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I.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE EXPERIMENTAL METHOD.

IN a scientific age like ours, something will be gained if we can show that Christianity is amenable to the Experimental Method. This method has very largely made the modern world. It received its great exposition and impulse from Lord Bacon, and is sometimes called the Baconian method. It consists of three stages: first, the collection of all the facts procurable upon the subject in hand; secondly, the casting about for some happy hypothesis to explain the facts; and, thirdly, the verification of the hypothesis by experience or experiment.

Now it so happens that Christianity may be made amenable to this method; and, that there may be no mistake about this being the Founder's intention, let us look at one declaration He made in the days of His flesh. His enemies had, strange to say, argued themselves into the idea that He deserved to be killed because He had made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day (John vii. 23). They illustrated in doing so the fact that, if we only set ourselves to it, we can argue ourselves into anything. The history of human thought shows that there is nothing too absurd, nothing even too diabolical, to be reached by argument. But Jesus has a better method to suggest than this one of everlasting discussion; and it is contained in the words, "If any man will [*willeth to*—Revised Version] do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John vii. 17). He does not say, "If any man will *discuss* God's will in all its length and breadth, he shall know of the doctrine;" but if he will *do* it, he shall reach

ality to nationality as the development of the subject seems to require. Certainly this is an improvement on Flint's plan, and the improvement shows itself especially in Flint's overloaded *Introduction*. Rocholl further advances on Flint in so far as he has the courage to follow his survey of the history of the science with a constructive attempt of his own. This Flint declines to do, on the plea that his own view is sufficiently developed in his criticism of others. From the first, however, Rocholl promised to supplement his volume of criticism with one of positive construction. But, as he himself says, it is easier to criticise others' work than to improve upon it; and the years have run on from 1878 to 1893 before he has been able to complete his plan. At length the promised construction is before us, and it seems worth waiting for. After discussing with great thoroughness the factors and the work of history, the author passes in review the structure of the history of all peoples, and seeks a point of view from which he may observe not only the material out of which it is built, in its parts and as a whole, not even the nature of its technique, or the constructive skill with which it has been wrought; but from which he may grasp the thought that rules the entire edifice. So viewing the course of universal history, he finds that it centres in the advent of the Son of Man. Sweeping the eye over the whole field of human activity, as the astronomer sweeps his eye over the heavens, noting the regular movements of the great bodies which come into view, investigating all perturbations and puzzling phenomena, at last the centre is found: "We have found in the appearance of the Mediator whom the Church proclaims to us, the desiderated central astronomical point. We have found in Him the point of unity, in which all these requirements, like so many lines, meet and lose themselves. In this phenomenon all questions find their solution. . . . Without it the whole becomes an unordered mass, collapsed, purposeless, meaningless." Rocholl does not pretend, of course, that the mere survey of the material of history, approached with no clue, will yield such great results. As fully as Flint and Grau (*Jahrbücher für Protestantische Theologie*, 1886, i), he recognizes that our religious conceptions really give us our clue to the philosophy of history. But he contends with great force that only *these* religious conceptions will give us any basis for a philosophy of history: that only on their assumption does history become a unit. And he rightly argues that the assumption is verified by its results. We cannot do more here than point students of history to this comprehensive and well-packed volume, and to congratulate them on the accessibility of its treasures.—*The Meeting-place of Geology and History*. By Sir J. William Dawson, LL.D., F.R.S., etc. Crown 8vo, pp. 223. (London: The Religious Tract Society; New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1894.) This little book contains the substance of Dr. Dawson's Lowell Lectures, and has as its object "to give a clear and accurate statement of facts bearing on the character of the debatable ground intervening between the later part of the geological record and the beginnings of sacred and secular history." It is one of Dr. Dawson's best books: and everybody who knows Dr. Dawson will understand that that is saying a great deal. Dr. Dawson concludes that no link of derivation of man from the lower animals has yet been discovered; that the interval which divides man from the animals is immense; that man is a recent comer upon the earth; that there is but one species of man; that the diluvial era gives a double origin for man; and the like. Those who are interested in the antiquity of man on the earth will do well to consult what Dr. Dawson has to say of the much discussed relics found in the Trenton gravels.—*A Short History of Syriac Literature*. By the late William Wright, LL.D., Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge. Crown 8vo, pp. 296. (London: Adam & Charles Black; New York: Macmillan & Co., 1894.) Students of Syriac literature have long