

REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

A MODERNIST AND THE CREEDS.

CONSCIENCE, CREEDS AND CRITICS. By C. W. Emmet. London: *Macmillan and Co.* 3s. net.

We trust we shall not be misunderstood when we say that Mr. Emmet is of all modernists who write for the information of the public the one that is least likely to give offence to those who differ from him. We disagree with his contention that the main difficulties concerning the Virgin Birth and the physical Resurrection of our Lord arise not so much from *a priori* arguments against miracles as from the ambiguity of the evidence in the New Testament. That is his own position and he frankly says so, but it is by no means the general conviction of those who agree with him. We cannot improve on his presentation of the position as he finds it.

"The Church will have been permitted to believe in the Virgin Birth and the Empty Tomb till the essential doctrines of the Incarnation and the Resurrection were sufficiently established to stand without their support, through a better understanding of the broad arguments from history and experience which are their true basis. The modern doctrine of Revelation must allow frankly for the use of illusion. In other words we shall not make God directly and personally responsible for the external forms in which religious truths have clothed themselves."

This is a claim we cannot admit. Christianity is an historical religion. Its first teachers based their faith on the empty tomb. The Lord Himself said He would rise again and the whole course of human history has been changed by belief in the emptiness of the tomb. It is something more than a passing illusion we have to meet. We have to face the fact that the disciples were changed from men who despaired into the inheritors of a glorious hope and a certainty of faith. Take the Gospel of the Resurrection out of the New Testament and where are we and what Christian, until the modern view of miracle became prevalent, ever thought that our Lord did not leave His tomb empty? We are reminded of a distinguished Modernist who boldly contends that the miraculous element in the New Testament is simply the poetry of revelation! On that ground there never would have been built an apostolic Church.

May we add that this book contains the clearest and most balanced account known to us of the great trials for heresy in the last century? Mr. Ward Cornish gave an excellent summary in his *History of the Church in the Nineteenth Century*, and when we say that Mr. Emmet has improved on that brilliant writer, we accord him very high praise. The whole book deserves notice for its attempt to make satisfactory what to most readers is in essence a most unsatisfactory position.

A ROMANIST AND THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

A STUDY OF ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL. By G. H. Trench. London: *John Murray.* 7s. 6d. net.

This work by a Roman Catholic layman well deserves study. It is written from the orthodox standpoint of the Johannine authorship and takes no notice of Modernist views of its contents. Evidently Mr. Trench is a scholar who has meditated long on the work of the beloved disciple, and

Protestant readers will find themselves for the most part in agreement with his commentary, which is written in intelligible English by a man who knows what he believes and why he believes it. Naturally, when he deals with specific Roman doctrine, we profoundly differ from him and we are struck by certain naïve dogmatism that is not always as satisfactory to the reader as to the author. For example, in commenting on St. John xx. 23, he admits with Westcott that others were present besides the Apostles when our Lord instituted "the Sacrament of penance." He adds—

"If the Church of Rome, for disciplinary reasons, has seen fit to confine in practice this absolving power to a certain body of officials, well and good; it is but part of the discipline which binds together the members of that, the most vital of the Christian denominations. Or the philosophy of this phenomenon may be that a power at first inherent in the general organism has, by the inevitable law or formula of that organism's development, become specialised into a function of a definite part of that organism. Just so the power of infallibility in doctrine, at first known to be inherent somehow in the Church collectively, has by the law of development become specialised into a function of the visible head of the Church!"

As is usual with Roman Catholic authors, Mr. Trench identifies Mary the sister of Lazarus with Mary of Magdala—the woman that was a sinner. He endeavours to show that her sin was only known to very few, but the narrative in St. Luke will not bear this out, and it has always seemed fatal to this contention to find the Pharisees comforting the bereaved Mary, whom they would have avoided if she were a "sinner" in the sense evident to all candid readers of the third Gospel. We do not always agree with the details of the skilfully compiled Diary of our Lord's ministry, but very few students can come to the same conclusions when the material for exact determination of dates is so scanty. Mr. Trench is a man who has entered into the thought of St. John, and his commentary cannot fail to aid devotion and to win the sympathy of those who study its pages.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY. By J. R. COHU. London: John Murray 3s. 6d. net.

