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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

Notices of Books.

LAY VIEWS BY SIX CLERGY. Edited by the Rev. H. B. Colchester, M.A.
London: *Longmans, Green and Co.* Price 3s. 6d. net.

Six clergy, in as many loosely connected essays, seek to explain—so apologetically that we had almost said “defend”—the present decline in Church attendance. There is a disease in the body. These physicians, apparently heedless of its deadly and infectious character, endeavour to console us with the reflection that it arises not from removable causes of ignorance or vice, but from the exceedingly complex conditions of modern life. If its ravages are to be stayed, more positive advice and treatment is essential.

The Dean of St. Paul’s perceives a prototype of the sufferers in King Jotham, who “did that which was right in the sight of the Lord . . . albeit he entered not into the Temple of the Lord,” and timorously suggests that the Church is a social institution. But that monarch, inheriting his father’s pride, so neglected his duty in this one respect that he could not check his subjects from relapse into idolatry, or better influence his son, who “shut up the doors of the house of the Lord, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem.” A weakened sense of obligation and responsibility renders the efforts of a lifetime nugatory. The help of God will be found in experience by those who resolutely face the irksome daily tasks, but the visions of Mysticism will succeed no better in discovering God than Rationalism has done through the abstractions of pure thought and reason.

There may be conscientious men who absolve themselves from the claims of public worship by the comfortable assurances that “life” is more than “religion,” that modern thought has modified the notion of “sin,” that “other-worldliness” springs from a needless sense of personal insecurity, and that our mental limitations preclude a knowledge of things to come. But the Rev. R. B. Tollinton, who writes the second essay, will not persuade them to a better mind by the mere opinion that all value is not yet lost to the liturgical services of the Church of England. The fact is that their intellectual environment is too narrow. They need a deeper knowledge of human nature, a wider acquaintance with a teaching too readily discarded, a livelier sense of immortality, and a fuller belief in the possibility (which every form of theism admits) of a Divine revelation. Then will they learn of Christ Himself, and more highly esteem ordinances which may claim His sanction.

The inflexibility of ecclesiastical regulations is the Rev. W. Manning’s justification of declining attendances. His diatribe that things are not what they ought to be lacks all suggestion as to the process of applying a remedy. We are all aware that reform is painfully slow, but our best hope is that the laity will claim by their presence at public worship a right to be considered, by participation in the Church’s work and business a duty to advance, and by care to secure adequate representation in the Church’s councils a position

of real usefulness. The perusal of Canon Pearce's clear exposition in the fourth chapter—quite the best in the book—first of the restriction and then of the expansion of lay influence during the nineteenth century, should encourage them to an activity and perseverance which will ultimately remove all causes of complaints.

By careful analysis of "the economic problem and the kingdom of God," the Rev. W. S. Swayne, in the fifth chapter, demonstrates how the life of the industrial world is drifting from clearly marked features of our Lord's teaching, and with words of prudence invites the clergy not to display indifference by silence, or rashness by the advocacy of ill-considered schemes, but to plainly declare to all parties the spirit in which they should face their problems, the self-sacrifice which may be demanded of them, and the responsibility for the welfare of others which lies upon the strong. This and the preceding essay are the satisfactory portions of the book.

The editor's concluding chapter pleads for the elimination of the tone of authority in imparting religious instruction, and deprecates teaching the Creed because "it is not reasonable to set the child in the Faith to learn at the outset the results of centuries of the Church's phraseology, philosophy, and experience." The lisping child must not be taught the English tongue; the multiplication-table, grammar, and geography must be banished from our schools; the Bible must ever remain unopened; for all these are the results of centuries of thought and discovery. We must not inquire whether our scientific instructors believe that the earth is flat or the Ptolemaic system preferable to the Copernican, for "authority" is to perish. This *reductio ad absurdum* shows why the Christian cannot fail to teach with authority the faith which he has learned, and which he has proved to be true and efficacious by countless experiences of life. "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

THE SON OF MAN. By Professor A. C. Zenos, D.D. THE JOY OF FINDING. By Principal Garvie, D.D. Two volumes in the Short Course Series. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark. Price 2s. each net.

