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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-*

ject from the following points of view: religion as the ground or source of leadership; the spirit of leadership; religion as the equipment for leadership; the ministry; loss of leadership; the power to constrain or lead; the leader's program; the training for leadership. As to substance of thought, there is little new in this volume: the main idea is that loyalty to Jesus Christ in daily life yields the superior type of character that alone is fitted for moral leadership. But many an old truth of fundamental importance to the minister of the Gospel is here set forth with such simplicity, beauty and compelling power that one feels himself alternately filled with a noble discontent with his past attainments and with stern resolves to make the life of trust in, and devotion to, Christ a more influential reality.

*Princeton.*

FREDERICK W. LOETSCHER.

A WAY OF HONOR AND OTHER COLLEGE SERMONS. By HENRY KINGMAN, D.D. Fleming Revell Company. 1911. 8vo, pp. 210.

These fourteen sermons were delivered by the author in the Congregational Church of Claremont, California, in which the congregation is made up largely of the students of Pomona College. The discourses make much of Christ's character and influence upon his followers, and put the chief stress upon the ethical teachings of the Gospel. Simple in style, affluent in illustrative material, and strong in their hortatory appeals, they are rather loose in structure, and vague in their didactic elements. Prevaillingly topical in the method of development, they commonly present but a few of the many phases of truth suggested by the unrestricted forms of most of the themes proposed for discussion.

*Princeton.*

FREDERICK W. LOETSCHER.

SOME OF GOD'S MINISTERS. By WILLIAM MALCOLM MACGREGOR, D.D., St. Andrew's United Free Church, Edinburgh. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. 1910. Imported by Charles Scribner's Sons. 8vo; pp. x, 297. \$1.75 net.

The substance, diction, style, and masterful technique of these sermons make them exceedingly interesting, suggestive, and spiritually helpful. It is one of the best volumes of this kind that we have had occasion to review during the year. Dr. Macgregor is a preacher of great power. His messages deserve a large number of readers, and his homiletic methods may be studied with profit by every minister who desires to perfect himself in the art of preaching the Word.

*Princeton.*

FREDERICK W. LOETSCHER.

RHYTHMISCHER CHORAL, ALTARWEISEN UND GRIECHISCHE RHYTHMEN, in ihrem Wesen dargestellt durch eine Rhythmik des einstimmigen Gesanges auf Grund der Accente: von FRIEDRICH SUCCO, Pastor. Gütersloh: Druck und Verlag von C. Bertelsmann. 1906.

We are presented here with a portly tome of four hundred and five