Mr. Cohu writes this book for "The Modern Churchman's Library." One of its predecessors has been the subject of acute controversy and is by no means calculated to win Evangelical approval. This work on the contrary is a fair presentation of the development of the Christian Ministry and is based on a careful study of all the facts known to historians. The position of the Episcopate in the Church is the crux of all reunion discussions and we know of few works that put so accurately and popularly a sustained historical argument as Mr. Cohu has crowded into his pages. He is never obscure and he has the rare gift of making plain exactly what he thinks. His position is broadly that of Bishop Lightfoot and it may be well to place again on record the view, which Mr. Cohu does not quote, of his great friend Bishop Westcott.

"I cannot find any basis for the High Church theory in the New Testament. It is based, as far as I can see, on assumed knowledge of what the divine plan must be. I had occasion to look through the New Testament not long ago with special reference to this question, and I was greatly impressed by a fact which seems to have been overlooked. All the apostolic writers are possessed (as I think rightly in essence) by the thought of the Lord's return. They show no sign of any purpose to create a permanent ecclesiastical organisation. Whatever is done is to meet a present need as, e.g.,

the mission of Titus to Crete. The very condition laid down for the Apostolate excludes the idea of the perpetuation of their office. Is not this true? What followed when the Lord (as I think) did come is a wonderful revelation of the providence of God."

This little known extract from a letter to Mr. Llewelyn Davies proves that Dr. Westcott is in agreement with the main contention of Mr. Cohu, and we venture to add that all historical investigation since the letter was written confirms his view that the Apostles left no successors. Christianity is the least exclusive of all religions and yet Churches have made membership of and life in Christ depend on a form of organisation that has grown with the centuries and cannot be recognised as in any way consistent with New Testament teaching.

SPIRITUALISM EXAMINED.

SPIRITUALISM AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. By E. W. Barnes, F.R.S. *Longmans.* 2s. net.

We have long desired a work on Spiritualism that would at once be sane, well versed in its history and true to the highest religious claims. We have read most of the recent works on the subject, from Sir William Barrett to Sir Oliver Lodge, and are familiar with the Reports of the Psychical Research Society, but we did not know of any book that had without bias scientifically and tersely analysed the evidence and shown how weak it is. Most of those who attack spiritualism show a *parti pris* spirit. It is hard to avoid this, for the most outstanding quality of spiritualistic literature is its inability to distinguish the rhetorical and trivial from the grave and important. Dr. Barnes comes to the subject with a well trained mind. He does not attempt to prove a negative, but with frank desire to get at truth he has arrived at conclusions that to us seem incontrovertible. "The common business of spiritualism is permeated by deceit and fraud: many who have sought aid from it have been alternately exalted and depressed, excited, baffled and duped. It has given them not tranquillity of spirit and usefulness of life, but morbid excitements and experiments alike unhealthy and unsatisfying." Those of us who have come into personal touch with the victims of spiritualism know how true this is.

We wish specially to draw attention to the argument that because a man has made a great reputation in one branch of research that is no guarantee that he has the necessary qualifications for evaluating psychological evidence. This requires a special type of mind and training, and experience has proved that self experimentation on the part of men supposed to be balanced has frequently worked mental evil. There is much still to be discovered in the domain of morbid and even normal psychology, but we do not believe that along the line of séances we shall arrive at knowledge of permanent value. The one thing that must be excluded from scientific inquiry is strong personal bias, and that is the one qualification—apparently—for the reception of sympathetic messages from those who are supposed to communicate with friends beyond the veil.

DR. NAIRNE AND JOHANNINE AUTHORSHIP.

JOHANNINE WRITINGS. By A. Nairne D.D. London: *Longmans, Green & Co.* 2s. 6d. net.

