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THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY AND ITS WORK.

In the last number of this REVIEW* some account was given of the calling of the Westminster Assembly and of its historical meaning. It was pointed out that its really significant work was the preparation of formularies designed to serve the churches of the three kingdoms as a basis for uniform establishments. Some account of its work on these so-called "four parts of uniformity" is now to be given.

Of these "four parts of uniformity", the one which was at once the most pressing and the most difficult for the Assembly, was the preparation of a platform of government for the churches. Both Parliament and Assembly were, indeed, fairly committed to the Presbyterian system under solemn sanction; and the majority of the members of both bodies were sincerely Presbyterian in conviction.⁶⁶ But sincerity and consistency are very different matters; and so soon as the details of church organization were brought under discussion, a bewildering variety of judgments was revealed. The Scots, though prepared to yield in the interest of harmony all that it was possible to yield,

* Number for April, 1908, pp. 177-210.

⁶⁶ Baillie, writing in 1645, says (ii., p. 320): "The bodie of the Parliament, City, and Countrey are for the Presbyterie." Cf. i., p. 287, from Dec., 1640: "The farr greatest part are for our discipline."

Memoirs and selected passages from the other MS. to fill up any chronological blanks. A comparison of Mr. Low's book with the better known *Memoirs* reveals the fact that Michael Boston used a pretty free hand in making changes in the MS. of the *General Account* and sometimes these were not an improvement. Mr. Low in the editor's preface informs us: "In transcribing the *General Account*, I have not adhered to Boston's arbitrary use of capital letters, or to his punctuation. His spelling of words and of proper names is often inconsistent. Where it seemed desirable I have adopted present usage in spelling. I have further indicated four or five names by the initial letter, but with these exceptions nothing has been altered or omitted." All students of the ecclesiastical literature of Scotland will feel themselves deeply indebted to Mr. Low for the carefully edited volume which he has brought before the public.

Wick, Scotland.

D. BEATON.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY.

LES ÉTAPES DU FIDÉISME. Par EMILE DOUMERGUE, Professeur à la Faculté de Théologie de Montauban. Genève: J. H. Jeheber. [1907.] 16mo., pp. 95.

LE DERNIER MOT DU FIDÉISME. Par EMILE DOUMERGUE, Doyen de la Faculté de Théologie de Montauban. Toulouse: Chez M. le Pasteur Langereau. [1907.] 16mo., pp. 67.

Professor—or now we must say, Dean—Doumergue writes in these two booklets under the pressure of a profound sense of the importance of the questions he is discussing. "*Fidéisme*", he says, "is the question of the day; the question at the bottom of all other questions". What, then, is this *Fidéisme*? This it is the object of the former of these booklets to tell us. Formed as it is on the model of Rationalism, Individualism and the like which take up a particular position with respect to reason, the individual, and the like, the name shows that it is a particular conception of faith which *Fidéisme* exploits. What this conception of faith is Professor Doumergue wishes to make clear, and he thinks he can make it clearest by tracing its history.

Accordingly, he wishes us to observe with him three stages of *Fidéisme*. The fundamental contention of *Fidéisme* is that faith is an absolutely free movement of the soul, independent of all intellectual conceptions, whether in the sphere of science, history or philosophy. So far from identifying faith, as the classical theology of Rome does, with "the adhesion of the mind to a speculative truth enunciated in an abstract formula", it rather declares faith to be indifferent to all intellectual ideas, and announces as its program: "Faith is independent of beliefs." Now, says Prof. Doumergue, the first appearance of this proclamation as a definite platform of a party in the Protestant churches

