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it all. To holy natures there must ever be something incredible and foreign in the nature of sin, until it is actually tasted through the consanguinities of sympathy with the sinful. So was it with Him, until in this amazing experience of need He

had knocked the third time. Then did the door open and loaves were given. He was made equal to the tragedy of a world that was dead in trespasses and sins; He rose up from his 'strong crying and tears' clothed with the majesty of God.

Recent Foreign Theology.

The Acts of the Apostles.

THIS volume¹ is part of the series 'Études Bibliques,' to which the well-known commentaries by Père Lagrange of Jerusalem belong. A massive volume of over a thousand pages, it is the work of a liberal Roman Catholic, who has already rendered good service to New Testament study by his learned and useful volumes on the text, canon, and other subjects of New Testament 'Introduction.' The long introduction is followed by the Greek text on the left-hand page, and a helpful French translation on the right-hand page, the comprehensive commentary being printed continuously below both of these. It would be hard to mention an important topic that is not discussed in the introduction, for it comprises a treatment of the following fourteen subjects: the history of criticism; the author; biography of Luke (author of the Acts of the Apostles); aim of the author; plan of the work; date and place of composition and the readers addressed; the text; the sources; the language and style; literary history; admission into the Canon; doctrinal teaching; historical value; chronology of apostolic times. Nine subsidiary topics are discussed in an appendix: Jewish sects in apostolic times; the Scribes; the Sanhedrin; the Synagogue; the Samaritans; the Jewish Dispersion; the Speaking with Tongues; the Conversion of St. Paul; the Apostolic Decree. The book concludes with admirable indexes.

The author has an extensive knowledge of the bibliography of his subject, though he does not know Dr. Still's suggestive volume, and sometimes employs editions that have been superseded. If any student wants an up-to-date commentary on Acts in which every aspect of the Book is fully

¹ *Les Actes des Apôtres*, par E. Jacquier (Paris: Lecoffre, 1926; pp. ccviii+823; 100 fr.).

discussed, he could not do better than use this work of Jacquier's. A. SOUTER.

Aberdeen.

The Problem of the Word.

The purpose of this volume² is to explore the significance and to enhance the value of the Word—God's personal communication with man—in the Christian religion, and to relate in this way modern Protestantism to the fundamental conviction of the Reformation. The Introduction shows the need for a treatment of the problem. Faith attaches itself to the Word; and as 'theology leads from the life in faith to reflexion about faith,' its decisive principle must be the relation of faith to the Word. The theology that depends on the philosophy of religion ignores that relation; but a reaction is found in Karl Barth (*The Word of God and Theology*) and Emil Brunner (*Mysticism and the Word*). 'Theology is the science of faith, which is life and knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) of the Word, which awakens faith, and assures knowledge (*Wissen*).' In systematic theology one may expect the Word to be treated in the doctrine of revelation, and in regard to the means of grace, and in both respects a fresh treatment is necessary.

A hundred pages are devoted to an historical survey of the treatment of the problem in modern theology—a discussion of great interest and value which cannot be considered in detail here. The constructive part begins with an analysis of the conception of life as emotion, experience, history, and insists that life consists in a continuity in relations. The science of life must be sociological, and must describe life in all its ways and forms of association as economic, ethical, and religious.

² *Das Problem des Wortes*, von Wilhelm Vollrath (Bertelsmann, Gütersloh, 1925).

From this sociological standpoint the psychological and historical methods of dealing with the religious life are shown to be inadequate. As life is personal relation, the Word is that which distinguishes as it relates persons; psychologically the Word is an expression, and historically it is a tradition of life, but sociologically it is a *pontifical*. Why this term is used, and what it exactly means, the writer, as far as I can discover, does not make quite clear. But he seems to be referring to the original meaning *bridge-building*. 'As it unites, so it separates, as it associates, so it absolves, as it establishes relation, so it maintains distance' (p. 169). The Word does not exhaust itself in *speech*, but its end is 'the mutual disclosure of associated persons in some form of communal life' (p. 172). The *objective* spirit, embodied in science, arts, literature, morals, etc., must become a social interchange—the Word which makes history a present possession.

Religion is an intercourse of words, for it is 'the Word that brings God to men, and men to God' (p. 175). As a relation between persons in the Word, religion is distinguished from mysticism, which is no religion, for mysticism means absorption of man in God, and not as is religion a relation, in which difference is preserved of man and God. (This criticism applies only to extreme forms of mysticism.) The specifically religious functions of the Word are to bridge the gulf between man and God, as in the forgiveness of sins. As a relation religion involves conduct. Accordingly the Word has also an ethical function: man realizes his moral autonomy in the fulfilment of the will of God. As the Word of God is the instrument of God's will and power in man, to will and to do according to His goodwill, His power acts in man not *magically*, but spiritually and personally, for 'man can be overcome only as he is won as a person' (p. 202).

On this doctrine of the Word the conception of revelation must be based; for 'faith knows that it has all in the Word,' that the Word is the *principium essendi et cognoscendi*, and only in accordance with that Word can it understand nature, history, persons, and community as methods of revelation. The critical principle of all theological methods is the Word as the unity of living associations. Hence the sociological method must be combined with the psychological and the historical. The isolation of individual personality and the immobility of history must be corrected by the

living community, of which the Word is the vehicle. As the Word of God to man it is transcendent as well as immanent, and thus offers a synthesis for all theological disciplines. *What is written* is the diffusion and the continuance of the Word; hence the Holy Scriptures in their universality and permanence are a symbol of the infinitude and eternity of the Word.

