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Literature.

DEVOUT HUMANISM.

OUR first duty is to thank and congratulate the translator, Mr. K. L. Montgomery, for the literary skill with which this work of Henri Bremond, *A Literary History of Religious Thought in France*, i. (S.P.C.K. ; 16s. net), is executed, and for the insight which prompted the undertaking. It was worth doing and worth doing well, and readers will be rewarded by the perusal of this volume, and many will hope that Monsieur Bremond's whole work is to be given us in an English form. This first volume on 'Devout Humanism' deals with a phase of sixteenth-century thought in France with which the ordinary English reader is not familiar except in the devotional works of François de Sales. Monsieur Bremond writes of the whole school—Richome, Sales, Binet, Camus, Yves de Paris—with unqualified admiration which almost resents criticism. His attitude is that of a lover who can see no defects in his beloved ; but even if that be so, he gives us here sufficient original material to enable the reader to sympathize with his incorrigible ardour, and to make allowance for the excesses of his zeal. Even the Protestant reader, while aware of the one-sidedness of his attitude to Jansenism and his blind acceptance of the theology of Trent, will yet feel at home as he reads these humanists with their naïve delight in allegorizing Nature—with their kindly interpretation of human failing, with their poetic mysticism and anecdotal garrulity—and, above all, with their strain of true piety. It is true that, with the exception of Sales himself, they get their inspiration in Helicon rather than in Zion, but they try to identify the two hills and at the same time swear by Augustine and Aquinas. This attempted eclecticism sublimated by mysticism is sublime, although too often we feel that the tumultuous human Eros is identified with the pure love of God, and the artificial atmosphere of the cloister is over it all, so that the sense of sin vanishes with the obliteration of Nature and grace, and casuistry befogs conscience. The few references to Port-Royal and Pascal are very bitter, and it is evident that the writer is an apologist for the Jesuits ; but just because of that we commend the volume as supplying to English readers a phase of French piety and outlook which may supply a needed corrective to our accustomed and traditional judgments on the France of the sixteenth century. The historian, the *littérateur*, the mystic, and the

theologian will find much in the volume to enlighten, edify, and delight him.

MOFFATT'S COMMENTARY.

While recognizing the merits of the previous volumes of this series, we are tempted to say that this, by Professor J. Hugh Michael, M.A., on *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians* (Hodder & Stoughton ; 8s. 6d. net), surpasses them all, and will be found most useful both by the hard-working minister and the theologically minded layman. The scholar will be interested in his defence of the Ephesian origin of this Epistle, although we are of the opinion that it raises more difficulties than it solves, and Professor Michael's theory as to the unity of this letter is valuable and suggestive.

The value of the Commentary, however, depends on the fine blend of scholarship and spiritual insight that is manifested on every page. Like the ideal scribe instructed in the Kingdom of Heaven (Mt 13⁵²), he brings out of his treasury things new and old, and his selection betrays the sure touch of real selective genius.

Bengel and Lightfoot, Trapp and Kennedy, Wesley and Hughes, Rendel Harris and Moffatt, they are all—old and new—of different centuries and different schools—brought to shed their light on the Epistle—or rather the light of the Epistle is allowed to flow out on the reader through their understanding. It is this catholic selectiveness that is the excellence of this Commentary. The new discoveries in the field of New Testament language and culture are all made to yield their contributions. We are particularly struck by the excellence of the exposition of the ethical terminology, and by the sanity of treatment of the more difficult theological passages, and only once do we feel as if he did not carry our assent—namely, in his exposition of 'goodwill,' which is surely the 'goodwill of God' as Moffatt translates it.

We have read every word of this Commentary with delight and with admiration for its scholarship and its practical, sane spirituality, and also for its felicitous illustrations and useful references which, if the preacher follows out, should enrich his thinking and profit his hearers.

CHRISTIAN ART.

