

discounted by the fact that I know of nothing in any language which deals with it better. There is the historical difficulty. The flux of experience and the finality of any ideal seem to be irreconcilable. There is also the religious one. Were the goal of history attained, the meaning Christianity gives it, as having an eternal purpose of God both in it and beyond it, would cease to apply. Also the liberty of the children of God, as well as the liberty of the enquiring spirit, forbids us to live under the authority of the past. Yet in practice it is impossible to come in touch with the spirit of Christ at all without realizing something absolute, something which is precisely the rock on which we can stand in the flux of things and have the spiritual outlook which has a right to judge all things and be judged of no man. To attempt to sum up in a phrase all that Canon Streeter says on the subject would manifestly involve grave omission and possibly distortion, but one part at least of his contention may be summed up by saying that Jesus is so perfectly the Son that we have in him an absoluteness of relation to the Father from which progress can alone be made securely in the knowledge and service of God and his purpose in man, an absoluteness

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management, and sometimes the argument only conceals unexamined fashions of thinking. To deal with them is necessary; but one is apt to come down in doing so, from the mount of vision. In the main, however, the essay even if it does not successfully accomplish what the writer sets out to do, at least gives help greatly wanted.

The Christian Experience of Forgiveness, by H. R. MACKINTOSH, D.Phil., D.D., Professor of Theology, New College, Edinburgh. (Nisbet & Co., Ltd., London, 1927.)

THIS is a theological treatise in the fullest sense of the word, a work of solid learning, painstaking thought, systematic exposition, and carefully pondered style. It may be laboured but is always sustained, and if it errs, it is in eloquence, not in expansiveness. In these days when men can write a discussion on any conceivable problem *currente calamo*,

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and in the lucidest 'newspaperese', the almost too painstaking form of the work is a grateful reminder of more quiet and patient days, before men had had the pace set for them by the motor-car. It deals with the wide scope of the history of the question, with the central theologies of it, with its ethical and its religious aspects, its personal and its social. And this is only preliminary to the main task of shewing that it is central to all understanding of the peace and power of Jesus Christ and in the understanding of all Christianity. Finally it relates the doctrine to the whole fullness of the Christian life and service and shews what it signifies for the Church and the Church for it.

In most ways the work is worthy of the learning of the writer and the labour which has been spent on it. No one can read it without being impressed by its somewhat austere religious spirit and without being stirred to a deep sense of what is at stake. There is the wealth of varied standpoints, which comes from not dealing with a theory but with a whole world of reality. There are many thoughts which will bear reflexion and expansion. For the preacher especially it is a challenge to be central in his preaching and a manifestation of the riches at his disposal if he will be, which ought to help him in following the apostles as a minister of reconciliation.

This kind of work naturally has the defects of its quality, though, so rare is the quality in these days, that it seems almost ungrateful to mention them, and many readers, perhaps most, will think them excellences, not defects. Moreover, disagreement is probably rather from a difference of race and temperament and general outlook than from any clear difference of opinion. The book has in a very high degree the quality of unctio. No utterance is really religious if devoid of it. Yet there is here something of a Celtic quality with which the ordinary Briton feels a little overwhelmed. With this goes a difference of feeling, which is very difficult to describe, but which suffuses the whole outlook upon life.

Thus Prof. Mackintosh naturally takes to Otto's awed holy; the other type instinctively shakes it off as a nightmare. Prof. Mackintosh revels in dogmatic forms, and in filling with his own meaning the ritual of phrases hallowed by orthodox use; the other suspects himself of unreality the moment he starts using them. Especially with a doctrine like forgiveness, any departure from simple statements seems a hazardous elaboration.

Nor are the difficulties the two types of mind feel the same. Prof. Mackintosh very easily thinks of God as just doing things; it is an essential part of the latter's idea of God that God is just another name for the ultimate real. Thus the problem of forgiveness is apt to be, for him, something exceptional that God does, while, for the other type

it is something which is just because God is what He is, and we have found it out.