of France, was among the so-called Liberals of fifty years ago. Religion, said this Liberalism, is not a knowledge, but a feeling, and is therefore in its essence independent of all convictions of the mind. Accordingly, the famous Manifesto of Liberal Christianity of 1869 announced the readiness of the liberal church to receive into its bosom all who desired to labor for spiritual improvement, whether in (so-called) faith they were theists, pantheists, spiritualists, materialists, or even atheists. This was historically the first stage of *Fidéisme*. The second stage is marked by the effort of this Liberalism to find for itself a theology. This is the stage represented by the so-called "Paris School", which seeks to cover up the crass indifferentism of Liberalism by a developed theory of the realism of faith, as distinguished from belief. But the hesitations and contradictions of the "Paris School" lead Prof. Doumergue to designate this second stage in the development of *Fidéisme*, "Semi-Fidéisme". This stage is characterized by an unwillingness to declare religious beliefs wholly without significance to faith, and yet a determination to represent faith—the faith that constitutes religion and saves—as entirely independent of intellectual conceptions. It loves to contrast itself with "orthodoxy" as standing for the faith of the heart, instead of the belief of the understanding; trust in God instead of acceptance of propositions about God: and to represent as its main purpose and effect the establishment of the religious life on a basis unassailable from the point of view whether of philosophy, science or historical criticism. What! its adherents cry, shall our faith be at the mercy of the next scientific or archæological discovery? In felicitating itself on this position of safe detachment, it has permitted itself to go very far. M. Ménégoz is sure not only that true faith can exist—and save—without any knowledge of Christ; but that it can coexist with decisive rejection of Christ. God will not condemn a man for this intellectual *bizarrie*: and "in Paradise" such "an original" as can deny historically that Jesus ever existed "will see he was mistaken and cast himself at the feet of the Lord". He even feels bound to affirm that true faith may coexist with denial of the existence of the very God on whom it is said to rest! Certainly on this side of Prof. Ménégoz's teaching we are already in presence of the third stage of *Fidéisme*, that of consistent *Fidéisme*, which Mr. Frommel calls "religious Agnosticism", though Prof. Doumergue does not approve the term. In this stage the affirmation is not only that faith has no content of the intellectual order and is independent of all beliefs, but that the believer stands aloof from all beliefs,—it is indifferent to him what is true or whether anything be true. "I cannot affirm that God exists, in the sense in which you understand these words", says one of its exponents. "Is God a person?" asks another. "Who knows? What I can have of religious needs can be satisfied with beliefs *ad referendum*. . . . Even the personality of God [remains a pure symbol] because before everything I remain agnostic with respect to belief in His personality—a word which continues vague."

Over against these vagaries of unbelief Prof. Doumergue sets simple

common sense. He modestly professes to have nothing to say on his own account against them, but to confine himself practically to summarizing and popularizing what has been so well said by M. Babut and Prof. Frommel in two striking articles published in 1904 and 1905. Prof. Doumergue has, however, his own contribution to make to the discussion, and that does not consist merely in casting the matter into the historical framework which we have taken note of. Above all, he has brought the matter to the level of the lay comprehension—for he is addressing laymen particularly in his brochures—and has given it all a readable and attractive form.

In the second one of his little brochures Prof. Doumergue takes his text from Prof. Ménégoz's *Une triple distinction théologique: observations sur le rapport de la foi religieuse avec la science, l'histoire et la philosophie*. The relation in which religious faith stands to science, history and philosophy according to Prof. Ménégoz is—just no relation at all: it is independent of all three. In his remarks on this thesis, Prof. Doumergue, while not confining himself to it, yet concentrates his attention on the assertion as regards history. The astonishing declaration of *Fidéisme* is that Christianity is not concerned at all with any historical fact, is independent of the determination of historical facts altogether. "The Bible", says Prof. Ménégoz, "does not contain a single narrative which we are authorized to erect into an article of faith." Not the miraculous birth; nor the resurrection of Christ; nor the crucifixion of Christ; nor even—by consequence—the existence of Christ. Professor Doumergue follows these astonishing assertions with a patient as well as a telling refutation. "We learn", says Prof. Ménégoz, "for example, from the Scriptures that Jesus Christ was crucified. I believe it just as I believe that Julius Cæsar was poignarded: but no more than the murder of the Roman emperor can the judicial assassination of Jesus be an article of faith." "What may be a matter of faith is the meaning which we attach to the death of Christ: but His death itself is a fact of the purely historical order." Will, then, Prof. Doumergue significantly asks, the meaning of the death be the same whether Jesus was crucified, or killed accidentally or committed suicide? "What do I say? Will the meaning we attach to this death be the same whether we believe that it occurred or did not occur?—that it is a fact or a legend, a myth, as would be the case, for example, if Jesus never lived?" Clearly the extremity of the *Fidéistic* assertions overreaches itself. If faith is to be independent of all historical occurrences whatever, then faith is a purely subjective thing, and all that we call Christianity as an objective religion is matter of indifference. "We are face to face with pure intuition, with pure mysticism. God reveals Himself to the heart: the heart gives itself to God: everything passes between God and the heart; between the heart and God." And what, then, shall we do with *sin*? *Fidéisme* may be a religion for angels, but for *sinner*s—surely sinners cannot be trusted each to make his own religion and to make it true!