Dr. Nairne is more satisfactory as an expositor of the teaching of the Johannine writers than as an historical critic. It is extremely difficult to grasp his view of the personality of the author and we are glad to find in

the Preface a first-rate criticism of his argument. Dr. Murray of Selwyn College shows clearly that the choice lies between history and romance—and we may add between a first hand authority and a secondary workman who wrought over the tradition he had received until it assumed a new orientation. Naturally Dr. Nairne is much impressed by the story of the raising of Lazarus, which he tries to explain away. "Was the evidence considered ambiguous by the other evangelists: that Lazarus was certainly raised, yet not perhaps from death but from a trance? The difference might seem of little matter to St. John, bathed as he was in the consciousness of that life eternal which is here and now in Christ. The sleeper rose at the call of the Lord; why linger on the manner of the calling? Not the swathed corpse so awfully emerging from the sepulchre, but the Lord's 'I am the resurrection and the life' is the truth that admits no ambiguity." He adds, "But this is mere conjecture; a refuge for superficial familiarity with the science of the passing day." We do not think that it will add to the acceptance of the truth to find the facts romance, and the plain man will seek other grounds for his belief in a message from God than he finds in a Christianity that is explained away. For us it is much easier to accept the facts in their simplicity than to find refuge in a rationalism that is false to the Canon that of contradictories one must be false. The man that could pen as history what he knew to be false in reality, is by no means a safe guide when he gives us a Christology that satisfies those who believe in the Divinity of Him Who was Truth incarnate. We have dwelt so long upon this part of a suggestive book that we run the risk of belittling its value. Few will lay it down without discovering freshness of outlook and stimulating suggestiveness in its pages.

TWO MISSIONARY BOOKS.

THE RIDDLE OF NEARER ASIA. By Basil Matthews, M.A. London: C.M.S. Price 2s. net.

Here is an intensely interesting as well as an immensely important volume. Mr. Matthews, who has a picturesque style, gives us "the drama of the East, the wonder of its past, the uneasy slumber of its present, and the mystery of its future"—as he tells us he saw it in the Spring of 1914, just before the outbreak of War, and of how he realized then the importance of Mesopotamia, Palestine, Syria and Asia Minor. He tells the tale of the storied past and outlines the task which lies before the Christian Church in lands which are "strategically a pivot on which world issues swing." Emphatically a book to be read and re-read.

IN THE EAST AFRICA WAR ZONE. By I. H. Briggs, C.M.S. Missionary in German East Africa. London: C.M.S. Price 1s. 3d. net.

This illuminating little book appears at a time when German East Africa looms large on the horizon, and Mr. Briggs has given us a fascinating account not only of the country, and the people, but of the history of the missionary enterprise of the C.M.S. in a dark corner of the earth. Of course the account of the internment camp at Niboriani, in which the missionaries were imprisoned, will be read with the deepest and most sympathetic interest. Needless to say the general get-up of the work leaves nothing to be desired.

OF HUMAN INTEREST.

SISTER MATTY AND COMPANY; A MIXED LOT. By Robert Holmes. Edinburgh and London: Blackwood and Sons. Price 6s. net.

Mr. Holmes made quite a hit with "Walter Greenway, Spy and Hero," and now establishes his reputation by this collection of life-stories. He

reveals himself in these pages as a person possessed of infinite tact and unflinching patience together with no small amount of humour. Some of the stories bring before us men and women who can only be described as "incorrigibles." In some cases the characters described eventually made good. "Sister" Matty was one of these and this is in many ways the most remarkable story in the book. But from first to last it is alive with human interest and proves that "truth is stranger than fiction."

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

THE PRIEST AND HIS VESTMENTS; OR, THE VICAR'S DISCUSSION. By Wm. James Stewart. London: *C. J. Thynne*.

Since the second issue of this book appeared, in July, Sir Robert Anderson, K.C.B., who contributed a characteristically forceful Introduction, has passed away. Mr. Stewart's carefully collected facts are unanswerable, but the discussion strikes us as being rather wearisome, though no doubt there are many to whom a work of this kind appeals, and those who have the time and patience to wade through the conversations between the Vicar and his parishioners will find themselves armed with arguments for the case against the Vestments.

THE MINISTRY OF THE SPIRIT.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE INDIVIDUAL. By Arthur W. Robinson, D.D., Canon of Canterbury. London: *S.P.C.K.* Price 2s. net.

This is a companion volume to the author's little books—*God and the World* and *Christ and the Church*, and like everything from his pen it is characterized by a deep insight into spiritual things and an unswerving fidelity to the teaching of Holy Scripture. No subject can be of greater importance than that of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and especially at the present time, when so much is being said about reconstruction and when we need a revival of Pentecostal Power.

