

prove that the character of writing hitherto assumed to have been of French origin, of the eleventh or twelfth century, was in reality Oriental and much older.

The present work of Prof. Merx is now the first attempt to utilize some of these newly recovered documents for the study of ancient Hebrew palæography. He publishes three documents (contracts of partnership, sale, and marriage) from 1115, 1124, and 1164, which he had obtained from a Jew of Yemen, who had probably got them in Egypt. Professor Merx publishes them in Hebrew square characters, with a French translation, and adds a few notes as well as an introduction, in which he dwells mostly on certain forms of the marriage-contract. The originals are reproduced by phototype, and a few epitaphs and documents from Worms and Spiers are added, also a fragment of an ancient Arabic text.

Every contribution of this kind, however small, must be gratefully received. But I cannot join in Professor Merx's enthusiasm over these not very perfect specimens. One can account for it by the fact that Professor Merx does not know of the vast number of more ancient and more perfect documents which the old "Genizoth" have furnished. If all those with dates would be published in facsimile and transcribed, they would form one of the most important contributions to Hebrew palæography. Texts of the tenth century (and not of the twelfth as those of Professor Merx) undreamt of only fifty years ago are now a reality, and who knows what surprises the soil of Egypt has still in store for us.

The book is magnificently printed and beautifully got up.

M. 'G.

BUDDHISM, ITS HISTORY AND LITERATURE. By T. W. RHYS DAVIDS, LL.D., Ph.D. (London, 1896.)

This book contains the first series of American Lectures on the History of Religions. The opening announcement

describes the circumstances under which the course delivered by Prof. Rhys Davids was conceived and carried out. It is the aim of the promoters of the new enterprise to secure "popular courses in the History of Religions" by the best scholars of Europe and America for delivery in various cities. For this purpose it was natural to begin with Buddhism in a country where Sir Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia" has been accepted "almost as a fifth Gospel"; and no better exponent could possibly be found than the author of the volume before us. It was perhaps a disadvantage that this distinguished scholar had already presented the same theme in a similar course of lectures some time ago on the foundation of the Hibbert Trust; but the ways of error in this difficult path of study are many, the same truths need re-enforcement and fresh illustration, and much additional material has become available in the last fifteen years. Prof. Rhys Davids' style has lost none of its ease and charm, and if his opposition to the soul-theory be a little more vehement and pervasive, this does not prevent him from appreciating contrasted systems, at least on Eastern, if not always on Western soil.

The lectures, though often delivered within university precincts, were designed for general audiences. It is much to be regretted that the published volume adheres so closely to the original plan; the student would often have welcomed additional information, or fuller discussion of difficult points, such as the late Prof. W. Robertson Smith was wont to include in his notes. Criticism, therefore, takes the form chiefly of a wish that this or that topic for which space could not be found in the text, might have been expounded in an excursus. Thus, in the opening lecture the relation of Buddhism to two current forms of belief is sketched—the monism afterwards formulated in the Vedānta, and the origins of the Sāṅkhya philosophy (where Prof. Rhys Davids avails himself of the researches of Prof. Garbe). But there were other modes of speculation in the immense

intellectual activity of the Ganges Valley, amid which Buddhism arose, some of which involved the total rejection of the doctrine of Karma (common to Buddhism and Brahmanism), and with it the whole possibility of the ethical culture which was the essence of Gotama's teaching. How did Buddhism defend itself against these? Each lecture, in turn, suggests similar questions. The second discourse deals with the Pitakas; the third describes the life of Gotama; two more are devoted to the Path and the goal of Arahatsip, in which Prof. Rhys Davids finds the secret of Buddhism; and the sixth lecture offers "some notes on the history of Buddhism." Among these the fourth and fifth, as they are the most important, so they are the most firmly knit. They contain a singularly clear and forcible display of the "truths" as expounded by the Teacher. But Buddhism, as it existed in the apprehension of the disciple, was necessarily different from its aspect to the mind of the Master. The believer received it through the Order; it was invested with all the authority of revelation, it was the gift to a sinful and perishing world from the supremely Holy and Enlightened One. The missionary power of Buddhism was largely due to the possession of this ideal. How much of the Buddha-theory was already in existence when Gotama began to preach? The materials for a decided view on this subject are not yet completely at our command; but so much has been published (due chiefly to the unwearied toil of our author himself) since the Hibbert Lecture of 1881, that a reference to his former volume is, on this topic, no longer adequate. There is a good deal of uncertainty on some questions about which Prof. Rhys Davids entertains very positive views, connected more or less directly with this central theme. For instance, there are passages in which, as Oldenberg has shown, the question of the existence after death, whether of the Buddha or of the perfected saint, is left practically open. If it may not be affirmed, it may also not be denied. So much of the terminology

of the Buddhahood is borrowed from modes of thought in which it had a transcendental meaning, that it cannot be surprising if some shreds of such significance still lingered round it. It is at any rate in that direction that we must look for the explanation of what Prof. Rhys Davids can only regard as the corruptions of the truth, viz. the assimilation of Buddhism with theism. But at this point we approach a philosophy of the subject unsuited for discussion here. It must suffice to call attention to some of the fresh passages which are now translated from the texts for English readers, and to express the hope that the lecturer may be enabled to complete the work to which he has devoted a score of laborious years.

The book is well printed: "conception," p. 124, l. 11, should of course be "exception." It is not evident what is the connection of the Akkadians of Mesopotamia with Zoroastrianism (p. 7), nor can we profess the author's faith that religion is a product of the feminine mind, and that all the gods were once "goddesses" (*sic*). And is anything gained by spelling Konfucius with a *K*? Kong-fu-tse might be endurable; but if we accept the Latinized ending of the old Jesuit missionaries, why alter the first letter?

J. E. C.

S. SCHECHTER AND REV. S. SINGER. TALMUDICAL FRAGMENTS IN THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY. Edited with Introduction (and a facsimile). 4to, pp. vi + 28. (Cambridge: University Press, 1895.)

Among the fragments which have come from Egypt, came also a portion of a Talmudic treatise (Kerithoth), dated 1123, of the Babylonian redaction, and another small fragment consisting of two leaves of the Tr. Berachoth (Palestinian recension), but without date. These two have now been published by S. Schechter and the Rev. S. Singer. But not even an attempt has been made by them to collate these fragments with the printed editions, and especially with the first editions.