

many atheists and agnostics among us. For science is opposed to religion. Science and religion, says Professor Stewart, cannot be reconciled. If we teach our children the facts of science when they are young and neglect to tell them stories, we are making it hard, perhaps we are making it impossible, for them ever to attain to a knowledge of a living personal God.

Now, without a personal God there can be no religion. This is religion, the recognition of a personal God with whom I, a person, have to do. But natural science denies a personal God. When natural science or metaphysics occupies itself with the idea of God, it always arrives at the conclusion

that God is not a person. The god of modern metaphysics is the Absolute; the god of modern science is Nature, and they are none the less impersonal that they are spelt with capital letters.

That is why science is opposed to religion. The God of religion is a personal God; the God of science is impersonal. Science cannot help itself. With all the will in the world it cannot find a personal God. For personality means portion. If there is one person in the universe called God, there are other persons in it called men. Therefore God is only a part of the universe. But how, asks science, can a God that is only a part of the universe be its Maker and Ruler?

## Professor Dods' New Book.

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DR. MARCUS DODS always writes genially and attractively, in an easy and agreeable style, with just a pleasant subdued colour, and in a way that none can fail to understand. He is always well informed, and has a special skill in weaving in apt quotations. He addresses himself to the general public, and makes it his object to carry the average man safely through the great transition of thought that is characteristic of our time. Those who trust to his mild and reasonable guidance are not likely to go far astray.

In the little volume before me he has undertaken to sum up in seven chapters, which were originally lectures, the present position of opinion in regard to the Bible. He has done this under the following heads:—'The Bible and other Sacred Books,' 'The Canon of Scripture,' 'Revelation,' 'Inspiration,' 'Infallibility,' 'The Trustworthiness of the Gospels,' 'The Miraculous Element in the Gospels.' I am not sure how far the reader will agree with me, but I am inclined to think that under the first, the third, and the last but one of

these heads the treatment is freshest and most interesting.

I may give just a few specimens of this treatment, which seem to me to be also noteworthy for their own sake. The following, I think, goes to the heart of the failure of Buddhism:—

'To subdue all desire was to become superior to life; and perfected triumph was to enter Nirvana, a state of passionless, apathetic, unmoved existence or non-existence. This was a view of life he could not possibly have taken had he believed in God, and his system fails because deeper even than the thirst for righteousness is the thirst for God' (page 8).

'I would be disposed to say that the two attributes which give canonicity are congruity with the main end of revelation and direct historical connection with the revelation of God in history' (p. 54).

'What is the infallibility we claim for the Bible? Is it infallibility in grammar, in style, in history, in science, or what? Its infallibility must be determined by its purpose. If you

<sup>1</sup> *The Bible: Its Origin and Nature*, by Marcus Dods, D.D. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1905. 4s. 6d.

say that your watch is infallible you mean as a timekeeper;—not that it has a flawless case, not that it will tell you the day of the month or predict to-morrow's weather' (page 151).

'Before we form any opinion about the Gospels, and even though we see much in them that we cannot accept, they set before us this unique figure—a figure far beyond the creative power of the writers, and carrying in it its own authentication, its own direct appeal to heart and conscience and reason. We need as little fear the nibblings of criticism as we fear the minute erosions of our shores by the ocean' (page 157).

'Too much may very easily be made of the distance in time between the events and their record. A second generation is sometimes spoken of as if it arrived all at once, and in a day displaced and abolished the first generation, like changing guard at a military post, or like the sudden displacement of day by night in the tropics' (p. 183).

'What, then, was our Lord's purpose in performing miracles? The answer is, He performed them not to convince people that He was the Messiah, the messenger and representative of God, but because He had that understanding of God's love and that perfect fellowship with God which made Him the Messiah. . . . But just because the primary purpose of the miracles was to give expression of God's mercy and not to prove our Lord's Messiahship, on this very account they can be appealed to as evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. The poet writes because he is a poet, and not for the purpose of convincing the world that he is a poet. And yet his writing does convince the world that he is a poet' (pages 225–227).

Thoughts like these seem to me to be really helpful. One of them is taken from the chapter on Infallibility; the main point, however, as it is formulated on page 137, is hardly stated with the writer's usual felicity. The awkwardness is due to the attempt to bring under one head the lesser fallibilities that are found in the Bible with the one great infallibility in the Person of Christ.

For myself, I should deprecate the antithesis that is drawn out in chap. ii. between the Romanist and the Protestant view of the Canon;

as though 'the Romanist accepts Scripture as the Word of God because the Church tells him so, and the Protestant accepts it as the Word of God because God tells him so' (p. 41; cf. 57, 58), in other words, because his conscience commends it to him. The verdict of the individual conscience is surely strengthened by having the support of a number of consciences; and that is, in the last resort, what the judgment of the Church comes to. Is it not better to try to find out the real principle that lies behind other people's beliefs than to foster our own self-complacency by treating our beliefs as so much better than theirs? The strength of the Protestant position lies, not in the fact that it is more securely founded, but rather in that, at some point in the chain, it implies more personal reality of apprehension. When Luther pronounced the Epistle of St. James 'an epistle of straw,' it was a subjective and rather hasty opinion, which as such was open to correction; but it did mean that he had a real understanding—not of St. James but of St. Paul.

We observe that the centre of gravity of Dr. Dods' book rests much more on the New Testament than on the Old, and in the New Testament specially upon the Gospels. The reasons for this are very intelligible, when the point of view is so essentially practical. At the same time there would be something to be said for the opposite method; because, historically, the idea of inspiration and of a 'sacred book' attached to the Old Testament before it attached to the New, and therefore we must study it in the Old Testament if we would really trace it back to its origin. It is also, I suppose, in connexion with the Old Testament that the greatest advances in recent thought have been made.

I have said that the seven chapters of the book were originally delivered as lectures. It is explained in a preliminary note that these were given under the 'Bross Foundation,' which is associated with Lake Forest College, Illinois, U.S.A. It may be rather tantalizing to British scholars to gather from the same note that a munificent prize of 6000 dollars (roughly = £1200) is offered for competition for works of apologetic theology coming under the heads laid down in the Trust, the MSS of which, however, must be sent in by 1st June of the present year. Unless their attention has been called to this announcement before, it is to be feared that our countrymen will not have very much chance of competing.