

## MISCELLANEOUS.

### A STATEMENT FROM RABBI DRUCKER.

In both my articles on the Bible as a text-book I have endeavored to make it plain that I was not criticising either the Old Testament or the New. I merely wished to point out the mistake we make in using the Bible *as it stands* as a text-book in our Sunday-schools. I have shown that some of its stories are not suitable for children. But that the Bible has still a great mission to fulfil and that its educational value is great, I never wished to deny. I simply maintain that we should apply the same scientific method in the religious school as we use in the secular school.

In teaching chemistry or physics, we change text-books to suit new conditions and ideas. A book on chemistry becomes antiquated a few years after it has been introduced. We would consider it wrong to use an old text-book on physics, even of the greatest ancient master. Nevertheless many even of our liberal ministers consider it quite in order to use without comment or revision a book two thousand years old as a religious text-book. It is this inconsistency alone that I wished to point out in my articles.

However, when the Editor taxes me with inconsistency, owing to certain statements in one of these articles which contradict statements in my pamphlet on *The Trial of Jesus*, he applies the same method in my case which I have criticised in connection with our Sunday-schools. If my later assertions in some instances contradict my pamphlet, I feel that I am justified on the same grounds which justify the authors of recent books on chemistry or physics to contradict their own findings of some years earlier.

I may also add here that the pamphlet *The Trial of Jesus* was written on this basis: Supposing that the main facts narrated in the New Testament *are* true; by putting them alongside facts attested by Jewish historians,—namely Josephus and Philo, and Talmudic authorities, we need not conclude that the ones or the others are false. Up to the present time this was the usual deduction of students; the Christians maintained that the Jewish traditions were wrong, while the Jews returned the compliment and claimed that the New Testament accounts were fictitious. The task I set for myself in this pamphlet, therefore, was to point out that after eliminating certain admitted interpolations in the New Testament, the remaining portions to a great extent corroborate Jewish traditions and historical accounts. Hence the pamphlet has no special Jewish or Christian stamp upon it.

A. P. D.

### BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES.

LEADING AMERICAN ESSAYISTS. By *William Morton Payne, LL. D.* New York: Holt, 1910. Pp. 395. Price \$1.75 net.

This volume belongs to W. P. Trent's series of Biographies of Leading Americans, and at the first glance the reader feels a sense of surprise to note

that besides the Introduction the book consists of but four chapters dealing respectively with Irving, Emerson, Thoreau and Curtis. In order to make his selection it was necessary for the author to define the limits of the term "essay," and this he does as follows: "To this category we may assign all the prose compositions that exhibit the mark of style, that give pleasure by virtue of the form of their expression irrespective of its content, and that have, in consequence, a clearly recognized place in the history of literature. Our definition must be classic enough to include almost all prose that is not cast in the mold of fiction or the drama, and that does not find a place in the solid literature of some special subject, as history, science, politics, or theology."

Many of our essayists are known primarily for literary work in other fields and in this series have been treated in other groups. For instance, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes and Poe are naturally to be found among the poets although it is hard to make a distinction in the case of the last two. Hawthorne, Howells and Henry James are classed among novelists. The "Bibliographical Introduction" is really a very important integral part of the work as it gives brief biographies and critiques of all the other essayists from Benjamin Franklin and the beginnings of our literature to Hamilton W. Mabie and Lafcadio Hearn, including such well-known names as Nathaniel P. Willis, Ik Marvel, Margaret Fuller, Charles Dudley Warner, and concluding with a list of those literary people of to-day who can come under the head of essayists, such as, for instance, Brander Matthews, Henry Van Dyke, Agnes Repplier and Bliss Perry.

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MODERNISM ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF SENSUAL IMPRESSION AND HISTORICAL INSPIRATION. By *Arius Luther Wright*. Albany: Joseph McDonough. Pp. 155.