The first volume contains a series of studies in St. Mark's Gospel, bringing out different aspects of the Saviour's life and work as Son of Man. Needless to say, His Divinity is not lost sight of, and in the first exposition we read: "The heart of the message of Christianity is that God and man are somehow kin. It was possible for God to become man, because there was in man that which could be affiliated and linked with God, and in God there was that which could adapt itself to man and live in association with man." The Resurrection is treated here as a fact, and not a fancy; and in the last of these admirable studies, under the heading "The Son of Man in the World's Future," the Second Advent is proclaimed as a "certainty."

The second volume is a concise, careful exposition of the parable of the Prodigal Son. From a chapter in which the meaning of the parable is discussed the author passes on to the consideration of the following subjects: God, man, sin, judgment, penitence, pardon, righteousness, and blessedness. Dr. Garvie observes that the title of the parable, "The Prodigal Son," ignores the existence of, and so diverts attention from, the elder brother,

whom he takes as an example of "what was esteemed righteousness in the Jewish nation," and he considers some of the characteristics of "what was generally esteemed goodness" under the headings (1) "Calculation"; (2) "Conceit"; and (3) "Censoriousness": the calculation of claims upon God; the conceit of conformity to His law; the censoriousness which scorned "plain good people, whose circumstances did not allow them to maintain the Pharisaic strictness." Again, pardon is considered as regards (1) the motive, (2) the method, and (3) the measure of it. These examples of the homiletic method must suffice.

Not the least valuable part of this little handbook is the appendix—a commentary on the parable, the explanatory notes being taken from the "Expositor's Greek Testament," the "International Critical Commentary," and the "Century Bible."

THE MISSION OF CHRIST AND THE TITLE-DEEDS OF CHRISTIANITY. By the Rev. Canon R. B. Girdlestone. London: *Robert Scott*. Price 3s. 6d. net.

"We are brought up in such an atmosphere of so-called Christianity that we are distracted by its manifold aspects. What is the thing itself? What is the centre, the spring, the aim? How did it begin, and how will it end?" Canon Girdlestone tries to answer these questions, for the benefit of "students and workers." His method is to consider Christianity as a known phenomenon in history, and to track it to its source. The first chapter deals broadly with sources, manuscripts, versions, and non-Christian testimonies. The second and third discuss the New Testament epistles, their main teaching, and their writers. The fourth and fifth, which occupy half the book, tell us about St. Luke as a historian, and summarize his teaching on Christianity and Christ. Chapter vii. says something about the comparative progress of Christianity in ancient and modern times, and the causes of success or failure.

The book will be useful to those who want a simple, untechnical, and clearly written account of the evidence for the genuineness of our New Testament records. The Canon is a scholar of the conservative school, and in several places makes statements to which it is probable the majority of modern New Testament scholars would take exception; but, after all, majorities are not always right, and the Fathers of the second century may be wiser in these matters than the Fathers of the twentieth.

We are glad that the argument from experience is invoked to confirm the argument from history, and everybody will agree that "the real test of the mission of Christ is the Christ-like life of those who believe in Him. Love is the very breath of the Christian soul. It shows itself in the heart, in the home, in the workshop. It is as real and effective now as it was during the first century."

THE SELF-LIMITATION OF THE WORD OF GOD. By the late Forbes Robinson. London: *Longmans, Green and Co.* 3s. 6d. net.

The book contains two essays, one with the above inscribed title, the other called "The Evidential Value of Old Testament Prophecy." Canon C. H. Robinson in a preface explains that the essays won the Burney and Hulsean

prizes at Cambridge, and are now published at the request of those who have read them privately. We are unfeignedly glad to have them in permanent form. They are most helpful. It is needless to say that they are written by one who held a full view of our Lord's Divinity. At the same time he was conscious of the need of modern statements on the problems thereby raised and on the argument from prophecy, and in a spirit of the deepest reverence he attempted to make them.

