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A Cambridge Apologia.[1]

IT is impossible not to think of the Oxford "Lux Mundi" in taking up this volume of Cambridge Theological Essays. Dr. Swete's preface speaks of it as emanating from a small body of Cambridge graduates, to whom it seemed that the time had come for an effort on the part of the theological teachers of Cambridge to deal with some of the present-day religious problems. We are also told that there has been no desire to limit the representation to any particular schools of opinion so long as there is general loyalty to the common Faith. The choice of subjects has been determined by the desire to give prominence to those which seem to be of vital importance in themselves or in relation to present circumstances, though the promoters also had in view "to provide an orderly treatment of the chief landmarks in the theistic and Christian positions." There are fourteen essays altogether. The first, by Dr. William Cunningham, is on "The Christian Standpoint," which is treated mainly from the philosophical point of view. It is not easy reading, and covers a somewhat wide field, but it merits careful attention. Its conclusion is that Christianity can confidently urge its superiority over other religions "when we try to gauge the force and the aim of the influences which appeal to the human will" rather than on account of any "mere exercise of the cognitive faculty to show that one point of view is better than another" (p. 53). "The Being of God in the Light of Physical Science" is the subject of the next essay, by Mr. F. R. Tennant, in which the present naturalistic bent and trend of physical science is stated and met by the arguments for a First Cause and a Supreme Intelligence. An attempt is made to explain the element of apparent irrationality in nature, and the conclusion is that "the theistic view is not only compatible with the results of science, but is strongly suggested by them" (p. 98). Professor Caldecott takes up the subject of "The Being of God in the Light of Philosophy," and his position, as is well known, is that of spiritual idealism, and he claims that Christianity has "enabled Christian minds to contribute to the endowment of philosophy with that noble and inspiriting character with which it is now facing the demands of the people." The entire essay is worthy of very careful attention. We are somewhat puzzled to know why the next essay was included in a book of theological essays. It is on "Man's Origin, and his Place in Nature," and is written by Dr. Duckworth, Lecturer in Physical Anthropology. We express surprise because the essay does not seem to relate itself to anything definitely theological. The general view of man from the standpoint of morphology is that his "position in the animal series is not absolutely exceptional" (p. 155), and the same result is arrived at from physiology, such differences as exist being regarded as differences of degree and not of kind (p. 158). As to psychology, we are told that even here "the psychical manifestations of man owe their origin to a process of evolution," and we are invited to study the progress of the human mind as infancy gives place to maturity as an illustration and proof

[1] "Essays on Some Theological Questions of the Day." By Members of the University of Cambridge. Edited by Henry Barclay Swete, D.D. London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd. Price 12s. net.

of this. "The human intellect is no more an interruption of the course of nature than is the human body" (p. 163). As to man's future development, there is, according to Dr. Duckworth, no reason "why the present condition of mankind in respect of mental ability should be the final stage" (p. 170). The conclusion of all this purely biological discussion is that "the past history of man fails to reveal to scientists evidence of sudden degradation like that implied in the expression 'fall'; on the contrary, the general tendency has been upwards" (p. 173). There is, therefore, no attempt by the author, or, indeed, any other writer of this volume, to correlate these biological results, if results they be, with the Biblical statements of man's nature and fall. This lack is a very serious and significant defect in the volume.

When we turn to the next essay we are equally disappointed with the inadequate, partial, and often erroneous treatment as Dr. Askwith discusses "Sin and the Need of Atonement." It may almost be said that a man's view of the Atonement will determine his attitude to all else in religion, and it is perhaps not going too far to say that, at any rate from the standpoint of present-day needs, a true doctrine of the Atonement is the *articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ*. Dr. Askwith makes atonement practically mean nothing else than the reconciliation of man to God with a view to fellowship. He rightly says that our view of the need of an atonement will depend upon our view of sin, and that the nature of the atonement must be decided by the nature of sin (p. 178); but his doctrine both of sin and of the Atonement is sadly wanting in some essential particulars. He is too fond of false antitheses and of stating what he conceives to be opposing views in a way that the advocates would not for an instant admit. Thus, in referring to the story of the Fall, he says: "We need not deny that wrong-doing or sin is a disobedience of a Divine command, but we say that this is not a full account to give of it." We reply that no one ever said it was, though disobedience of a Divine command is certainly the primary element in it. It is, of course, true that no view of the Atonement can be sufficient unless it implies that man is intended for fellowship with God (p. 206); but Dr. Askwith rejects the penalty view, because he says it does not give prominence to the ethical purpose and effect of atonement, and therefore cannot be accepted as a full account of the matter. But no one ever has regarded the penalty view as a full account, and yet the Pauline doctrine of the Atonement constantly gives prominence to ethical purpose. Dr. Askwith entirely fails to bring out St. Paul's doctrine of Christ's Atonement as the manifestation of the *righteousness* of God. It is entirely inadequate to say that the purpose of the Atonement is the bringing of man into the relationship with God that was eternally meant for him. Most assuredly Divine love and the bestowal of grace are essential parts and results of the Atonement; but they are not everything, and it is only by ignoring and setting aside the teaching of the New Testament about "ransom," "propitiation," and "the wrath of God," that such a view as is here presented can be upheld. Altogether we have been greatly surprised and gravely disappointed with this article, which is certainly not the New Testament doctrine of the Atonement; and if it at all represents current Cambridge theology on this subject, we can only express our unfeigned sorrow and concern.

