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Review.

Christian Theology: The Doctrine of God, by A. C. Headlam; Oxford, 1934. 12s. 6d.

THE Bishop of Gloucester has certainly fulfilled his hope of writing "with lucidity and accuracy" on the subject of this volume. It shows the comprehensive competence and the reasoned judgment which we have learnt to expect in his work. Its substance consists of lectures delivered to theological students in London and Oxford, and it is now published "as a manual of theology for those who desire to enter the Christian ministry in the Church of England." This does not mean that the book will not be found useful by students of theology in other Churches, but it does explain the line of approach and the method of treatment. A second volume is purposed, which will deal with "the subsidiary subjects of Creation, Redemption, Grace and the Doctrine of the Christian Church and Sacraments."

The present volume consists of two parts, the first of which discusses the sources of our knowledge of God, with special reference to the Scriptures and the Church. Here, as throughout the book, emphasis is laid on the Creeds and the Thirty-Nine Articles, as was to be expected. Dr. Headlam holds that the basis of a really Catholic Christianity must be found in agreement on four points—the Canon of Scripture, the Chalcedonion Christology and the resultant Doctrine of the Trinity, the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the three orders of Bishops, Priests and Deacons (though he disclaims Apostolic Succession in the Tractarian sense). In this connection he regards the "Nicene Creed" (the Creed of Chalcedon) as the supreme theological document of the Church. At the same time, he does not take a narrow view of its authority: "I do not think that the acceptance of the traditional phraseology compels us to accept the philosophy which may have created it. It should not be looked upon as language which attempts to explain what is to the human intellect inexplicable, but as designed to guard all sides of the Christian truth" (p. 388). This statement naturally bears on the ethics of subscription to the Articles. The subscriber accepts not the creeds but the faith presented in them—a distinction which the lawyer might find it hard to accept, but one which has religious justification.

The second and larger part of the book deals at considerable

length with the doctrine of God and its alternatives, on the general lines of philosophical theism. The method here rather "dates" the lectures, and unduly holds up the exposition of the specifically Christian doctrine. This is not begun until the ninth chapter, with its approach to Christology. The Old Testament preparation is too narrowly confined to the "Messianic" hope, whereas the larger continuity should have been brought out. Four chapters are given to the Jesus of the Gospels, the miraculous elements in His life, the development of doctrine concerning Him in the New Testament and in the Patristic Church. It is a little strange to be brought up sharply at John of Damascus, and to be told that "nothing has been added since that time to the authoritative teaching of the Church" (p. 386). There is a formal sense, of course, in which this is true, but it hardly does justice even to the author's handling of doctrine. His avowed acceptance of "the higher anthropomorphism," the reality of kinship between God and man as expounded by the present Dean of St. Paul's, implies the acceptance of a principle to which the Chalcedonian doctrine of the two natures affords no justification, though we heartily agree with that principle.

The chapters on the Holy Spirit and the Trinity follow conventional lines, and are rather slight in constructive effort. It is not true to say that the Spirit meant originally the breath of man; that is a meaning which is developed later in the Old Testament, from the original meaning of "wind," and of a divine wind-like energy. (Incidentally, this correction strengthens such arguments as are here offered.) We regret to see that the author, like so many others, endorses the popular argument as to the "social" view of the Trinity, which sacrifices the real unity of the Godhead, if it is taken ontologically; if not, where lies its value? But these criticisms must not be taken to mean any blindness to the high qualities of both scholarship and expression which mark this book. If it does not mark any step forward in theological construction, it gathers up most competently what might be regarded as the middle way of Anglican theology, with its rational and cautious avoidance of the Scylla of Tractarianism and the Charybdis of Modernism.

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