The essay on prophecy is the slighter of the two. It recognizes that many of the old arguments from particular prophetic passages do not carry conviction to a modern mind, and sets out to establish a more general argument from the fulfilment by Christ of the religious ideals and yearnings of the religious geniuses of the Old Testament. "I am convinced that the evidential value of prophecy primarily lies in the fact that it expresses longings natural to the most religious of all nations. These longings . . . are fully explained and illuminated by the teaching and work of our Lord."

The other essay grapples with the problem raised by the phenomenon which lies upon the surface of the Gospels, that a person who is clearly man claims also to be God. There are some interesting preliminary pages upon the possibility of Divine self-limitation, and upon the meaning of such terms as "Person," "absolute," "omnipotent," etc. The Incarnation is regarded as the necessary completion and crown of creation, but the need for the crucifixion only arose with the Fall. In Chapter V. an attempt at Christological theory is made. The Dyothelite view is adopted, with the proviso that the human will was always perfectly accommodated to the Divine, and the suggestion is that similarly the Lord possessed a Divine and human consciousness, but the Divine was always adapted to the human. We do not wish to commit ourselves definitely to this theory, which is no doubt open to criticism; but that reserve does not make us less anxious to commend Mr. Robinson's reverent treatment to general study, especially by thoughtful Churchpeople who have neither the time nor equipment for technical details.

ONE BAPTISM. By H. F. M. With Foreword by Canon Barnes-Lawrence. London: *Robert Scott*. Price 1s. 6d. net.

A small book on what Canon Barnes-Lawrence in his foreword rightly describes as "a subject of grave importance to us all." The writer tells us that he is a retired clergyman, and he gives us in these pages "the thoughts of a lifetime," and very helpful and suggestive thoughts they are. We share with him regret that "the Articles are not at all generally known, even to Church of England people, and are not generally taught at the present day; so that when questions arise, many of our own people hardly know what the authoritative teaching of our Church really is."

Those who are in difficulty about baptismal regeneration will not turn in vain to these pages. The writer points out that Baptism is not regeneration, but the sign of regeneration, so that the words "this child is regenerate" must mean "this person (or this child) has received the sign of his regeneration."

The anonymous author is a person of excellent temper, so that those who may differ on some points will not be irritated by anything in these pages.

Upon the ministration of Baptism there are some wise counsels. Too often, especially in our populous town parishes, Baptism is frequently administered when there is practically no "congregation of Christ's flock," and it is truly said that "if Baptism is a sign of profession, then there should be present those before whom this profession can be made," and the writer pleads for *public* Baptism.

This is just the book to put into the hands of the young clergyman or the church-worker whose views upon Baptism are in a state of flux.

THE PRIMITIVE TEXT OF THE GOSPELS AND ACTS. By A. C. Clark, M.A.,
Corpus Professor of Latin at Oxford University. Oxford: *Clarendon Press*. 4s. net.

It is always interesting when a scholar who has made his name in classical literature turns to Biblical criticism. Some years ago Professor Blass turned to it from Demosthenes, now Professor Clark has temporarily given up Cicero to devote his attention to it. Both the professors attacked the problems of the Gospels and the Acts. Both have arrived at conclusions not altogether in harmony with those of the reigning school of Hort, for both lay great stress on the primitiveness and importance of the readings of Codex Bezae (the Western text). Professor Clark is a stauncher advocate of the Western text than his predecessor, and he has some novel arithmetical arguments for it, the principle of which he gathered empirically from Ciceronian manuscripts. His general conclusion is that the primitive text is usually the longest, not the shortest, as Hort supposed, and that the parent of all our manuscripts of whatever group is a second-century manuscript of Western type. We cannot give particular illustrations, but we must confess to a, no doubt, unorthodox pleasure at finding another textual critic to plead the cause of the much despised D.