The next essay is by Canon Wilson on "The Idea of Revelation, in the

Light of Modern Knowledge and Research." The author places in antithesis revelation as the growth of Divine life within and revelation as Divine progressive enlightenment from without, and argues for the former as against the latter. The result is that revelation *ab extra* as embodied in Scripture is set aside (p. 230), and we are consequently told that "revelation should be regarded as the evolution of the knowledge of God, which is life eternal" (p. 235), and that it is "the enlightenment of the whole man, the intensifying of the feeling, the stimulation of the conscience" (p. 239). We are thus face to face throughout this essay with a remarkable confusion between revelation and illumination, between the objective revelation of God and the subjective appropriation of it by man. This view simply dissipates all objective reality into subjective feeling and impression which, however valid for some minds, is of no authority for others. Nor does Canon Wilson remove this difficulty by his admission of some objectivity in our Lord's revelation. That revelation must originally have been external to the Church, whether it was manifested in the personal form or embodied in writing. Dr. Wilson is compelled to admit that in the time of our Lord the Old Testament was "appealed to as an objective revelation of God's will" (p. 256), though he actually has the courage to say that "Christ Himself treated the Old Testament as not final, and therefore as not, except in some modified sense, an objective revelation from God" (p. 256). Surely there is some confusion here. Lack of finality does not involve the absence of objectivity. To deny objectivity in revelation is to make man the criterion of validity in a sense which is subversive of all reality in Divine revelation. This may be a prevailing tendency to-day, but it is permanently untenable, and Canon Wilson has only to press his view of evolution a little further in order to rob himself and us of all that is unique and supernatural in Christianity as a revelation from God.

Space forbids our doing much more than mentioning the rest of the essays, which include one on "Prayer in Relation to the Idea of Law," by Dr. A. W. Robinson; "The Spiritual and Historical Evidence for Miracles," by Dr. J. O. F. Murray; and "The Permanent Value of the Old Testament," by Dr. W. E. Barnes, in which we are glad to see the Messianic element made a predominant part of the value of the Old Testament.

"The Gospels in the Light of Historical Criticism" is the subject of the tenth essay, by the Bishop of Ely, and is marked by all the wealth of learning which we have long been accustomed to expect from Dr. Chase, though it has also not a little of what we cannot but feel is an unduly concessive spirit in his writings. The credibility of the Gospels is ably discussed, and the evidence for the Resurrection, Miracles, and Virgin-Birth skilfully and cogently presented. The essay concludes with a valuable and timely warning against alienation between "simple believers and those who may be called Christian gnostics." Dr. Chase appeals to both parties, and urges finally that the apostolic maxim of speaking the truth in love is "binding on no one more conspicuously than on the Christian critic. The student must bring the results of his investigations, and submit them to those who are trained in the school of practical religious life. They must take their part in the progress towards a final verdict" (p. 418).

Two valuable and suggestive essays follow. Dr. Mason discusses "The Primitive Portrait of Christ in the New Testament." Dr. Foakes-Jackson takes up the subject of "Christ in the Church: the Testimony of History." After an article on the ethical significance of Christian doctrine by Mr. Bethune-Baker, the book closes with a delightful, spiritual, and soul-stirring essay on "The Christian Ideal and the Christian Hope," by the Master of Trinity, which appeals to mind and heart in a very special way, and provides just that personal application and verification which is needed, and to which the Bishop of Ely's closing words refer. It is a choice utterance, and breathes the noble and manly spirituality which we have long learned to admire and value in Dr. Butler.

It will be seen that, like "Lux Mundi," this collection of essays is decidedly unequal in quality. It has also several omissions mainly from the theological side, which may or may not be characteristic of Cambridge theology. Thus, there is nothing on the Church or Sacraments, and very little to relate and connect the subjects of these essays with the positive Christian creed of the Church. We should have much liked an essay from the editor himself, Dr. Swete, for which room could easily have been made either by omission or addition. On most of the great Christian fundamental realities the teaching is clear and true, but we deeply regret the inadequate and erroneous ideas of sin, atonement, and revelation which characterize the essays on these subjects. The book will not make the stir of its Oxford prototype, perhaps because this is not the psychological moment for a theological and ecclesiastical stir of that kind, but it will enable the world at large to know the trend of thought in the University of Cambridge, and what the present generation of undergraduates are being taught by those responsible for theological instruction.

THETA.

Literary Notes.

IN spite of the fact that a General Election dislocates to some extent a large number of businesses, I doubt very much whether the publishing of serious or important volumes of any kind whatsoever is affected to any really great extent. Of course, there would naturally be a few book-buyers who, having some personal interest in the election, would postpone the purchase of a book to a later and more convenient date. In any case, very few publishers would venture to issue a novel—although a few were issued, including Mr. Arnold Bennett's "Hugo"—or a popular book whilst the parties were in their grips. There are many reasons why this is so. First, and foremost, people's minds are concerned with Imperial matters, which, after all said and done, and however irksome politics must necessarily be to the book-lover's mind, they should be concerned with other things, and therefore they have no time for the moment to turn to the delights of book buying and reading; secondly, were an ephemeral book to be published at such a period the various papers and journals would be devoted so largely to electioneering material, that either a review of it would be shelved until