

The Princeton Theological Review

JULY, 1920

THOMAS GUTHRIE

Wandering one day down Princes Street in Edinburgh, somewhere between the Scott monument and the National Gallery, and not far from the memorial to Scottish soldiers who fell in the Boer War, I came upon a bronze group of three figures. In the center stood a tall man, massive head and benign countenance. On either side of him, as if taking refuge from a pursuer who would do them harm, crouches a ragged street urchin. In striking contrast with the many memorials on that famous street to Scotland's heroes on the crimson field of war, her philosophers, scientists and poets, this fine statue commemorates the life and ministry of a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Thomas Guthrie. In the burying ground at the other end of the street there is a statue of Abraham Lincoln erected by Scottish Americans who fought in the Civil War. At the feet of Lincoln cowers a slave; but his fetters have been struck from him, and Lincoln reaches down his great hand to lift the negro to his feet. Both monuments, that to Thomas Guthrie, with the ragged boys about him, and that to Lincoln with the negro at his feet, suggest the greatness that is also goodness. Perhaps the monument to Guthrie makes the deeper appeal; there is less of the formal and grandiose in art about it, and, although it does not always use him well, all the world loves a boy. A fitting memorial, one would say—and not far from the model of the Gospels, where we see little children gathered about the feet of Jesus—for this minister of Christ to have the street Arabs associated with him in the sculptor's creation.

I commence with this account of the Princes Street memorial to Guthrie for the reason that that monument to

such or under ordinary circumstances be disallowed by, or would cause serious difficulty to, an open-minded, well-instructed man of science. It is really the scientific spirit that I wish to represent." Second, in the "explanation" which he proposes of specimen miracles. For example, the story of the floating axe-head in 2 Kings v. 1-7. What he desires to "explain," i.e., to explain away here, is just the floating of the axe-head; and the reason why he wishes to get rid of it is just that it is naturally impossible. Hence, while he admits the fact, he tries to account for it on natural grounds; viz, that the salt water of the Dead Sea is so dense that eggs will float on it. Eggs, however, are not axe-heads; and the Jordan, on the water of which the axe-head floated, is not the Dead Sea.

With the explanation we are not so much concerned, however, as with the conviction, the motive, back of it. It reveals the fact that Dr. Sanday has no further use for the Supernatural. He does not teach that nature is God, but he does teach that God confines himself to nature. Indeed, he accepts the awful consequences of this position. He rejects the virgin birth of our Lord and his literal bodily resurrection and his physical ascension (pp. 74 and 75).

While we are forced to make these strictures, we are glad to call attention to the excellence of the volume in other respects. It is marked by Dr. Sanday's well known simplicity and clearness of style, by rare caution, by ample knowledge, and by sweetness of spirit peculiar to himself; and to say this is to say much.

Princeton.

WILLIAM BRENTON GREENE, JR.

EXEGETICAL THEOLOGY

Christianity according to St. Luke. By the REV. S. C. CARPENTER, B.D., Fellow and Tutor of Selwyn College, Cambridge, Examining Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of Southwell. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1919. Pp. xii, 239.

Mr. Carpenter does not present any very distinctive account of the Lucan writings, but is inclined to regard with sympathy the observations of modern scholars of widely divergent tendencies. With regard to some things indeed—as, for example, the Lucan authorship of Luke-Acts—his mind is made up; but with regard to the exact degree of trustworthiness to be attributed to the New Testament narratives he is often in doubt. For example, at one point (p. 77) he is able to regard without sharp disfavor a rationalizing explanation of the feeding of the five thousand, which would regard "the real purpose of the distribution" as "what we would call 'religion,'" and would represent the event as "more like the Holy Communion than a regular meal" and "the portions distributed" as "very small"! Yet he accepts the fact of the Virgin Birth, though on doctrinal

rather than historical grounds—because of its congruence with the doctrine of the incarnation. In this connection (pp. 160, 161), Mr. Carpenter quotes with approval a passage of DuBose, which insists that Jesus Christ was not an “individual human person”—as He would have been if He had been son of Joseph and Mary—and that “it was not one man but humanity that He was.” Here our author involves himself in a dangerous and erroneous form of speculation. Compare p. 218.

The “churchmanship” of Mr. Carpenter at times assumes a form distasteful to Protestant ears, not only in details like the incidental use of the phrase “Our Lady” as referring to the mother of the Lord, but also in the depreciation of the authority of Scripture in the supposed interests of the Church. Thus, in opposition to “the attempt to produce conversions to Christianity by distributing copies of the Bible, even of the Gospels,” Mr. Carpenter gives the following account of the “Apostolic procedure,” as the procedure which ought still to be followed now (pp. 9, 10). “The baptized child receives, as formerly the adult inquirer received, some elementary Christian teaching about God and Christ and being good. This is given either by the priest at the Little Catechism, or by the teacher in the Sunday Kindergarten, or by the mother at home. Sometimes by all three. But in any case by the Church. As soon as he knows some prayers, and a hymn or two like ‘I love to hear the story’ he is taken to the Church, and is introduced to Christian worship. ‘Who is that?’ ‘The priest.’ ‘What is he doing?’ ‘He is standing at the altar, and doing what our Lord says we are to do.’ Then, presently, comes the reading of the Gospels. That is the true Christian order of events.”

But we are glad to find in Mr. Carpenter’s book, despite his “churchmanship” some good observations (p. 206) about the danger of tending “to substitute the Church for Christ,” and of following Professor Murray in resolving Christianity into “membership of a community.” Our agreement extends also to what Mr. Carpenter says in opposition to the current desire of believing “more than one religion at the same time” (p. 223), and in opposition to the “flamboyant ‘patriotism,’ to which, for emphasis, the name of God has been attached” (p. 224).

Princeton.

J. GRESHAM MACHEN.

The Rival Philosophies of Jesus and of Paul. Being an Explanation of the Failures of Organized Christianity and a Vindication of the Teachings of Jesus, which are shown to contain a Religion for All Men and for All Time. By IGNATIUS SINGER, Author of “Some Unrecognized Laws of Nature,” “Problems of ‘Life,’” etc. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. Ruskin House, 40 Museum Street, W.C. Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company. 1919.

Mr. Singer is totally ignorant of the subjects which he undertakes to treat, but at the same time convinced of the total ignorance of all