

Mt. Gerizim, ^{has} witnessed by the author in 1898.¹

Dr. Thomson, however, has other ends in view in this volume than merely an historical study of the Samaritans. He is one of the few really competent Old Testament scholars who still hold out against the now dominant view of the history of the Pentateuch and its legislation associated with the names of Graf and Wellhausen. In the religious rites of the Samaritans, and, above all, in the history of their Pentateuch, Dr. Thomson finds, as the title of his book is meant to indicate, conclusive evidence of the great antiquity of the Pentateuch in its present form.

To summarize the arguments—some new, others familiar and often refuted—advanced in support of this position would far exceed the limits of this review. Scouting the idea that the Samaritans could have accepted the Pentateuch from their bitter enemies, the Jews, in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, Dr. Thomson believes he has proved that the ten tribes were in possession of the complete Torah before the fall of Samaria, on the ground, mainly, that the sacrificial terminology used by Amos and Hosea presupposes acquaintance on

¹ With this description, and with Dr. Thomson's exposition of the points in which the Samaritan observance differs from that of the Jews before the destruction of their Temple in A.D. 70, should be compared the latest account by a Swedish observer in Dalman's *Palästinajahr buch* for 1912 (pp. 104-120) with the editor's competent study entitled: 'The Samaritan Passover in relation to the Jewish,' on pp. 121-138.

their part with the terminology peculiar to the Priests' Code. He is on more original lines when, after an exhaustive discussion of the development of the Hebrew alphabet, and an informing examination of typical textual variations between the Samaritan and Massoretic recensions of the Pentateuch, he concludes that these must have parted company not later than the reign of Solomon. It is scarcely necessary to say that the material as yet available for the study of early Hebrew epigraphy is much too limited to permit of so definite a conclusion. Even more precarious seems the argument, novel and ingenious though it be, drawn from the non-pronunciation of the characteristic Hebrew gutturals by the Samaritans, which, it is here maintained, is due to Phœnician influence, and takes us back to the period when the Greeks borrowed their alphabet from the Phœnicians.

However, when all is said against the author's main thesis, the fact remains that Dr. Thomson has given us an original and stimulating book. He has laid bare not a few weak places in the modern critical position, and has opened up lines of investigation demanding the closer attention of future students.

Attention may be called, in conclusion, to the four useful appendixes, and to the first in particular, which consists of a descriptive catalogue of all the known manuscripts of the Samaritan-Hebrew Pentateuch, including a list, here given for the first time, of those preserved in the Rylands Library in Manchester.

The Neglected Interpreter.

BY THE REVEREND JOHN DOUGLAS.

LET it be said at once that the title of this paper applies to the study of the Foreign Missionary History of the last generation or two, the study of the emergence in non-Christian lands of the Christian Church, and to the study of present-day conditions, both in policy and in practice, on the Foreign Field. It is this manifold study which is here set forth as the neglected interpreter of the Bible and especially of the New Testament.

It is recognized on all hands, both within the

Church and without, that the teaching ministry of the pulpit urgently requires to be revised and revived. For ours is a time of renewed sifting and revision, not least in the region of Christian thought and doctrine; and critical inquiry into revelations, laws, and gospels, their very presuppositions as well as their claims and authorities, is busy all about us in the disturbed and unsettled atmosphere which the Great War has produced. The Church and especially the pulpit have to meet this, if they are to make an adequate response to

the needs of our time. Preaching, in other words, must anew give prominence to the exposition of the fundamental Christian doctrines, and of the historic basis of these doctrines; while at the same time the authority of the Christian ethic, linked (as it must be) with the doctrine, requires anew to be declared and interpreted. And this in a living, vitalizing, and practical fashion.

Now back of this lie nothing less than a thorough restudy and reinterpretation of the New Testament itself—I mean on the part of the average minister of the Churches. It is, no doubt, an extremely elementary thing to say, by way of reminder, that the New Testament is history from first to last; it is so hardly less in its development of doctrine than in the directly historical sections. And this elementary fact about the New Testament really requires to be emphasized, when one recalls how largely it is handled merely as a text-book in the pulpit. How many preachers avail themselves, as it is only fair to their subject that they should, of the results of modern historical analysis, and the rich light which these results throw upon the Book? Yet at the back and as the basis of accurate and illuminating Christian preaching and teaching there ought to be, and there is no excuse to-day for there not being, the live and conscientious use of the light of interpretation just referred to.

Now if—as is here claimed—this be indeed the case, here, in 'the neglected interpreter,' there lies to hand a very treasure-trove of enlightenment and inspiring exposition of the New Testament history and Church development and development of doctrine. For in the history, and especially in the more recent history, of Foreign Missions, and in the situation produced by the emergence of the Church on the Foreign Field, and in the problems raised by the impact of Christianity upon the non-Christian religions and peoples and civilizations, you have almost New Testament history repeating itself in a vivid, fascinating, illuminating pageant which acts out again the very process which is apparent in the making—and in the life which is behind the making—of the New Testament.