Dr. Percy Gardner has spent a long life mainly in the study of archæology and history. He has

written works of value on the Christian religion and on Greek art. There can, therefore, be few who are more competent to write on *The Principles of Christian Art* (Murray; 10s. 6d. net). He starts from the present estrangement between Christianity and art, alike in Protestant and Catholic countries, and the need for their reconciliation. After a discussion of the three elements, Naturalism, Humanism, and Religion, which determine the main character of art, he proceeds to an historical survey of the various periods of Christian art. Finally, dealing with the religious art of the present day, Dr. Gardner offers suggestions, not in regard to technique, but in regard to the spirit which must be cultivated both in the artist and in the public if great Christian art is to revive. It cannot be said that he is optimistic. Many of the signs of the times—the love of wealth and display, the disfigurement of Nature by glaring advertisements, the newspapers and fashion plates which implant and encourage among us a wretchedly perverted idea of the physical beauty of women—these and much else indicate a spirit remote from appreciation of things beautiful and Divine. Many modern artists, also, hold Christianity to be ‘outworn and moribund.’ And whether it be outworn or not, they would consider that it has nothing to do with modern art. Art, they would hold, must form an alliance with the ideas of a new age, especially with democracy. But, in Dr. Gardner’s view, ‘it has yet to be shown that democracy has worthy ideas on the subject of either religion or art. The only ideas which one can call distinctly democratic are the principles of secularity. . . . Therefore, until I am better instructed, I shall hold that as the root principles of Christianity are eternal, and need only to be adapted to the intellectual and social conditions of the new age, so the principles of art as set forth by the great sculptors of Greece, the Gothic architects, the painters of the Renaissance, are good for all time, and need only modification and modernization in order to be a light for the present, as they have been a light in the past.’

THE HALE LECTURES.

Of all the recent books which deal with the problem of Creed revision and the formulation of theology suitable for modern times, we have seen nothing so able and satisfying as *New Horizons of the Christian Faith*, by the Dean of the Western Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois—Dr. Frederick C. Grant (Morehouse; \$1.50). The

author writes with fullness of knowledge of the results of modern thought whether in science, philosophy, or psychology; with sympathetic understanding, too, of the revolt of the modern mind against the scholasticism and rigid dogmatism of old Creeds, Confessions, and doctrinal statements. He is too wise to write a new theology. He does a more helpful thing, he indicates what an adequate theology must be like. And it will be like this. It will frankly recognize the real primacy of the ethical element in Christianity. As an ethical religion with a minimum of philosophical content, ‘it will dispense with certainty on many points on which our fathers demanded oracular knowledge.’ Then it will give a rounded view of the world and of human life *sub specie aeternitatis*, an outlook in harmony with the religious experience. Last but not least, it will insist on the primacy of faith and not of theology: ‘Faith is indispensable for the Christian life, but theology is not.’

Such are the conclusions reached after seven preceding chapters which deal with religion in a changing universe, religion and natural science, Christianity and history of religions, Christianity and psychology of religion, the new Bible, and theology and modern philosophy. Not a long book (290 pages), but an excellent one which we most heartily recommend.

PERSONALITY.

A Study in the Philosophy of Personality, by Hilda D. Oakeley, M.A. (Williams & Norgate; 5s. net), is a monograph of first-rate excellence. It contains the substance of four lectures given at King’s College, London, in the Michaelmas Term, 1927. Personality is described as ‘that principle which must needs endow experience with individuality, for this is the law of its operation.’ It is always subject and creative. ‘If we make it an object we abstract from it its creativity, since this can only belong to mind knowing and active.’ The practical interest of the study of personality can hardly be exaggerated. ‘The problem of the special and unique part played by the form of personality in the endlessly diverse forms of existence surely underlies the problem of human progress in the deeper sense, viz. whether society is advancing in the direction of giving fuller scope to the true personality of each member, so that each may offer his own contribution to the common good.’ The writer deals with personality in relation to Metaphysics, to History, to Ethics, and to the History of Philosophy. The lectures are rich both in critical

