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YET ANOTHER CRITICISM OF THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

Such criticisms are called for and are even demanded by the general and the lively interest in the subject. The questions as to the truth and as to the significance of evolution are no longer merely academic ones. Persons of all classes and in almost all places are thinking and even talking of it. They ought, therefore, to receive the guidance which they need and want. To give it, consequently, is the duty of all capable teachers, whether scientific or philosophical or theological. Sincere inquiry must be aided along all possible lines. Specially is this so when the matter of interest is bound to exert a mighty practical influence, and particularly if it create an atmosphere which affects even those not conscious of breathing it. Now it is thus with the "theory of evolution." Its world-view, because of its monism, is both at first so attractive and afterwards so compelling that, if yielded to, it must at last revolutionize civilization. The most serious aspect of all this is that the influence of evolution, whether for good or for ill, is strongest in the most important of all spheres, that of religion. It is bound to determine our conception of God and of man and of duty and of sin and of destiny. There are many who say that its establishment as fact means the collapse of Christianity and even of religion in general. There are others who declare that such establishment, while destructive of Christianity, will redound to the perfection of true religion. Under these conditions no honest criticism of the theory of evolution can be superfluous. The deepening interest in it, the practical significance of it, its influence on religion, and above all on Christianity, confirm this judgment.

The Wonderful Christ. By REV. ALBERT PLEASANT ROBINSON, author of "One Pearl, and Other Sermons." Glad Tidings Publishing Co. Pp. 54. Price, 35 cents.

That Christ is wonderful is shown by the "Concurrent Testimony of Bible Characters" and by "Divine Attestations." He is wonderful in his creation, in his birth, in his ministry, in his graces, in his second coming, in his eternal glory. The thought presented is in general in line with Scripture teaching, and renders to Christ the honor that is his due as Savior and Lord.

The style leaves much to be desired. It lacks precision and grace, and does not always observe the rules of grammar. There is a profuse, even excessive, use of Scripture quotations.

Various inaccuracies appear. It was not Malchus (p. 11) but a kinsman of Malchus who accused Peter of being a disciple of Jesus (John xviii. 26). Paul is represented as the author of the *book* of Hebrews (p. 15). A noted preacher of the last generation is introduced as "the right Rev. T. D. Talmadge" (p. 24). Surely it is time that preachers should omit 1 John v. 7 from their list of prooftexts (p. 21). It is curiously at variance with the Scripture narrative of the resurrection to say that because of the prediction of Jesus "the hearts and minds of his disciples and friends were fully prepared" (p. 40). "Slammed the rocks into Stephen's ribs" occurs on p. 14.

Princeton.

J. RITCHIE SMITH.

Princes of the Church. By W. ROBERTSON NICOLL, LL.D. George H. Doran Company, New York.

This volume is a collection of biographical sketches of notable figures in the Churches of England and Scotland. The sketches were written by the editor of the *British Weekly* and appeared from time to time in its pages. American writers and speakers are the ones who above all others have been charged with a fondness for the adjective 'great,' and for too strong a predilection for the superlative mood. But now we must hand our crown over to Dr. Nicoll and his fellow writers on the other side of the Atlantic. It matters not whom Dr. Nicoll writes about, be he professor, ecclesiastic, preacher, student, orator, or saint, he is always great and preeminent. Of Dr. Parker he says that "to set down one's memory of his sentences would only be to mar them"; George Matheson was "potentially the greatest man given to the Scottish Churches since the days of Dr. Chalmers"; "If Dr. Rainy had been a member of the House of Commons he would most certainly have been the first man there"; of Ian MacLaren he says. "Since George MacDonald, there has been no such prophet of immortality"; Marcus Dods was "one of the few who really loved God"; "in any profession Alexander MacLaren would have taken the head." The sketches are marred by this unrestrained eulogy, and no doubt if Dr. Nicoll were writing of these men today, he would write more guardedly of their eloquence, scholarship and saintliness, for in their characters and lives there must

have been some modicum of this world which presses so hard upon us all, even upon Scottish preachers and theologians.

Aside from this very serious defect, the book is admirable and all who love biography will rejoice in it. Ministers especially will find much that is profitable and suggestive in these accounts of the celebrated personages of the British Churches. In the sketch of Professor Flint, for example, it will be stimulating for ministers to read a sentence like this: "It was their extraordinary learning that singled out Flint and Fairbairn from their contemporaries. Both had manifold gifts of speech, of intellectual energy, of religious devotion. But it was their supremacy in knowledge that impressed men's minds. They spent long hours and lonely hours of study in comparative obscurity, but once they had accomplished their tasks and displayed their resources the most jealously locked doors fell open."

One of the most interesting accounts is that of Cardinal Vaughan. His mother never asked a temporal blessing for any of her children, but prayed that they might all be devoted to the Church. Of her eight sons six became priests and her five daughters entered convents. "It is strange and painful to read that during his last years he wore on his left arm an iron bracelet, with spikes on the inside, which were pressed into the flesh. It was made out of steel wire, and the points were sharp. When it was made to his satisfaction, he told a friend to bring a pair of pliers and to fasten it on the arm so that it could never come off. When that was done, the Cardinal brought his right hand down heavily on the iron circle and so drove it home. It was cut off his arm after death." However much we may disapprove of this mortification of the flesh, this driving in of a not God-given thorn, the Protestant Church would do well to emphasize the truth of which that spiked bracelet was but the symbol, namely, that the prizes of the Christian life must be won with a struggle, that we must make war on the flesh, that we must strive, literally, agonize, to enter in at the strait gate. In the words of Froude in his life of Bunyan, "We live in days of progress and enlightenment; nature on a hundred sides has unlocked her storehouses of knowledge. But she has furnished no 'open sesame' to bid the mountain gate fly wide which leads to conquest of self. There is still no passage there for 'body and soul and sin.'"

Philadelphia, Pa.

CLARENCE EDWARD MACARTNEY.

Lord, Teach Us to Pray. Sermons on Prayer by the late REV. PRINCIPAL ALEXANDER WHYTE, D.D., LL.D. George H. Doran Company, New York.

This is a great book on a great subject written by a prophet, who knows from his own experience what prayer means. Many of the devotional books of our time are compilations, whose authorship reveals a wide and industrious gleaning. As such they are interesting and informing, but they fatally lack the element of inspiration. Principal Whyte has read as few men have the classical literature on the ministry of intercession, and his sermons abound with apt and illuminating