

Reviews of Books.

THEOSOPHY AND CHRISTIANITY.

THEOSOPHY AND CHRISTIANITY. By M. Carta Sturge (Moral Sciences Tripos). London: S.P.C.K. Price 1s. 6d. net.

In former years Theosophy had been definitely anti-Christian. It is still so in India, where, under the influence of Mrs. Besant, it has assumed a dangerous nationalistic form and caused the Government some concern. In England, however, some of the exponents of the cult, with a view to gaining adherents from the Churches, have of late adopted a seemingly patronising attitude towards Christianity and use many Christian phrases, though in a misleading sense. For instance, not long since, Mrs. Besant created some stir in London by announcing the speedy "coming of the Christ." Subsequently, it became known that her "Christ" was a poor, weak-minded Indian boy, named "Krishnamurti," alias "Alcyon," to whom Theosophists were to offer worship!

Miss Sturge has read a good deal of the writings of English Theosophists, and in the first part of her book presents to us all the best things that they claim for their system. In the second part of her book she contrasts Theosophy with Christianity, and, after pointing out the superiority of the latter, she makes the unconvincing statement that Theosophy is "in the main, quite in accord with the teachings of Christianity, and where the theosophic teaching differs from Christianity we shall find lies more in what is left out, not stated at all, than in what is positively given" (p. 50).

We are among those who believe that Theosophy is irreconcilably opposed to the Christianity of the New Testament, for the following reasons: (1) The Theosophic conception of God is pantheistic. (2) In Theosophy there is no place for prayer, repentance, atonement, forgiveness, or miracles. (3) Theosophy regards the New Testament as a fantastic allegory and not as history. (4) We are told that "Master Jesus," in 13,500 B.C., was "the wife [sic] of an Emperor in South India!" and that he is inferior to the half-demented Indian boy Alcyon. (5) The doctrine of "Karma" makes a God of love an impossibility. (6) To swallow the preposterous and audacious assertions about Mahatmas and re-incarnations requires an infinite amount of credulity.

Miss Sturge's book, though useful, is inadequate as a Christian evidence handbook and ought to be supplemented by Dr. Frank Ballard's admirable booklet entitled *Why not Theosophy?* It can be got for a penny from C. H. Kelly, 26 Paternoster Row, London, E.C. 4.

KHODADAD E. KEITH.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

DOMINUS NOSTER. By C. A. Anderson Scott. Cambridge: *Heffer & Son*. Price 6s. net.

Dr. Anderson Scott is one of the clearest of contemporary biblical theologians. He has a truer grasp of the message of Scripture than most of them and he is one of the few who apply the new method of interpretation without causing unnecessary pain to those who were accustomed to use the Books as of equal value for arriving at doctrinal truth. Dr. Scott sees growth in the New Testament. He discerns the inspired authors as men who step by step reached the fulness of the knowledge of the meaning of the Person

of Christ. He traces with skill the evolution of thought and by honest dealing with the documents he brings home to the mind that no other explanation but the divinity of our Lord will account for the facts narrated and the statements found in the Gospels and Epistles. As a piece of constructive theology this book is of exceptional value and cannot fail to make a very deep impression on the minds of all who weigh its carefully considered opinions. There is nothing scrappy or hasty in its pages, and it is certainly written with a reverence and restraint that carry conviction.

His remarks on the attempt made to insinuate that the early Christians in hailing our Saviour as Lord only followed the custom of their times drive home his main contention: "If the Divine name and status was finally assigned to Jesus Christ, it was by men who held the purest and most exalted conception of the Godhead, who at the same time could no longer resist the converging pressure of history and experience. If the followers of Christ for two generations hesitated to give their Master the name of 'God' we may claim that they did so because they could give no other." Many who find Liddon's famous Bampton Lectures of very unequal value through a certain change in the method of approaching the proofs of our Lord's divinity will read Dr. Anderson Scott with sympathy, and they will discover that he is forced by his study of facts and documents to the same conclusion. "Christianity is Christ" and everything depends on the fact that Christ is God. *Dominus Noster* must be read from beginning to end if its real power is to be understood, and we confess that at first we failed to appreciate the force of a cumulative argument, which satisfies the intellect and leads the reader to bow before Him whom the Church throughout the ages has rightly called God.

THE MINOR PROPHETS.

JOEL AND AMOS. By A. Lukyn Williams, D.D., Hon. Canon of Ely and late Examining Chaplain to the Bishop of Durham. London: S.P.C.K. Price 1s. 6d. net.

