion as we may esteem its several authors to have been qualified to deal with the large and intricate problems that they have assumed to handle. We may at our pleasure, add to, subtract from, modify, or even wholly set aside what they have to say. We would, of course, do this with that courtesy of phrase that is characteristic of our advanced and cultured age; but to expect us to refrain from doing it, would be to require us to lay aside that intellect-

## Current Biblical Thought.

A series of articles that have lately appeared in *The Monist* invite attention, both on account of their inherent interest and on account of their containing one of the last contributions to the discussion of the trustworthiness of the Old Testament narrative made by the lamented Dr. WILLIAM HENRY GREEN. The series opens in the number of *The Monist* for October, 1899, with a paper by Prof. C. H. CORNILL, of Breslau, the object of which is to commend "The Polychrome Bible" to the public. Prof. CORNILL argues that it is only by the analysis which it is the object of that publication to exhibit, that the Old Testament is relieved from a multitude of absurdities in its historical statements; and he makes it his business to draw out a number of these absurdities in detailed illustration of his thesis. The same number contains also a paper by Dr. GREEN, bearing the same title, in which he expresses his own judgment on the analysis attempted in the "Polychrome Bible," and patiently, as was his wont, goes over the instances of the difficulties in the text as it now stands adduced by Prof. CORNILL, pointing out how largely these difficulties are created by the critic, and disappear if the narrative is read sympathetically from the point of view of its author, or compiler. To this is added yet a third article by the editor of the journal, Dr. PAUL CARUS, under the general title of *The Bible*, in which, from his own point of view of monistic atheism, which denies the existence of a personal God to reveal himself, and therefore, necessarily, the whole conception of a divine factor in the Bible, he endeavors to discredit the Bible as from God, and to present it as only "the dossier of the

religious evolution of the people of Israel." In the next number of the journal (January, 1900), in lieu of the extended criticism from Dr. GREEN on this last mentioned article which he had sought in vain, the editor publishes a letter from Dr. GREEN in which he expresses his conviction that the difference between them turns on points too fundamental to render a discussion between them on the Bible fruitful; they disagree on the question of the very existence of a personal God to inspire a Bible: "Your philosophy," says Dr. GREEN to the editor, "is unintelligible to me"—your very conception of God as what you call the "norm of existence" is to me a meaningless abstraction. But Dr. GREEN proceeds to give a brief statement of his own positive faith and of its reasonableness, which is very interesting indeed. In the April number of the journal, the series is closed by a paper by Prof. CORNILL, meeting the criticisms passed by Dr. GREEN on his former article. It is called *The New Bible and the Old*, and proclaims that, to the critics, their work is a labor of piety which seeks the honor of God, and the Bible is "a document of religious history, the collection of the records of God's revelation to humanity, which they honestly strive to understand, and to understand further simply as historical religious records." There are phrases here that Dr. CARUS could not properly use. But in what does the conception that is presented of the Bible—a book written, says Prof. CORNILL, "by men for God"—differ from that presented by Dr. CARUS? A touching feature of this article (which is dated November, 1899,) is a short post-script dated February 17, 1900, noting the death meanwhile of Dr. GREEN, and speaking in a manner that does

credit to Prof. CORNILL's heart. "With heartfelt sorrow," he says, "I lay a wreath on his new-made grave: for he battled manfully for a conviction that was sacred to him, that is sacred to many millions, and will remain so for a long time to come. Not that which a man has done constitutes his worth before God, but that which he has designed to do and the manner in which he has done it. And Prof. GREEN's endeavor was pure and his deed stainless." It is qualified praise: it does not put the emphasis where Dr. GREEN would have wished it put: but it is, at least, a recognition of the spirit that informed all of Dr. GREEN's work. In that "long time to come," into which Prof. CORNILL's words carry forward our thought, Prof. CORNILL's destructive work will have been forgotten, and doubtless Dr. GREEN's defensive work, too; but the things Dr. GREEN has been contending for will still hold the minds and hearts of God's servants, while those that Prof. CORNILL is striving for will be looked back upon as only other examples of "the curiosities of literature," and the vagaries of half-belief. It is so that Dr. GREEN would have it. The future is in the hands of positive faith, whatever clouds may seem to gather around the present. That, the course of past history demonstrates. Strive as we may, it is not for the ages, but for our own age, that each of us struggles: the ages to come remain in the hands of the "King of the Ages," who alone shall rule through the ages of the ages.

B. B. W.

We have had occasion in an earlier number to call attention to a series of articles by Prof. D.

**Unity of Isaiah.** S. MARGOLIOUTH of Oxford, now appearing in *The Expositor* under the general heading *Lines of Defence of the Biblical Revelation*; and although

they had been sneered at by a scholar of the newer school, we venture to do so again. In the April number Prof. MARGOLIOUTH begins a series headed *Unity against Plurality*; and the first of the series is on Isaiah. His discussion is negative in that he criticises the modern criticism of Isaiah; and positive in that he advances some new arguments in favor of the traditional view. It is to the former part that we would call attention to here. It is not so long since we heard merely of a "second Isaiah" and wondered who he might be. Now, however, there is a third, and a fourth, and indeed our book of Isaiah has become but a patchwork of fragments dating all the way from the death-year of King Uzziah to beyond the conquest by Alexander the Great. In this progressive dissection Prof. MARGOLIOUTH finds weakness. If the first bisection of Isaiah gave us two units, each complete in itself, then there could have been no original unity of plan in the work as a whole; but if this bisection leads, as has been found to be the case, to endless dissection, the conclusion is that the book was originally an organized whole.

The external evidence is all in favor of the unity of Isaiah; tradition, both Christian and Jewish, manuscripts and versions give no trace of the different strata which critics have recently, on internal evidence, pointed out to us. None of the prophetic books is anonymous, nor are the writings of one prophet incorporated with those of another. If little Obadiah is kept separate, why should the author or authors of the more glorious sections of Isaiah be entirely lost to memory? This is a common-sense argument and one of considerable weight; but one that is generally disregarded by critics on the other side. Two pieces of external evidence, however, are given in favor of the division of Isaiah; and these Prof.