and in constructive work. One point of interest may be noted. The doctrine of group-personality, so popular in our time, is decisively rejected. The group has no mind or creative power beyond that of the individuals who constitute it. 'The creative energy can only lie in the one force we know that introduces a wholly new principle into the endless flow of events, driving the being possessed of it to actions beyond the range of limits natural to all living things. We know this principle in the person whose contact with reality, and therefore the form of his struggle to transcend, is for him alone. Have we sufficient ground in experience for attributing a similar creative energy to a group-person? or is there any way of conceiving such a growth from the basis of the unique personal creativity, determined by all the memory and history of the individual? Where the phenomena occur which have led some thinkers to this interpretation, they are surely better explained by making use of the facts to which we have such abundant testimony, and which without any violence or straining will account also for the transcending activities of numbers working together, than by calling in a new force such as personality of a group, which would lack qualities essential to persons.' Miss Oakeley shows an unusually wide and profound knowledge of philosophic thought, both Greek and modern, and a thorough mastery of her material.

MR. MILLER'S CHURCH HISTORY.

Mr. Andrew Miller is engaged on a history of the Church from its beginning to the present day. It is to occupy three volumes, and the first two are before us—*The First Thousand Years of Church History* and *Five Hundred Vital Years of Church History* (Pickering & Inglis; 7s. 6d. net each). In Mr. Miller's view Church History is a long comment on the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares. It is all symbolically forecast in the Epistles to the Seven Churches. Further, it is mostly a story of defection from original purity and simplicity in doctrine, government, and worship. His aim is to show that amid all corruption a 'silver line' was preserved.

We have no quarrel with such views in themselves. They are not ours, but they are possible views. Duty, however, compels us to point out, with all courtesy, but firmly, that in two respects Mr. Miller seems not well qualified for the ambitious task he has undertaken. First, he fails to impress us as having any adequate conception of what history is,

and what historical writing requires. To him history apparently means just a catalogue of events; but as to why they happened, when, and as they did, only seldom does he think it necessary to inquire. To him they were either of God or of Satan, and no more needs to be said. That is a denial, and a Manichæan denial, that there is such a science as history at all.

Second, Mr. Miller gives no evidence of knowing from what authorities to gather his facts. His volumes are, for the most part, compilations from histories that were standard works some fifty years ago, but need more or less correction on many points. His account of Celtic Christianity in the first volume, and of Luther's early life and conversion in the second, are instances where he has been led rather far astray.

We are all the more sorry for this because Mr. Miller can write, and write in a vivid and very interesting style. If only he would see that even in Church History there are two sides to most questions, and try to realize the concrete situation in which the Church at any particular time was involved, he might make a useful contribution to the subject.

Slowly yet steadily woman is attaining to more prominence and recognition in the service of Christ and His Church. It has been a long and arduous climb, and the end is not yet. For the repeated exhortations in early Christian writings warning woman back to her secondary place is clear evidence that the urge towards something bigger and more official has been always in her heart. But few, probably, are aware that in Muhammadanism also woman has always claimed, and in some measure been conceded, a bigger place than people know. With that loyalty to her sex which delights to score a point for it that is so characteristic of modern woman, Dr. Margaret Smith heaps up her evidence. But, indeed, no such elaborate proof is needed. *Rābi'a the Mystic: Her Fellow-Saints in Islam* (Cambridge University Press; 10s. 6d. net) is in herself enough to prove it, and all the Muslim masters do her eager homage. Here is an authoritative life of the wonderful slave girl who became so notable a saint—heavily documented from sources often very difficult of access and containing an impressive account of Sufism and kindred things.

Rābi'a is like Santa Teresa on one side of that amazing woman's nature—the mystical side. Both of them preached and practised a disinterested love

of God that cares not for His gifts but for Himself. Their very sayings sometimes run in parallels. 'If I have loved God for heaven, grant me not heaven; if I have loved God from fear of hell, cast me into hell; if I have loved Him for Himself . . .' That is really a quotation from them both.