As you survey the Foreign Field you meet conditions and needs, a whole situation, which is surprisingly similar to those into which the Gospel and the Apostles fared forth in the first and second centuries. You have, for instance, the Christian evangel to-day working its leaven into masses of thought and life in Islam and Hinduism, which

reproduce in a remarkable degree the process by which, on the one hand, the work and thought of the Apostle Paul were conceived and achieved under the stress and strain of Judaism; and, on the other hand, the process by which St. John especially and the Fathers met and adapted and conquered Hellenism. Or again you have, to take a less general example, a wealth of illustration in this neglected interpreter to bring to the understanding of the whole question of Demons and Devil-Possession in its bearing upon the gladness and the glory of the Christian salvation—a very real factor in the religion which finds its reflexion in the glow of page after page of the New Testament. And the more you realize of the meeting to-day of Christianity with the world's Animistic religions, the more you understand of the liberations, the relief, the hopefulness, the birth of enterprise which burn and shine in chapter upon chapter of New Testament religion and life.

There is another aspect of this which falls to be noted in a sketch of the subject. It is that both the call for, and abundant aid in, the rethinking and the restatement of our theology come from the Foreign Field. There, as in the first four centuries of our era, the demand has to be met increasingly for a formulation of Christian theology in view of the philosophies and theologies which the missionary must encounter and overthrow, at the same time finding always his avenues of approach towards and points of contact with non-Christian religions. And he knows that the necessity is upon the Church, if she would but recognize it, of presenting to the world her reconsidered programme of thought, her theological 'platform,' a programme drawn out of her freshest understanding of the past and her newest experience of her resources in God and the gospel of His Grace in Jesus Christ. Christianity facing Islam, for instance, is called upon to declare afresh, and with freedom from the tyranny of easily misunderstood words, the doctrines of the Personality and the Freedom of God and the doctrine of the Trinity. While, to indicate a single other illustration of what I mean, even the Animistic religions in their call upon the Christian gospel suggest an earnest rethinking of our relationship, and the whole problem involved, towards God in prayer. These are one or two among many points at which the demand for theological restatement is made. Now this restatement has to be gone about and made in view of the missionary

aspect of the Church's life, in view of the growing emergence of the Church in non-Christian lands. It will not do—we learn it from the Foreign Field—to undertake the task of restatement as in behalf of the Home Churches. The day for that is past. And the task to-day must be faced with a definite and wide outlook to the far-flung lines of the Church's campaign; not merely a view confined to pulpits and colleges and classes at home. The restatement of theology at this late date must take place, in fact, in the light of comparative religion, in the light of that practical aspect of comparative religion, the study of which is richly provided by the foreign mission work of the Church. The restatement must, indeed, be as little of the West merely, as may be, and—here the assistance of the Foreign Field is invaluable now—as catholic as is possible at this stage. This, too, is seen to be necessary when one recalls how urgent upon our attention has become the oneness of the world, the nearness of its uttermost parts to one another. So that the Church's vital enterprises dare not be undertaken save in the missionary spirit with the missionary purpose. The fulfilment of such a purpose calls to-day for a living theology expressed in as universal terms as it is possible to achieve. And what I have called the neglected interpreter is here in God's wonderful providence with a wealth of assistance for the great task.

Finally, one other side of the subject must be touched upon which is in closest contact with the need of our time. It is this, that the practical study of comparative religion of which I have spoken and which is afforded in Foreign Mission study, reinforces superlatively the preaching and proclamation of Christianity as the absolute religion, and, one may add, gives added weight to the insistence, which is urgent to-day, upon the supreme claims of Christian morality, the Christian ethic.

As has been truly written, 'The absolute religion can only be fully understood in the light of the imperfect religions, if religion is a practical matter at all, and theology other than a mere abstract science'; and it is also true, even alarmingly true in a time when the authority and sanction of the Christian ethic is in hot debate, that 'comparative religion is being used by many to-day in a negative interest with the view of proving that Christianity is only one among other religions.' These words were written ten years ago, and they can be underlined heavily to-day. These words represent facts with which a pulpit that is to charge itself with a living message and a powerful apologetic must reckon seriously. Here again, therefore, the neglected interpreter stands by to offer invaluable aid to the preaching and teaching of the Church. Again, too, there is here endless help towards the understanding of the New Testament account and teaching of the new life in Christ as it won its way through a non-Christian world; and the life of the first Churches, in their witness, in their failings, and in their difficulties, receives living illustration as you see it in reproduction here on the Foreign Field—the life, and the truth, and the way. Enough has been said to make good the claim for the study whose lines were indicated in the opening paragraph of this paper. The neglected interpreter obviously ought to remain neglected no longer, either as regards our study of the New Testament, or as regards our exposition of Christian doctrine, and our insistence upon the authority of the Lord Jesus in the Christian morality.

In what I have said there lies an appeal to the average minister. The man in the pulpit who mounts it with the merely congregational or little more than the parochial outlook is surely a tragedy in the Church as it faces 'the need of a world of men' to-day!

Entre Nous.

SOME TOPICS.

The Resurrection Narratives.

Is it possible to harmonize the Gospel narratives of Christ's resurrection? The Rev. N. P. Williams, Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, does it in *The*

First Easter Morning (S.P.C.K.; 3s. 6d. net). This is his way with one difficulty, the difference between Mark and Luke on the one hand, and Matthew on the other, regarding the visits of the women to the tomb. 'I think it will be found that—given *two* apparitions, which Matthew has,