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## THE VIRGIN BIRTH IN THE SECOND CENTURY.

At the close of the second century, the virgin birth was a firmly established part of the creed of the Catholic Christian Church. What was the origin of that belief? This question can be answered only after an examination of the birth narratives which are included in our first and third Gospels. But an examination of extra-canonical sources is also not without value. At the time of Irenaeus, belief in the virgin birth was firmly established. Can a gradual establishment of that belief be traced in the history of the second century, or was the belief firmly fixed from the very beginning? The present article will attempt to give some answer to this question, and thus lay the necessary foundation for answering the further and more important question: is the belief in the virgin birth based upon fact, or did it originate in some other way?

Of course, no one denies that the belief in the virgin birth arose long before Irenaeus. The most that could by any possibility be held is that the doctrine did not attain the full assent of the Church until his time. Even such a view, however, can be dismissed very quickly.

In the first place, the virgin birth has a place in the so-called Apostles' Creed.<sup>1</sup> The form of that creed which is now in use was produced in Gaul in the fifth or sixth cen-

<sup>1</sup> The following discussion of the Apostles' Creed is not based upon independent investigation. All that has been attempted is to point out the bearing which the commonly accepted conclusions in this field have upon the question of the virgin birth. See especially Harnack, *Vetus-*

for Christian brotherhood, in a growing interest in the history of the Church, are found "signs of hope" that there will be discovered the necessary synthesis of authority and liberty, of faith and freedom.

*Princeton.*

CHARLES R. ERDMAN.

A CHRISTIAN'S HABITS. By ROBERT E. SPEER, D.D. Philadelphia. The Westminster Press. 12mo; 114 pp. Price 50 cents.

The treatment of any theme by Dr. Speer is certain to be marked by clearness, originality and deep moral earnestness. Such are the characteristics of these fourteen brief chapters which deal with the laws of spiritual and mental habit as applied to the Christian life. The messages are especially designed for the young, and suggest the need and the possibility of cultivating the habits of prayer, of right thinking, of prompt doing, of wise spending, of decision, of finding and following the will of God.

*Princeton.*

CHARLES R. ERDMAN.

THE ROMANCE OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE. By JOHN T. FARIS. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press. 63 pp.; 12 mo. Price 25 cents.

This is one of the most brief but not the least important of the long list of discussions called forth by the tercentenary of the publication of the King James Version. It recounts concisely most of the salient points in the fascinating history of the English versions, even glancing at the story of the early manuscripts and concluding with references to the revision of 1881-1885 and to the preparation of the American Standard Edition. The little book can hardly fail to realize the hope of the writer which is to lead the reader to inquire for some of the more ambitious volumes in which the story is more fully told.

*Princeton.*

CHARLES R. ERDMAN.

WELFARE WORK OF CORPORATIONS. By MARY LATHROP GOSS. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society. Paper; 12 mo; pp. 36. Price 10 cents net.

In discussing the various activities designed by employers to improve the circumstances of workmen, the writer traces the origin of the general movement to Germany and especially to the steel works of Frederick Krupp & Co., at Essen. The special provision for physical safety and comfort, the opportunity for recreation, the educational advantages, the provision of suitable homes, the establishment of provident funds and pensions, in short, all the efforts which are commonly classed under the term of Welfare Work are here illustrated in the provisions made by certain great corporations both in America and abroad.

*Princeton.*

CHARLES R. ERDMAN.

WITH YOU ALWAYS. A Sequel to "Over Against the Treasury". By COURTENAY H. FENN, D.D., Missionary of the Presbyterian Board,

Peking, China. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press. 1911  
12mo; pp. 238; 75 cents net.

"After the Convention comes the Campaign." As a sequel to his now celebrated missionary plea, "Over Against the Treasury", Dr. Fenn gives this imaginative account of the practical results that may confidently be expected in any church, when its officers and members thoroughly appropriate the promise of the presence of the living Christ. It is an instructive and entertaining description of ways and means that may be used for the conduct of an effective campaign for home and foreign missions.

An introductory chapter, giving a resumé of the earlier volume, furnishes the present story its setting. The Rev. John Stanton, the pastor of the Westminster Church of Jaronsett, had, in lieu of a sermon on the Sunday morning devoted to the annual offering for foreign missions, told his people of a remarkable dream he had had the night before, in which he beheld the Lord sitting "Over against the treasury" and observing the gifts of the contributors. The members of the congregation were then asked to come again in the evening and to make their offering under the influence of the conviction that Jesus Christ was as really present as though seen with the eyes of the flesh. The amazing results are here tabulated in ten chapters. Seven of these sketch the realization of an adequate missionary programme along the lines of the "Seven Characteristic Features of the Standard Missionary Church", so much emphasized by the Laymen's Missionary Movement, while the remaining three chapters deal with the supplementary topics: "A Missionary Session", "A Parish Abroad", and "Definite Prayer and Effort to Secure Volunteers".

The developments are somewhat too idealistically sketched to produce the maximum of verisimilitude; especially does the time seem too limited for the marvellous transportation of this staid and spiritually lethargic church. Nevertheless, as the author reminds us, we dare never call this ideal impracticable, since it is none other than that presented by our Lord himself as the true task of the kingdom.

The book ought to be read by every pastor. It cannot fail to inspire him to greater faith, courage and perseverance in developing the missionary spirit and service of his people. And it is even more to be hoped that this commanding presentation concerning the great cause of missions may find its way into the hands and hearts of many of our church members who are nigh unto perishing for lack of the vision of the living Lord and for their failure to obey his will with respect to the unevangelized nations of to-day.

*Princeton.*

FREDERICK W. LOETSCHER.

MORAL LEADERSHIP AND THE MINISTRY. By EDWARD E. KEEDY, Author of "The Naturalness of Christian Life". Boston: Horace Worth Company. 1912. 12mo; pp. vii, 200.

With great force and charm of style the writer discusses this sub-