THE WELSH CHURCH IN HISTORY.

THE CHURCH IN WALES IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY: An Historical and Philosophical Study. By the Rev. J. Vyrnwy Morgan, D.D., with Foreword by the Bishop of St. Davids. London: *Chapman and Hall*. 10s. 6d. net.

Dr. Vyrnwy Morgan has given us a deeply interesting as well as a thought-provoking study on the Church in Wales. The forces which have been at work in the Principality during the last hundred years are but little understood in England, yet it is of importance that the true inwardness of the nationalist movement should be rightly appreciated. The aim of this volume, which carries with it the warm commendation of the Bishop of St. Davids, even though he is not prepared to endorse the author's views on all points, "is to bring out the parts of correspondence and links of connection between the activities of the Church and the Renaissance movement in Wales"; and the writer adduces facts which certainly go to refute the erroneous notion that the Church has hindered rather than helped the movement. In the true spirit of the historian, Dr. Morgan writes with perfect fairness, honesty, and calmness; indeed, he leaves it to the reader to form his con-

clusion upon the facts presented. Starting from an instructive survey of the Church, past and present, he proceeds to give a general account of the Renaissance in Wales. Then he unfolds the place and significance of the Church in the Educational Renaissance—both elementary and higher—and in the Literary Renaissance—poetic and prose. The chapter on the pulpit life of Wales is of strong and abiding interest. Dr. Morgan passes in review the work and influence of great preachers, among the more modern examples being John Griffith of Merthyr, Daniel Evans of Carnarvon, Dean Edwards of Bangor, Archdeacon Griffiths of Neath, and Dean Howell. Concerning the last-named the author says that Dean Howell was a broad-minded and cultivated Welshman :

He knew his own mind and he never belied his Churchmanship for the sake of popularity. He was loyal to the Church and to his own convictions.

But he had the deepest repugnance for anything in the form of sectarian animosity, and he was always able to act in cordiality with those who represented Nonconformist opinion. Indeed, one might imagine that he was in some respects more in sympathy with Nonconformist sentiment than with the sentiment which commonly prevailed in his own community. He certainly recognized all that the Nonconformist bodies had done and were doing for the education no less than for the religious life of Wales. He felt the force of the Renaissance movement in the Principality and contributed to its growth. He also sought to keep the Church in its corporate capacity in touch with it. He was a nationalist, not in a political, but in a social and ethical sense.

Dean Howell had been bred in Evangelical associations, and he had no sympathy with the priestly conception of the ministry; he was strongly averse to Ritualism and Sacerdotalism. The disruptionists, he said, were those who were forcing certain practices and ceremonials upon the parishioners against their wishes.

He never concealed his own opinion that the sacerdotalists in the Church were accentuating divisions, and he did not hold the view that the episcopal channel alone possessed the power of transmitting grace. He longed for unity, but unity, he thought, could never come by trying to bring the souls of men into the bondage of Priestism and Sacerdotalism. He did not believe in compulsory confession, nor in the requirement of absolution before a penitent can be admitted to the Communion. He strenuously adhered to the Reformed and Protestant character of the Church, and his motto was, Christliness rather than churchiness. Press articles and platform orations about unity were worse than useless, he thought, so long as ecclesiastical regulations tend to create barriers to unity, and to divide Christian people.

It was the simplicity and sincerity of his religion, both in its outer and inner aspect, that gave him, as a preacher and a man, so deep and so wide an influence on his parishioners, and on all with whom he was brought in contact. He was an eloquent man, but his strength was in his own fascinating personality. No one could hear him preach, or associate with him, without feeling the force of his character, and without feeling that he lived in a higher world. Yet he was greatly interested in the affairs of life, and in all movements that had for their object the elevation of his race and the advancement of Wales.

With such preachers we are not surprised that Dr. Morgan holds that "its pulpit history is one of the imperishable treasures of the Church." There is a chapter on the Church and Industrial Unrest, and in the concluding chapter, "The Adjustment of the Church to the Future Life of Wales," the writer shows us that he is a man of broad outlook and hopeful vision. No one who desires to become acquainted with the real position in Wales can afford to neglect this informing and stimulating volume.