Rābi'a's influence upon great minds is proof enough of her own greatness. Yet she does seem to lesser folk a little overstrained, unnatural, and hot-house. But this is the book to get to judge about her for oneself.

To all who are interested in Judæo-Arabic literature the beautifully printed *Arabic Commentary of Āli Ben Suleimān, the Karaite on the Book of Genesis* (Dropsie College, Philadelphia; \$2.00) will make an immediate appeal. It is written in Hebrew characters, furnished with critical notes, and pre-faced by valuable chapters on Āli ben Suleimān himself, who appears to have lived about the beginning of the twelfth century, on his method of exegesis, his equipment as a grammarian, and his linguistic peculiarities. His commentary on Genesis, though resting on a thorough knowledge of Hebrew, is rather a compilation of various opinions than an independent commentary. Dr. Solomon L. Skoss, who edits the commentary, has translated some excerpts which illustrate his author's exegetical method.

A fresh book about the Jesus of the Gospels is always welcome, if it has anything original in it. And by 'original' is meant anything which a man sees or experiences for himself, however old it is, however often it has been seen or experienced by others. And this at least can be said of *The Shining Mystery of Jesus*, by Mr. Douglas Edwards, M.A. (Longmans; 6s. net). Mr. Edwards has seen Jesus, and his pages palpitate with the eagerness of his desire to show to others what he has seen, or rather to lead them up to Jesus and help them to see Him for themselves. He divides his study into three parts which he calls the Unique Figure, the Unique Art, and the Unique Dogma. In simpler words he tells us what Jesus was, what He did, and what He is. There is nothing strikingly new in what he writes. But it is all strikingly true. For instance, he sees clearly that the Jesus of the Gospels has two characteristics which seem incompatible. He is august, almost terrible. Peter shrinks from Him because of something supernaturally awful, distant, great. But He is also tender, gentle, kind. And it is this composite picture that is the real Jesus. This is one contribu-

tion the author makes to our vision of the Lord. His treatment of the Resurrection is in its own way as valuable. But indeed the whole book will be found refreshing and edifying. The author constantly warns readers against accepting *his* conclusions, and constantly brings them face to face with Jesus Himself. And if his book succeeds in persuading any to go to the Gospels for themselves and look at Jesus he will have achieved a wonderful result.

It has long been known that not only the thoughts but the literary forms of the New Testament were profoundly influenced by pre-Christian Judaism. The evidence for this has been succinctly presented in a thoroughly popular and readable form by the Rev. George Leopold Hurst, B.D., in *The Literary Background of the New Testament* (Macmillan; 6s. 6d. net). The influence of the Apocalyptic and Pseudepigraphic Literature is peculiarly evident in Matthew and Revelation, but more or less it is everywhere: the Midrashic method, for example, is followed by the Evangelists in collecting the traditions of Jesus. The New Testament Parable, Epistle, Allegory, Apocalypse, etc., are traced back to their pre-Christian antecedents, and the debt, in point of literary form, of Jesus and the Epistle of James to the Wisdom Literature is undeniable. All this is convincingly set forth by Mr. Hurst, and he has increased the value of his book by ample quotations from the too little known canonical literature which are paralleled by, or have influenced, New Testament utterances. This is a service for which real students of the New Testament will be grateful.

The Rev. Canon F. J. Horsefield's book on *The Voice of Prophecy* (Marshall Brothers; 2s. 6d. net) represents an attitude which must increasingly fail to command the modern mind. Prophecy is regarded largely as prediction, 'promises and predictions that must have been in many cases largely incomprehensible to those who uttered them.' It appears that, in the light of prophecy, we may reckon upon the rapid approach of the end of this dispensation, and the imminence of Christ's return. The book, which is written with much earnestness, can carry no possible conviction to any one who accepts the legitimacy and the necessity of the modern method of approach to the Bible.