This latter view makes only one condition of forgiveness, but it is a very comprehensive one, for it is just God. When the prodigal returns home he accepts what he had rejected, and his home-coming is his forgiveness, and his remaining there the abiding in its security and succour. All this Prof. Mackintosh has, and he says too that we must not divide when we distinguish. But, somehow, so simple a human everyday sort of business does not move happily in such heavy theological brocade. Yet it is a sort of essential ritual for those whom Prof. Mackintosh represents, without which religion would hardly be recognizable. Hence the importance of the phraseology of the older evangelicalism, even when, like 'atonement' and 'substitution', it is on other ideas than theirs. The work is very ably done; it does not surrender the author's position, and it gives a place to important truths. But, for all that, it a little suggests David in Saul's armour with his sling-arm not quite free to those whose ritual is different.

With the main line of thought there will be general agreement. But is the real difficulty in forgiveness either God's holiness, except in so far as it means that man is not having it, or the need of pardoning without corrupting? Do not both difficulties arise from confusing pardoning with condoning? This important distinction Prof. Mackintosh usually regards, but occasionally his argument depends on stepping from one into the other. As the essence of sin is hypocrisy, is not the essence of forgiveness such awakening of our trust in God's deliverance that we are no longer tempted to seek this refuge from Him? Anyhow, in the New Testament the difficulty to be overcome is all in us. Then from 'the law of a spirit made alive in Christ' the rest follows as everything does genuine conviction. From this Prof. Mackintosh does not really differ, yet in God commending His love, he hankers after something God has a great deal of difficulty in getting over. Now it makes all the difference whether Christ's death embodies this, or is the victory over the evil of the world which brings near to us the true nature of a pardoning and succouring God. Besides is not suffering too prominent and the victory of the Cross too little? The dying in weakness is to live in power. But whether this be the cause or not, somehow we do not reach the uplift of the New Testament, with the joy of the Lord our strength, and all things a new creation to work for our good.

At the same time Prof. Mackintosh's grave, serious, and even awed exposition may be of more value in our jaunty time, even because of this, which otherwise might be a limitation. He deals with the gravest matter in life gravely. He shews none of the cheapness of our sloppy hymns

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such as, 'nowhere is more kindly judgement given than up in heaven', and the 'heart of the eternal is most wonderfully kind', without a shadow of a hint that God is just reality and what He thinks is just what is, and what is has great need to be altered, and that the great problem is that nothing of it can be altered to profit except by God, and that even He can only alter it, by our own insight and consecration, to serve Him in the spirit and become His children. Whatever this book may fail to do, it does not fail to shew that this is central, decisive, all-important, a business of dealing with essential divine and human reality, without either sentimental unreality or legal fiction.

Systematic Theology, by WILHELM HERRMANN, translated by NATHANIEL MICKLEM and KENNETH SAUNDERS. (George Nelson & Unwin, Ltd., London, 1927.)

THIS volume consists of the notes for his course of lectures on Dogmatics made by Prof. Herrmann. They are, therefore, a synopsis of his general theological view. They were intended by him only for the purpose of lecturing and were never meant to be a book, yet they serve the purpose of a book both lucidly and connectedly. And so far at least as these qualities go the English rendering does them full justice. Not having the text by me I cannot say how far the rendering is close to the original, but it has the high merit that it does not smack of translation at all. So very few books have been rendered out of German into really readable English that the merit of this translation deserves the fullest and warmest appreciation.

To review the book adequately would require a full discussion of Herrmann's whole theological position, and behind that his relation to Ritschl. Nor is it possible to do anything in the way of summary, for the whole book is just summary. Nor is it necessary, because it is a short book not difficult to read, and every one interested in theology should read it for himself.

It consists of a shorter general part and a longer doctrinal. In the first part Herrmann explains his view of how he thinks Christianity is related to science, philosophy, and history. In the second part he deals systematically with the ideas involved in the Christian faith, the method being determined by shewing how the ideas spring from the root of faith. Thus we begin with overcoming the world by the faith created by God, proceed from that to the victory over sin; and only then deal with the historical facts and the doctrine of God. The Doctrine of the Trinity closes the whole as the final expression of monotheism. As the final expression of the Christian idea of salvation it would have been