The contents of this book seem to vary greatly in value. On the one hand they prove that the author is a great student of ecclesiastical history and well informed even in minor details, but on the other hand much of the book is crude and fantastic. Suffice it to say that even Atlantis plays an important part in it. The book is prefaced by an introduction consisting of a poem which in spite of many metrical infirmities betrays poetical ambitions and a certain talent. It seems to us that the author would be wise if he would recognize his limitations and concentrate himself on subjects where he could easily accomplish something above the ordinary. His note on Constantine would suggest the idea that he would be the right man to write a life of Constantine in novel form in which however we would advise him not to let his fancy go farther than absolutely necessary, and to let the main facts rest on historical ground. How interesting would be a chapter on Christian persecutions under Diocletian, a description of Constantine's relation to his Christian mother, the growth of Constantine's dream into the story of that supernatural vision, a description of the twelve bishops of Circa and their examination by Secundus, which proved that all had been traitors at the time of the persecution, Secundus not excepted, etc. Incidentally we will add that probably Constantine did not see a cross in his dream, but a labarum, which was originally a pagan symbol and was not interpreted as the Christogram until later (See Carus, "The Chrisma and the Labarum," *Open Court*, XVI, 428-439, and pages 37 and 38 of this issue).

It is difficult to understand why the book was called *Modernism*. At least it has nothing to do with the new movement in the Roman Catholic church, and we would say that it is interesting in spite of the author's theory of the law of sensual impression and historical interpretation. So far as it goes this theory is all right, but the way in which the author weaves Plato's story into the text detracts from the value of his more important ideas.

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MYSTICISM IN HEATHENDOM AND CHRISTENDOM. By *Dr. E. Lehmann*. Translated by *G. M. G. Hunt*. London: Luzac, 1910. Pp. 293. Price 5s. net.

This book presents us with a concise and comprehensive account of the history of mysticism, passing in review, first, primitive mysticism and then in turn Chinese, Indian, Persian and Greek mysticism. Then comes the mysticism of New Testament Christianity, of the Greek and Roman churches, the early German mysticism, Luther's mysticism, quietism, and finally "Outcrops and After Effects," under which title is discussed the effect of mystical tendencies on literature and life. The translation is excellent. With the possible exception of the noun "Outcrops," (and we would hesitate to offer a substitute) the book has that best merit of a translator's style, that it reads thoroughly like an original English work. This is especially evident in the poetical language of the Introduction in which the author defines a mystic and sets forth the significance of his mission: "For this is the true mission of mysticism, that it announces the approach of dawn, and evil is the day which is not preceded by this dawn. The tragedy of mysticism—and it requires all human energy to prevent its taking place—is that it may just as easily degenerate into the dusk of evening, enveloping the soul in impenetrable twilight."

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THE FOURTH GOSPEL IN RESEARCH AND DEBATE. By *Benjamin Wisner Bacon*, D. D., LL. D. New York: Moffat, Yard, 1910. Pp. 544. Price \$4.00 net.

This volume comprises a series of essays on problems concerning the origin and value of the anonymous writings attributed to the Apostle John. A group of four of these essays appeared a few years ago in the *Hibbert Journal*, and their purpose was to bring before the lay public the issues of the great critical debate on the question of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel. In these the cause of the opponents of the traditional position was frankly espoused. Others of the essays of the volume appeared during the same time and afterwards in various theological journals in the interest of research pure and simple. After an introductory statement of "The Issues Involved," the chapters are gathered into four parts treating respectively the External Evidence, Direct Internal Evidence, Indirect Internal Evidence and Latest Phases of Debate and Research.

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The Putnams are to bring out in the spring a work to be entitled *The Letters of Elizabeth Cady Stanton: An Epistolary Autobiography*." The editors are to be Mrs. Stanton Blatch and Mr. Theodore Stanton. Anybody having letters of Mrs. Stanton would confer a favor on the editors by sending copies, or the originals, to Mr. Stanton, Rue Raynouard, Paris, France.