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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."

and proper names are mangled (Theodotus, p. 52; Manctis, p. 60), and such coinages of the translator as "tribality", p. 15, are allowed to stand; but even such blunders as "in a mistaken name" (for "manner"), p. 15, "at the first time" (for "line"), p. 58, and the numeral "sixty", p. 66,—where we are told that Mary saw no miracles wrought by her son during so many years—have passed unnoticed by the eye of the proof-reader. We are glad to say we found afterwards that this volume is exceptionally bad. None of them, however, is well-translated: and the proof-reader has left us always liable to be told that John (or perhaps "Job", p. 16) was either really an eyewitness, or else "abrogated to himself in an extremely cunning manner" the part of eyewitness (Barth's *The Gospel of John*, p. 15); or to be suddenly introduced to a class of miracles, entirely new to Biblical investigators, viz., "the extra-ceremonial miracles" (Beth's *Miracles of Jesus*, p. 70). The volumes of the second series appear to have been more carefully done than those of the first. But we cannot say that, in any case, the German is fairly dealt by. On the whole, then, we fear that we must think that the enterprize which has put these interesting little treatises before the American public in so attractive looking a form has failed of its end. The work should have been better done or not done at all. An injustice is done to the German booklets in being so inadequately placed before their new constituency.

Princeton.

B. B. WARFIELD.

THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF CHRIST. Being lectures delivered under the auspices of the Bible Teachers' Training School, New York, April, 1907, by JAMES ORR, M.A., D.D., Professor of Apologetics and Systematic Theology in the United Free Church College of Glasgow, Scotland. With Appendix giving opinions of living scholars. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1907. Pp. xiv, 301.

Those who have derived instruction from Dr. Orr's other treatises will find it not unprofitable to enter with him upon the consideration of the Virgin Birth. Certainly the subject is a suitable one, not only for more technical treatment, but also for such popular presentations as the one now before us. For the question of the Birth of Christ cannot be confined to university lecture-rooms, however desirable that might be thought to be in the interests of calmness and sobriety of treatment, but inevitably challenges the attention of every thoughtful Christian man.

In the present course of lectures, Dr. Orr seeks to show (1) that the Virgin Birth is a fact, and (2) that it is an important part of Christian doctrine.

Lecture 1, "Statement of the Case—Issues and Preliminary Objections," contains much that is discussed more fully afterwards, but is important as pointing out that the author is not now attempting to prove the presence of miracle in general in the life of Jesus, but merely to resolve special difficulties connected with the particular miracle of the

Virgin Birth. "In brief," he says (p. 16), "my argument will have special respect to those who, accepting the general New Testament doctrine of Christ, are disposed to regard this as independent of the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, or who think the evidence for the latter insufficient."

Lecture II is concerned chiefly with the genuineness of the birth narratives as parts of the original First and Third Gospels, and with their integrity. The importance of the positive conclusions of the author on these questions is made evident by a brief statement as to the date of the Gospels in question. The other matter discussed at the beginning of this lecture—namely, the harmony and independence of the two birth narratives—surely belongs logically to Lecture III, which is entitled, "Sources of the Narratives—Historical and Internal Credibility." Lecture IV is concerned with "The Birth Narratives and the Remaining Literature of the New Testament—Alleged Silence of the New Testament." The sensible discussion of what might be expected as to the early extent of a knowledge of the Virgin Birth, supposing our birth narratives to be historical, is worthy of special notice. Dr. Orr exhibits the sufficient motives both for Mary's early silence and for her subsequent revelation of her secret, and as a probable channel for the tradition at least of Luke's narrative he suggests "that holy circle in Jerusalem . . . to which Zacharias and Elisabeth and Simeon and Anna the prophetess belonged." Dr. Orr detects both in John and in Paul indications of a knowledge of the Virgin Birth. Paul's doctrine of Christ as the second Adam would naturally involve a miracle of some kind in His birth, and that such a miracle was actually accepted by Paul is argued from peculiarities of expression in his allusions to "Christ's entrance into our humanity." Particularly suggestive are the parallels which Dr. Orr sets up between Rom. i. 3, 4 and Luke i. 35. And even though such arguments should be pronounced ingenious rather than convincing, it must be remembered that the author himself makes them merely as more or less confident suggestions and subordinates them to the preliminary caution (p. 114): "It is first to be observed that, even were Paul's silence as great as is alleged, it would not justify the conclusion which the objectors draw from it. It is to be remembered that Paul is not in the habit of alluding to, or recalling, the incidents in Christ's life—incidents which must have been perfectly familiar to him from the common preaching. His whole interest in the Epistles centres in the great facts of Christ's death and resurrection." As to John, Dr. Orr insists that his silence, since he must in any case have had before him the birth narratives of Matthew and Luke with the rest of those Gospels, could be interpreted only as corroboraton. And then there are positive indications that John did believe in the Virgin Birth. The mode of Christ's birth, Dr. Orr believes, is in view in John i. 13, and "furnishes the type of the (spiritual) new birth of believers". Furthermore, John ii. 3, 5 shows that "Mary regarded Jesus from the beginning as endowed with supernatural powers".