This is Vol. II. of the Devotional Commentaries which Canon Lukyn Williams is publishing under the title of the *Minor Prophets Unfolded*. The purpose of the series is to "provide the layman who has but little time at his disposal with a very short but trustworthy guide to the interpretation of these little books of Holy Scripture, which are often difficult to understand, and sometimes obscure." In a few brief lines Dr. Williams gives us the main features of the life and times of each prophet, then proceeds to expound the prophecy section by section, and to add at the end of each section short but valuable notes, explaining difficult words and phrases in that section. The exposition is scholarly, clear and devotional; the notes are concise, trustworthy and to the point. More matter is compressed in one sentence than you can find in a page of a more pretentious commentary. Many using the book will thank God and feel grateful to Dr. Lukyn Williams for having introduced them to the priceless but woefully neglected mines of the Minor Prophets.

THE WAR AND THE GOSPEL.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE IN THE LIGHT OF THE WAR. By the Rev. W. M. Clow, D.D., Prof. of Christian Ethics, United Free Church, Glasgow. London: Marshall Brothers. Price 3s. 6d. net.

"The tragedy of this war," says the author, "has cast its own intense and searching light on the truths of the Gospel. It has compelled all to face

old questions and new issues with a fresh and more solemn interest." Accordingly in this volume, he endeavours to interpret some of the leading truths of the Gospel "with a constant recollection of what may be called the creed of the trenches." The subjects discussed are those that at the present time are uppermost in the minds of Christian people, such as, War and the Will of God, Christ's Sacrifice and Ours, Sin, Brotherhood, New Birth, Forgiveness, Pain, Prayer, Life to Come, the Eternal Destiny of the Fallen, etc. In the treatment of all these problems, Dr. Clow, like the scribe who hath been made a disciple of the kingdom of heaven, bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old. Professor Clow is essentially a teacher and marshals his facts in an orderly manner and presents them in clear language. Breadth of view, sound scholarship and Evangelical fervour characterise these chapters.

TWO WAR BOOKS.

WITH THE SCOTTISH NURSES IN ROUMANIA. By Ivonne Fitzroy. London: *John Murray*. Price 5s. net.

This delightful diary, kept during the brief and sadly ending struggle of the Roumanians, is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Elsie Inglis, the beloved founder of the Scottish Woman's Hospital and C.M.O. of the London Units. We have heard less about Roumanian hospitals than most others in the war, so this glimpse of the hardships, the dangers, the devotion and the cheerfulness of the "Scottish Women" is especially welcome. There is humour as well as tragedy in the narrative. "One of the patients was heard to remark, 'The Russian sisters are pretty but they are not good—the English sisters are good but they are not pretty.'" "We are very cast down!" is the writer's comment. There are many interesting illustrations, and we are sure the volume will be appreciated.

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CAPTAIN BALL, V.C. By Walter Briscoe and H. Russell Stannard. London: *Herbert Jenkins, Ltd.* Price 6s. net.

Mr. Lloyd George, Sir Douglas Haig, Sir Hugh Trenchard and General Higgins (Chief of the Air Staff), all furnish enthusiastic forewords to this stirring biography. Its hero was a wonderful boy, in the two years from nineteen to twenty-one, during which he was flying, he gained the ranks of First Lieutenant and Captain, and the Military Cross, D.S.O. with double bars, and ultimately the V.C. He brought down more enemies than any German, Frenchman, or Englishman; was acknowledged everywhere as England's first airman. His death was deeply lamented as a national misfortune, and the King sent his personal condolences to the sorrowing parents. If ever there were a hero Captain Ball was one.

"THE NEW CATHOLICISM."

THE NEW CATHOLICISM. By W. E. Orchard, D.D. London: *George Allen & Unwin*. Price 3s. 6d. net.

We do not believe one tenth of those who will read these thoughtful sermons will agree with their outlook. Dr. Orchard is a Nonconformist who believes in Catholicism, adopts the Eastward Position and wears Vestments, rejects Papalism but admires the Roman ideal of continuity; wishes to see all followers of Christ gather together round the Lord's Table, and advises members of the Catholic Churches not to give expression to their Catholic

convictions in this respect without the approval of their leaders." In spite of these eccentricities and others we do not specify his addresses deserve careful reading. It seems to us that he approaches every controverted position with the idea that the more violently he disagrees with assertions made in its support, the more he is bound to discover reasons why he should protect what he dislikes. His mind is that of a Catholic Dissenter, a Nonconformist Catholic who has visions of the comprehensiveness that will embrace contradictions and a unity that transcends all differences. He is therefore eclectic in the survey he makes and is inclined to believe that he has proved his point when he makes a reference to one part of a writer's contention. He is never dull and is always thought provoking.

