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SOME NEW BOOKS.

Commentary on Esther. By PROFESSOR PAULUS CASSEL. Translated by the Rev. A. Bernstein. (Edinburgh : T. and T. Clark, pp. xxxv., 400.)

PROFESSOR CASSEL, whose commentary on Esther is thus added to Clark's "Foreign Theological Library," employs the Jewish Midrash as no other scientific critic with whom we are acquainted. He sympathises with it because he thoroughly understands it. He realizes its full importance for Biblical exegesis and he never omits to quote it when it throws light on the text. In fact, Professor Cassel may almost be said to be himself possessed of a Midrashic soul, for some of his own brilliant suggestions breathe the very spirit of the Midrash. We have rarely read a commentary on the Bible with more real pleasure. Professor Cassel writes from the orthodox standpoint, his one weakness being a failure to appreciate the strength of the case against the authenticity of *Esther*. Therefore, those who turn to the book for a complete answer to the vigorous attacks of Graetz and others will be disappointed. But the book is none the less a veritable store-house of information on Persian antiquities, Oriental legends, and Jewish Purim lore. The English translation of the *Targum Sheni* presents this curious compilation in an English dress for the first time. Of the English translation, as a whole, we regret to have to speak unfavourably. Confusions of tenses occur on almost every page, and un-English idioms and phrases are rather frequent. Besides, there is considerable irregularity in the printing of the Hebrew text. The plan of printing it verse by verse as the commentary proceeds is a peculiarly happy one. It is, therefore, regrettable that it was abandoned so early in the volume. These blemishes, however, detract very little from the value of the edition, which may be commended to the student as a fresh and instructive addition to exegetical literature.

Inspiration of the Old Testament Inductively Considered. By ALFRED CAVE, B.A. (London : 1888, pp. xii., 468.)

THIS book indicates that orthodox advocates of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch feel the necessity of meeting the destructive criticism of the Wellhausen school. We cannot say that we find Mr. Cave's arguments always convincing, and we fancy that his quotations of scientific authorities in confirmation of Genesis are not always very discriminately chosen. Max Müller is, for instance, cited as though modern philologists had not largely refused to assent to the professor's views. Mr. Cave nevertheless makes several good points against Wellhausen, and shows considerable fairness in admitting the force of, and replying to, some of the objections of the "higher criticism" to the Mosaic authorship of the Law. Mr. Cave's book is both clear and original, and may be read with considerable profit by all who are acquainted with modern Biblical criticism.

I. A.