There are two new books out upon the Vedānta. Radhakrishnan's is the more elaborate. But for an introduction *The Vedānta and Modern Thought*,

by Principal W. S. Urquhart of Calcutta (Milford ; 12s. 6d. net), is almost unbeatable. And it will introduce you not only to the surface of things but usher you into the deeps, without you realizing they are deeps. For Dr. Urquhart has the gift of explanation in a very high degree. Moreover, he is the fortunate possessor of a mass of knowledge, and out of it can throw down striking parallels between the thought of East and West that help the mind along. If you have risen above Macaulay's silly saying that one shelf of European literature is more than worth the whole of Indian thinking—a dictum which begat an educational policy which is the prolific mother of many of our Indian troubles now—if you would know something of Saṃkara and Rāmānuja and the rest—and can one be an educated man if one is blankly ignorant of those who have largely built up the minds of masses of our fellow-subjects?—if you would understand the thought of that strange brooding India with its tremendous sense of the greatness of God, Dr. Urquhart is your man.

A second edition has been published of *The Sons of the Clergy: Some Records of 275 Years*, by the Rev. E. H. Pearce, Litt.D., D.D., F.S.A., the Bishop of Worcester (Murray ; 7s. 6d. net). The first edition was published in 1904, and it has been long out of print. The book is frankly, and worthily, propaganda, and not merely inspired by a love of history. The Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy is the oldest society in connexion with the Church of England. It is to celebrate its two-hundred and seventy-fifth year in 1929. And it is also one of the most beneficent of Anglican societies. It possesses a good deal of wealth, but it has a very large constituency. Its income is £36,000, and that seems a great deal. But then in 1927 it helped no fewer than 3224 persons, widows and children of clergymen. Its benefactions are varied as the needs of the dependants. And a simple sum in arithmetic shows that each of the 3000 could have got very little to help to set him up in life.

The book will certainly achieve its purpose. For few people who begin it will be able to stop reading it. It is full of delightful bits of ancient lore about all kinds of things, from sermons to the cost of wine. It has an annual dinner, preceded wisely by an annual sermon. And most of the noted names in the Church appear on its list of preachers. It may be hoped that suitable persons of large means may be induced to read the book and to enlarge the usefulness of an excellent society by enlarging its funds.

The Life and Teaching of Christ, by Mr. Reginald Ponsonby (Simpkin Marshall ; 7s. 6d. net), is a harmony of the four Gospels given in the words of the Revised Version. It is warmly commended in a preface by Sir Wilfred Grenfell. The compilation of gospel harmonies is a very ancient exercise, and recent workers in the field have commonly adopted the plan of setting the four Gospels in parallel columns. Mr. Ponsonby, however, has aimed at providing a readable consecutive narrative of attractive appearance and arrangement. In this, with the help of printer and publisher, he has been most successful, for the aspect of the book is decidedly inviting. The writer is fully aware of the chronological difficulties, and while he does not claim to have solved these he has given as reasonable an arrangement as is possible. The various sections of the gospel story are introduced by headings, and a moderate number of footnotes helps to elucidate the text.

The latest attempt to rouse an apathetic public to the interest and value of the Bible is that of Canon Vernon F. Storr, M.A., in *The Bible and the Modern Mind* (S.P.C.K. ; duxeen 1s., cloth 1s. 6d.). It is a very successful attempt. Frankly asserting that the older method of approach to the Bible is gone for ever, but with equal earnestness maintaining that its spiritual value has not been destroyed by historical and literary criticism, he shows us clearly what the Bible is in the light of this criticism, and he gives wise counsel to teachers whose business is to initiate other minds into the modern approach to the Bible.

