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CHRISTIANITY'S FINALITY AND NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING

Every intelligent adherent of Christianity sooner or later faces the question as to the truth, the uniqueness, and the finality of Christianity. We, Christians, have in most cases imbibed Christian ideas and followed Christian standards from infancy. Having been born into a Christian environment and having enjoyed a Christian training, we were led to accept the system of Christian truth and to adopt the Christian moral norm as true, final, and satisfying. Consequently, Christianity has practically from infancy been our standard of truth and of value.

But as we grow in intelligence we wish to know the reason why. We discover that Christianity is not the only religion in the world. We challenge ourselves as Christians. Such questions as these involuntarily force themselves upon us. If I were born in India from Hindu parents, would I not as resolutely hold that Hinduism is the only true and satisfying religion? Just what is there in Christianity that gives it a claim to the allegiance of man? Is there really anything fundamentally, unique, final, absolute about Christianity? Granted that Christianity is true and has value, is such truth and value relative or absolute? Are not perhaps all religions true and satisfying in a measure, the one more, the other less so, the only difference between them being one of degree? Does not possibly each racial group have the religion best adapted to it and serving its needs best, so that the question as to the finality of any religion ought not to be raised? Is Christianity perhaps the highest form of religious de-

Leave them out and you will find that then has the offense of the Cross ceased. This is the question before the Church today: Shall the offense of the Cross cease? Shall the Gospel cease to be good news and become only good advice? Shall the Churches which have been entrusted with the Gospel become lighthouses whose light has been quenched, or, still worse, lighthouses which burn and flash with false lights which allure to destruction voyagers on the sea of life?

"Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" Wherever that is left out Christianity is left out. Wherever it is spoken and honored there the Gospel is preached, whether from the incense-laden altars of Greek and Roman Churches or in the severe dignity of our Reformed Churches, or in a Gospel mission, or to the accompaniment of a bass drum on the street, or when at eventide a mother tells her little child of the love of God in Christ. Man is still a sinner, and still his great need is redemption from sin. Calvary has no successor, the Lamb of God has no substitute. He is the sinner's only hope. He is the power and glory of the Church here, and hereafter it is the Lamb of God, no longer upon the Cross but upon the throne of the universe, to whom redeemed sinners will pay their grateful homage.

These are not only eloquent but weighty words. Here is the center of the Gospel. Here is still the offense of the Cross. All of the so-called modern theories of the Atonement are but efforts to take away from the Cross its offense. The offense of the Cross has never ceased, and the cause of its offense has always been the same. The Greeks among modern men are still seeking human wisdom and the Jews among modern men are still seeking a legal righteousness, no matter how subtle or refined its form. But unto those who are effectually called, the preaching of Christ crucified for sin is still the power of God unto salvation.

We commend this book. God give the Church more preachers like this.
Princeton. C. W. HODGE.

Paul the Man. His Life, His Message and His Ministry. By CLARENCE EDWARD MACARTNEY, D.D. Author of "Putting on Immortality," "Twelve Great Questions About Christ," etc. New York, Chicago, London and Edinburgh: Fleming H. Revell Company. 1928.

This latest book, which Dr. Macartney has added to the notable series already bearing his name, deals with Paul the man, rather than with Paul's message. But unlike some recent books on the same subject it is written by one who not only admires the man but also has himself understood the message. No more important qualification could be found for a book on such a subject. Paulinism is greater than Paul. So Paul thought himself, and so they must think who would understand Paul.

It is refreshing, therefore, to read this simple and vivid account of Paul's life by a preacher who with at least as great power as any other man of our day is proclaiming to a lost and needy world the gospel of salvation that Paul was the chief instrument of God in giving to the Church. It is a noble figure of a man that stands out for us again in the pages of Dr. Macartney's book. We see the Apostle to the Gentiles in his physical weakness but also in his true greatness. By contrast with Roman governors and Jewish mobs, we obtain some impression of the moral grandeur of this greatest hero of the Faith. What is better still,

we come to understand anew that the true secret of Paul's life was found in the message that he was commissioned to proclaim.

Dr. Macartney is not concerned in this book to discuss mooted questions about the order of events in Paul's life or about the time and place and addresses of the Epistles. The outline that is here given is not altogether complete; we miss, for example, any mention, in the regular place in the narrative, of the "famine visit" of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, though that visit is later mentioned in the enumeration on p. 127. Sometimes one may hold a different opinion about disputed points. We are not so certain as Dr. Macartney is about the correctness of the South Galatian theory of the address of Galatians; and we hardly think that on that theory the date of the Epistle can be put so late as apparently Dr. Macartney puts it. We think that it would have been well to make a little plainer the sharp separation that undoubtedly existed between the Judaizers on the one hand and both Peter and James on the other. So the term "Judaic" and not the term "Judaistic" should have been used on p. 45, where the "Judaistic childhood" of the gospel is spoken of, though it is plain enough from the rest of the book that the infelicity there is one of terminology merely and not of thought. It might have been well also to distinguish a little more sharply between the law of Moses, which even in its ceremonial aspects Paul believed (and our author also unquestionably believes) was the law of God, from the misuse of that law in the new dispensation by the Judaizers.

But it would be unreasonable to demand completeness of discussion in a book such as this, which has admirably accomplished its true purpose. Dr. Macartney has here unquestionably helped to make the Apostle Paul a living figure for modern readers; the wonderful dramatic quality of the life of Paul is well brought out. We have exemplified in this book the noble simplicity of style which helps to make the author so powerful as a preacher. Thus when the account of the conversion of the jailer at Philippi is closed with the words: "At midnight this jailer was a lost pagan; in the morning he was in the Kingdom of Heaven," we feel that the true significance of the incident has been presented in the fewest possible words and with the greatest possible vividness and power. Or when we read on p. 136 that whereas those disciples at Ephesus "had not heard of the Holy Ghost, the disciples of today have heard of Him, and that is about all," we can well understand that under the preaching of Dr. Macartney men are "pricked in their hearts." Best of all, such writing as that which appears in this book does not try to be a substitute for the Bible, as do many books on Biblical characters today, but it will send men back again, with new interest and understanding, to the reading of the Word of God.

Princeton.

J. GRESHAM MACHEN.

Protestant Europe: Its Crisis and Outlook. By ADOLF KELLER, D.D., LL.D., and GEORGE STEWARD, PH.D., F.R.G.S. New York: George H. Doran Company. Pp. 371. Price \$3.50

This book consists of two parts: Part One under the caption of