THE GREATER MEN AND WOMEN OF THE BIBLE. VOL. II.: MOSES TO SAMSON. Edited by Dr. Hastings. Edinburgh: *T. and T. Clark*. Price 10s.; by subscription, 6s.

We have been waiting eagerly for the second volume of this splendid work, nor are we disappointed now that it has arrived. It is on the same lines as the first volume, and wherever we have tested it we have found it most useful. Covering the books from Exodus to the middle of Judges, it is to be expected that more than half of the volume deals with the history connected with the life of Moses, and this is covered in fourteen periods, and covered well. Even so there are ten other of the "greater" Biblical folk to read of, including those which offer the well-known difficulties connected with Balaam's journey, Deborah's Song, Jephthah's vow, and Samson's sensuality. The volumes are splendid. Many an ordinary preacher could deliver far better sermons than he is doing if only he had the time to collect his material. He does *not* want somebody else's sermons. He wants the best matter, from which he is well able to make sermons of his own. He has such material here—exact, instructive, scholarly, concise. The modern point of view is not shut out, nor, on the other hand, does the Bible become a "thing of shreds and patches," myths and forgeries. To this series will the

over-busy man turn with gratitude to the scholars who are producing it; not to save himself work, but to save himself lost time.

THE CHRISTOLOGY OF ST. PAUL. By the Rev. S. N. Rostron. London: Robert Scott. Price 5s. net.

We owe the distinguished author of this illuminating volume an apology for a somewhat belated review. But the delay has been due to the accident of circumstances. "The Christology of St. Paul" is the Hulsean Prize Essay published as one of the volumes of the admirable "Library of Historic Theology." Mr. Rostron is to be congratulated on having covered so wide a ground with such painstaking care. The whole question of what St. Paul really believed about Jesus Christ is dealt with in detail. Chapter by chapter we see how St. Paul thought of Jesus Christ as Messiah, Second Adam, Redeemer, Eternal, Immanent, Transcendent, Perfect God and Perfect Man. Important Scriptural passages are faithfully dealt with, and all manner of "views" are mentioned and (in some cases) criticized. Indeed, there is a final chapter on recent Christological thought where our author distinguishes no less than eight modern Christologies. Such a book does not provide light reading, and must have entailed considerable time, thought, and labour in its production. We have to thank Mr. Rostron for giving us a book which deals with the whole subject right through, and which maintains a position which is Scriptural and Evangelical.

TRUSTING AND TRIUMPHING. By the Rev. Prebendary F. S. Webster. London: *Religious Tract Society*. 2s. net.

A volume of twenty sermons. To say that they are characteristic utterances of one whose praise is in all the Churches is sufficient recommendation. The Evangelistic note is dominant, and there are some suggestive sermons on holiness. There is no "modern thought" here, and, to tell the truth, nothing extraordinarily clever or original; but there is the right ring about these sermons. Would that we had more of the kind!

PLUM-BLOSSOM. By Lily Sandford. *C.M.S. House*. Price 3s. 6d. net.

Happy are the children to whom this wonderful "play-book" comes for a birthday present, and, unless we mistake, many a little life will glow with fresh resolve to be Christ's soldier, and to spread Christ's kingdom before the end of this delightful play-book is reached. Not only is the story of Peggy and Peter most winsomely told, but the whole book is most attractively printed, and "got up" with many coloured pictures on mounts, and numerous illustrations, and simple music for little fingers to play. Add to this that inside the back cover is a large pocket containing all manner of coloured papers and pictures to be cut out and gummed into the book on pages left blank with directions all fully printed. We have seen many things for children, but nothing nicer than "Plum-Blossom," which has only to be seen to be bought eagerly, and as eagerly received. The C.M.S. is to be congratulated on this splendid production.