Lecture V deals with "Relation to Old Testament Prophecy—Witness

of Early Church History." In the former part of the lecture, Dr. Orr seeks to prove (1) that the story of the Virgin Birth could not have been evolved out of Old Testament prophecies, but (2) that the use of prophecy in Mt. i, ii and Luke i, ii is legitimate. The second of these arguments belongs to the establishment of the trustworthiness of the narratives; the former, to the refutation of those hypotheses as to the origin of the narratives that deny their historicity. The latter part of the lecture, dealing with the "witness of early church history", seems to belong logically with the external evidence in favor of the Gospel narratives.

In Lecture VI, the author discusses "Mythical Theories of Origin of Narratives of the Virgin Birth—Alleged Heathen Analogies." Having in the preceding lectures exhibited the direct evidence for the fact of the Virgin Birth, Dr. Orr now shows "the untenableness of the rival explanations." In view of the importance of this part of the discussion, it might seem at first sight as though one lecture were a scant allowance of space, but the author succeeds well in stating the main objections (and they have never really been answered) to the various theories of mythical origin for the narratives. The objections to a Jewish origin for the narratives (supposing the narratives to be mythical) would have made themselves better felt if some of the material of Lecture V could have been combined with Lecture VI.

Lecture VII, "Doctrinal Bearings of the Virgin Birth—Personality of Christ as Involving Miracle: Sinlessness and Uniqueness," and Lecture VIII, "Doctrinal Bearings of the Virgin Birth: the Incarnation—Summary and Conclusion", are concerned with the latter of the two propositions that Dr. Orr is attempting to prove—the proposition, namely, that the Virgin Birth is an important part of Christian doctrine. The Virgin Birth is shown to be in vital connection (1) with the sinlessness of Christ, (2) with "His uniqueness as a new creative beginning in humanity," and (3) with "His Incarnation as Son of God. In this part of his subject, the author is particularly at home; the last two lectures are probably the best in the course. Dr. Orr insists judiciously upon the impossibility of maintaining a spiritual miracle in the life of Jesus while rejecting a physical one; grant anything supernatural in Jesus at all, and the *a priori* objections to the Virgin Birth vanish. Thus becomes evident the bearing which the question of the harmony of the Virgin Birth with other Christian doctrine has even upon the question of fact. The real believer in the Incarnation must be favorably disposed towards the historical evidence for the Virgin Birth. And this logical necessity has been evident from the history of criticism; for as Dr. Orr insists in his first lecture, those who have denied the Virgin Birth have with scarcely any exceptions also denied the doctrine of the Incarnation.

The only criticisms that may be ventured upon have reference not to the argument itself but to details of its presentation. As already pointed out, there are certain faults of arrangement, which may, however, have been made inevitable by the necessarily arbitrary division

into lectures. Again, the author has at times, perhaps, gone unnecessarily far in the direction of popularizing the discussion; for an audience of intelligent laymen, however little able to give reasons for its judgment, can usually appreciate the quiet dignity of scholarly exposition of which Dr. Orr has shown himself to be a master.

Such criticisms affect not the content but merely the form of the book, and the fact that the reviewer has recourse to them is really one more testimony to the value of the work. Dr. Orr has performed an important service to the dissemination of sound scholarship; and his comprehensive defence of the Virgin Birth may be expected to bring conviction to many in the wide circle to which the publication of the lectures in book form gives him access.

In the Appendix, Dr. Orr gives summaries of a number of papers on the general subject of the Virgin Birth, which were secured by Dr. W. W. White, of the Bible Teachers' Training School, New York. The writers of the papers include a considerable number of the most eminent Biblical scholars of Europe. They are as follows: Sanday, Ramsay, Box, Addis, Knowling, Garvie, H. W. Robinson, Zahn, B. Seeberg, Bavinck, Doumerge, Moule, Griffith-Thomas, Cowan, Joseph Jacobs, I. J. Peritz, Hirsch, Oussani. Dr. Orr has performed the task of summarizing as well as it could be done, chiefly by quoting longer or shorter extracts; but it would have been better (supposing the space to be limited), had some of the papers been printed in full rather than extracts from all of them. Dr. Orr is fully conscious of the limitations of the appendix, and expresses the hope that the papers may be published *in extenso*. This hope we share, since it is evident from the summaries and from the eminence of the authors that many of the papers are of great value.

On p. viii, line 12, read Mark xvi, instead of Mark xiv; on p. 35, footnote, 1901, instead of 1891; on p. 70, line 6, 4 B. C., instead of 4 A. D.; on p. 173, line 14, Völter, instead of Völker; on p. 178, footnote, omit "Das"; on p. 259, the first three lines should follow the fourth.

Princeton.

J. GRESHAM MACHEN.

HISTORICAL THEOLOGY.

DIE ABENDMAHLSFRAGE IN IHRER GESCHICHTLICHEN ENTWICKLUNG. Ein Versuch ihrer Lösung. Von KARL GEROLD GOETZ, Pfarrer, Lic. Theol., Privatdozent in Basel. 8vo.; pp. ix., 311. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung. 1904.

DIE HEUTIGE ABENDMAHLSFRAGE IN IHRER GESCHICHTLICHEN ENTWICKLUNG. Ein Versuch ihrer Lösung. Von KARL GEROLD GOETZ, Pfarrer, D. Theol., Privatdozent in Basel. Zweite, durch ein dreifaches Register vermehrte Ausgabe. 8vo.; pp. x., 328. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung. 1907.

The early appearance of a second edition of this important work, advises us how little it can be neglected. To the new edition a very

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.