Perhaps it might have been well to make a little more clear for the

lay reader than Prof. Doumergue seems to have done the fundamental confusion of the whole development of *Fidélisme*—the confusion of the product of the religious sentiment with Christianity. The religious sentiment,—yes, it is indifferent to religious conceptions and will work and produce its product in the presence of any religious conceptions whatever. If this is what we understand by pure religion and undefiled, then it is quite true that faith cannot be inseparably connected with any particular truth or fact of the intellectual order. Man will be religious under the most untoward circumstances; for man is a religious animal, and will function as a religious animal always and everywhere. But to confound this purely subjective functioning of the religious sentiment with a specific religion like Christianity is the limit of confusion. To say it is enough, is to reduce us all to the lowest form of naturalism. Yet, since Kant, and, above all, Schleiermacher, pointed the way, this is the gulf which has swallowed up many more than that particular one of the new theologies which calls itself *Symbolo-Fidélisme*. In every land there are those to-day whose dominant thought of Christianity simply identifies it with the native movements of the religious nature, and who therefore sit loosely to everything which distinguishes Christianity from natural religion. Nobody denies that these teachers are religious. But by what right can they call themselves Christians?

Princeton.

B. B. WARFIELD.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE SOCIAL ORDER. By R. J. CAMPBELL, M.A., Minister of the City Temple, London, Author of "The New Theology", "New Theology Sermons", etc. 8vo.; pp. xiii, 284. New York: The MacMillan Company. 1907.

The interest of this book does not lie in the zeal with which the writer advocates the most radical form of Socialism, though in this respect he is conspicuous even among those who would find in it the cure of every ill. Neither does the significance of the volume appear in the gradual and considerate methods by which the author would introduce the true social order, though at this point he differs widely from many of his school. Nor yet is the discussion most noteworthy for the off-hand way in which it disposes of the most obstinate questions, though in this regard Mr. Campbell, like not a few of his fellows, would seem to be blessed with convenient blindness. Nor, again, is it his attitude toward orthodoxy and even toward theology in general that is most worthy of remark. His previous volumes keep us from being surprised when we read near the close of this (p. 236) that wealth enables its possessor, "if he is utterly misguided, to endow theological seminaries." On the contrary, the real significance of the discussion is in the ground on which socialism is advocated. And here the interest is not in the fact that Mr. Campbell regards the connection between the traditional theology and the social question to be radically important. We all believe that. Our conception of God ought to determine our conception of society which he has constituted and preserves and governs,

then presents the results accomplished by other forms of missionary enterprise, dependant upon or related to the distinctly evangelistic efforts. Among the interesting chapters are included the discussions of Educational Missions, Philanthropic Missions, and lastly, certain other forms of social progress which Christian Missions have produced. These brief studies could hardly fail to awaken faith and interest in missionary work in the minds of even the most skeptical. The author acknowledges special indebtedness to the invaluable books of Doctor James S. Dennis; "Christian Missions and Social Progress," and "A Centennial Survey of Foreign Missions": and this smaller volume will stimulate many to enjoy these larger works, which form the special reading library arranged to accompany "Gloria Christi."

Princeton.

CHARLES R. ERDMAN.

CHRISTUS REDEMPTOR. AN OUTLINE STUDY OF THE ISLAND WORLD OF THE PACIFIC. By Helen Barrett Montgomery. New York: The MacMillan Company. Pp. 282. Cloth. 50 cents net.

The Church at large owes a debt to "The Committee on the United Study of Missions" for the series of helpful hand-books of which this volume is the sixth in number. More than a quarter of a million of these publications have been furnished to missionary societies, and classes for mission study. It is enough to say that this book well merits its place in the series. It opens to many an entirely new world. Names like John Calvert, John G. Paton, and Robert Louis Stevenson, are familiar to most readers, as are the main facts concerning the Hawaiian and Philippine Islands; but the number and extent of the Pacific Islands, and the marvelous transformation of their inhabitants by missionary effort, will be, to most readers, a novel story, full of romantic interest, and suggesting the divine power of the Gospel of Christ.

Princeton.

CHARLES R. ERDMAN.

THE CREED OF CREEDS. By THE REV. F. B. MEYER, B.A. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company. 16 mo. Cloth. Pp. 220. \$1.00 net.

We are here given a devotional commentary on The Apostles' Creed. The successive words and phrases are dwelt upon and illuminated in a series of brief chapters, forming fifty-two in all, and affording a message for each week of the year. The fundamental truths of Christianity are set forth in language peculiarly clear and striking; and the reader is impressed anew with the breadth, and beauty and power of this ancient symbol of Christian faith.

Princeton.

CHARLES R. ERDMAN.