"LAST WORDS."

LAST WORDS ON GREAT ISSUES. By J. Beattie Crozier, LL.D. London: Chapman & Hall. Price 10s. 6d. net.

Dr. Beattie Crozier has for many years been one of the most influential of British philosophical thinkers. He came to England from Canada when a young man and worked unknown to fame, but deeply appreciated by a small and select body of intellectuals who valued his insight and considered him to be a force to be reckoned with when fundamental problems of thought, belief and statesmanship were under discussion. Unfortunately, we cannot reckon Dr. Crozier among the Christian thinkers of the day. He is a man whose honesty is beyond question and whose sincerity strikes all his readers. He is no materialist—he refuses to class himself as a Theist. In a letter to the *Spectator*—republished in this volume—he informs us that in the dark days through which we pass he finds help and comfort in Lyte's hymn "Abide with me." We are not surprised. In reading his other works we were impressed by a faith in something more than a mere tendency to righteousness—a holding up of hands to Some One he did not define and a fixed conviction that at the root of life and the universe there is a Power—a Personality—that cares for all created things. Were it not for his severe comments on the Bishop of Birmingham for his application of the text to the author of *God, the Invisible King* we should say Dr. Beattie Crozier is "not far from the Kingdom of God." His reverence and his humility have certainly been fed by his early studies at his mother's knee.

We trust that the acute and masterly criticisms of the fancy religions of the present day will be read by students. We are fairly familiar with most of the discussions on Sir Oliver Lodge's Spiritualism, and Mr. Wells' new revelation, but we have nowhere seen anything more penetrating or incisive than the chapters devoted by Dr. Crozier to these subjects. He destroys the veil of illusion that surrounds them and shows how untrustworthy they are. The chapters on the present position of Religion and the problem of Religious Conversion dissect a situation that must be fairly met, and we have little doubt that the result of their careful study will be a conviction that if Dr. Crozier had not started the consideration of the subject in his sixties with forty years of settled opinions behind him, his conclusions would be much more in accord with Christian teaching than they are. For our part we cannot rest content with leaving the vital problems "pointing to the direct and immediate presence of God or the Spirit of God." We go forward to know God as revealed in His Son, through whom we learn not only that God is, but also that He dwells in our hearts and rules our lives as a Living Person.

OTHER VOLUMES.

FAITH AND DUTY. Sermons for the Church's Year. By Rev. W. H. Ranken, M.A., Late Fellow of C.C.C. Oxford. London: *Robert Scott*. Price 2s. 6d. net.

A selection of fifty sermons preached on different occasions in the course of a long ministry by a sound scholar. These sermons are sensible, thoughtful and direct in their applications. The author is quite justified in saying in the preface: "I think that there is at any rate as little as possible of commonplace in them, and that they are a clear expression of the sympathies and the standpoint of a fair-minded Evangelical Churchman." With the scarcity of paper we wonder how the publishers have been able to produce 390 closely-printed pages for half-a-crown!

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THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM. By the Rev. W. Temple, M.A. London: *Longmans, Green & Co.* Price 6d. net.

Mr. Temple believes that the fall of Jerusalem was the end of the world. "Every time that some form of civilization collapses because "it is not built upon the truth as it is in Christ, we see the Son of Man come in Judgment and a world ending" (p. 15). For instance, the Reformation was the end of the ancient world; and the French Revolution was the end of the world of feudalism and autocracy. "The coming of the Son of Man with power," we are told, "is the manifestation of His love, and the seal of God upon that manifestation; it is the Cross and Resurrection with all that follows from it. Our Lord never speaks of a *second* coming nor of coming *again*, except indeed when He speaks of His return in the person of the Spirit" (p. 17). Is this representation quite accurate? Do St. Matthew xxiv. 30, and St. John xiv. 3, refer to the coming of the Spirit? See also Acts i. 11.

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PRIMITIVE WORSHIP AND THE PRAYER BOOK. By Walker Gwynne, D.D. London: *Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd.* Price 12s. 6d. net.

Dr. Gwynne is an American Churchman who has long been interested in liturgical studies. This is a popular account of the history of our Book of Common Prayer with special reference to the Revisions that have taken place in some of our daughter and sister churches. Readers will find it well written and will discover in the frontispiece a drawing of the arrangement of a third century church that will shed light on the development of the internal development of Christian places of worship. Dr. Gwynne lays no claim to originality. He is an industrious student who knows how to pass on the knowledge he has gained from his well selected library.