In his new book, to which he gives the general title *Sacraments*, and the sub-title, *A Study of Some Moments in the Attempt to define their Meaning for Christian Worship* (S.C.M. ; 4s. net, and in paper covers 2s. 6d. net), Canon A. L. Lilley has a more general and a more specific purpose. The general purpose is to vindicate theology as a discipline that continually guards religion from excesses and helps to preserve its spirituality. But theology must be studied historically, because every dogma is intended to be the conclusive resolution of a doubt, and it is the history of that doubt which is all-important for the understanding of the dogma. You cannot understand a theological statement unless you know the story of what led up to it.

That is one good reason for studying the history of sacramental doctrine. Here, as elsewhere, theological thought has at critical moments laboured to preserve the most fully spiritual theory of the

Christian sacraments. The book before us therefore proceeds to discuss some of the great moments of sacramental debate. St. Augustine, Hugh and Richard of St. Victor, St. Thomas Aquinas, and later scholastic theology are passed in review. And it all leads up to an interesting chapter on 'Sacraments and the Modern Mind.'

The two ideas which have successively emerged in this history are symbolism and instrumentality. The sacraments are symbols of grace or they are instruments of grace. The former idea prevailed up to the time of St. Thomas, the latter since his time has, in the Latin Church, superseded it. It is a strange fact that our own day has seen a revival of 'high' sacramental belief coincident with a wide acceptance of a 'broad' Biblical criticism. This is strange because in the past 'high' doctrine of the sacraments rested upon a faith in the verbal inspiration of the text of the Bible. Modern minds no longer accept this. They regard much of its teaching as 'poetic truth.' And it is for that reason they have been sacramentally inclined. Canon Lilley thinks that the sacraments are for many to-day symbols of poetic truth and expressions of the reality of the Church as the abiding home of the soul. How long the modern mind will be able to maintain such an attitude is another question.

The book is an exceedingly able one. It is constantly suggestive even when it is not convincing, and its adoption of the historical method lends the discussion a freshness and interest which an abstract treatment does not always provide.

In a little book which he entitles *The 'Soul'* (Williams & Norgate; 3s. 6d. net), Mr. F. K. Chaplin, M.A., discusses the question of man's survival and immortality. After a very concise and very masterly survey of modern philosophy with its (on the whole) negative conclusions on the subject, he reviews the Scriptural passages to conclude that they teach conditional immortality, 'eternal life' being a gift.

The evidential value of spiritualistic phenomena is weighed and found quite indecisive. Mr. Chaplin's view is that 'soul' without 'body' is untenable. But man's evolution is far from finished, very far. There is already some indication of the possibility of the evolution of a 'subtle' body that may outlast the ordinary physical frame. On that, if we understand him aright, are based Mr. Chaplin's only hopes of human survival. It is a capital summary of views, but we wish he had expanded his positive views at considerably greater length. He leaves us wondering.

On Preaching from Texts.

BY THE REVEREND J. S. MACARTHUR, M.A., ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE, LLANDAFF, CARDIFF.

THE time-honoured practice of preaching from Biblical texts is not infrequently criticised on the ground that the prefixing of a passage of Scripture to a sermon is a sort of convention based on a superstitious veneration for the actual words of Scripture which accompanies outworn theories of verbal inspiration held by few preachers nowadays. Adherence to the convention thus appears to be an illogical survival which ought to be abandoned along with the theory to which it is attached. If the preacher still maintains this old-fashioned custom, is he quite fair to his hearers? Is he not really trying to introduce critical views, which he knows are unwelcome in certain quarters, under cover of a pious practice which means something else for him than it did for those of past generations?

The conventionality of the practice can, it is argued, be demonstrated from the fact that many a sermon is preached which has little or no obvious connexion with its text.

Here, then, is a view which merits careful consideration on the part of the preacher. It may at once be granted that many sermons have no vital connexion with their texts. But does it follow that preaching from texts should be given up entirely or at least in great measure?

The disconnexion of sermons from their texts may be due to more causes than one. Sermons that are irrelevant to their texts fall, broadly speaking, into two classes. There are those sermons which by reason of their general diffuseness could stand in close relation to no single passage of