The book is written diffusely, but for a German work very lucidly. The sentences are surprisingly short. Without offering any comment on the details of the argument, I may express my entire accord with its main idea, that religion is a conscious personal relation between God and man, and that it is in the Word spoken by God and heard by man that the community of life, which transcends the differences, is realized. It is a needed and welcome protest against all the present tendencies to relegate religion to a sub-conscious region of magic, or sacrament, or mysticism. God speaks, man hears, and thus God lives in man, and man in God.

ALFRED E. GARVIE.

London.

Erigena.

Johannes Scotus Erigena, whom his orthodox contemporaries sometimes spoke of as a pretentious and garrulous person, is often still referred to as the most characteristic representative of Neo-Platonism in early medieval Christianity, and the aim of the present work¹ is to ascertain the precise relation subsisting between him and the late Greek philosophical school that bears the name of Plato with a difference, and especially its master mind, Plotinus. The comparison is wrought out under the six headings of the Doctrine of God, Cosmology, Matter and Evil, Man's Place and Constitution, Ethics, and Religious Ends, under each of which we get, first, the relevant teachings of Plotinus (mainly), and then those of Erigena. The author's conclusions are that while there are unmistakable points of contact between the two systems, yet in the mass each lies outside the other, and often in polar opposition. Thus, for Plotinus, God is one, transcendent, beyond human predicates; the world is an unreality; and the mystic way to union with God is to leave behind not only the

¹ *Zur Geschichte der Mystik: Erigena und der Neuplatonismus*, Von Lic. Hermann Dörries, Privatdozent (Tübingen: Mohr; M. 4.80).

world, but reason itself, and even one's own soul and individuality. For Erigena, on the other hand, God, while one and doubtless transcendent, is at the same time that which pervades creation to its ultimate particle, so that the world is a theophany, created precisely in order that man may know it and its Creator, and in that knowledge attain to

union with the One who is all. Herr Dörries has worked conscientiously at the sources, attesting every step by citations from the original Greek and Latin, and his book is fairly entitled to be called a model of thoroughness and sustained interest.

ALEXANDER GRIEVE.

Glasgow.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

To Be Given Away.¹

'He that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; without money and without price.'—Is 55¹.

THE other week I met a friend of mine who was just home from Spain. And he told me that one of the things there that had struck him most was the trees in the streets of some of their cities. We have trees in our streets too, hawthorns perhaps, a red one and a white one turn about. Bags a red one for me, a deep, deep lovely red one! But the trees yonder are—what do you think?—oranges, all covered over with great, glorious, golden fruit; and anybody, I suppose, can pick them, and one can picture rows of ragged urchins sitting on the curbstones, each of them getting inside a big juicy orange as fast as he can; far better ones than we ever get here. For ours have to be picked and sent off before they are really ripe, but there they are just perfect.

I know what you are thinking. To-night when it has got darkish, when you climb up into mother's lap, and wheedle a few minutes longer out of her, you're going to put your arms about her neck, and whisper something to her. It's a secret. Yet I know what it is. 'Mummie, let's go to Spain this time for our summer holidays!'

Well, it's a splendid scheme, but I'm afraid that it's no use. I know the poets tell us that the orange trees keep bearing all the year round. But do they, really? And if not, well, then, if they are at it now, will they be still bearing in your holidays? Hard luck! But, never mind, I have something to tell you better by far than that. Here is a man who knows of a market (he has seen it, he says, and has been at it often and often), full of such lovely things. All the shop windows are crowded with them, and

¹ By the Reverend A. J. Gossip, M.A., Aberdeen.

he has stood staring in, not knowing what he would like best. For everything was nicer than the last. And then he looked at the tickets on them all. And what do you think he saw? Price—No pounds, no shillings, no pence, no farthings! It was marked in plain, clear figures. But, of course, he said, it must be a mistake. But he looked at the next, and it, too, was price—nothing; and the next, price—nothing; and all of them, price—nothing! What a lovely shop! It's not like that here. You have looked into the windows very hungrily at times, just itching to get something you saw there. The cover on that school-story was so dreadfully exciting. Did he really score; or, did that big chap, running across, get him in time? Or, that knife was such a beauty! You could almost build a house with it, you thought. Or, those sweets looked very good. And you felt in your pockets, the side ones, the inside ones, the little one, the top one. But they were empty, no, not empty; but there was never a coin, though you searched and searched among the twine, and the—what's this?—oh, that is or was an old lump of chewing-gum you had forgotten; and this?—oh, that's a bit of my bicycle; and this?—well, that was once a hanky, long ago—but never even a penny anywhere. And then you wished you hadn't got that other thing for which you used your money. It is all right, only these things in the window look so very thrilly. If only you still had that money now!

Ah, well! here is the place for you, a market where they give away things for nothing.

But, 'of course,' you say, 'you're only pretending.' No, indeed, I'm not. It's truly true and it's really real. God always gives for nothing, and all the best things come from Him. Just think it out.

To begin with, He gave you yourself, and a very