

Except a few phrases in the obsolete Canons of 1604, there is no real bar to friendly intercourse between Churchmen and Nonconformists. The Church of England is so enormously the largest body, containing more than half of the population, that, if the other bodies will only be content to leave her alone to do her work, she can heartily bid them God-speed in their religious efforts for the people, and join with them cordially in many a philanthropic and religious movement for the benefit of the great Master, of the unfortunate, the godless, and the indifferent.

WILLIAM SINCLAIR.

Reviews.

Religions of Primitive Peoples. By D. G. BRINTON. G. P. Putnam's Sons, London and New York.

THIS is a book that we have read with a great deal of interest. The author's range of authorities is very wide, his style is clear and attractive, and there is a tone of scrupulous respect maintained which will cause the reader, even if he dissent from certain remarks, no irritation at statements so reverentially made. We do not say—far from it—that the book is one which commands our assent altogether, but there is nothing in it to rouse rancour or give unnecessary pain.

In 1891 a committee was formed in America to promote the historical study of religions. Lecturers were selected to give courses of lectures, which were afterwards to be printed, on some religion or phase of religion. They were intended to be popular, somewhat after the style of the Hibbert Lectures in England; we do not know the particular denomination, if any, under whose auspices they fall. The first series was published in 1896, and the lectures composing it were by Professor Rhys Davids, on "Buddhism." The volume before us is the second in the series. Dr. Brinton is a well-known American ethnologist, and a Professor in the University of Pennsylvania.

Beginning with the methods and definitions of a scientific study of primitive religions, he next investigates their origin and contents, and further, what is capable of more exact research, the expression of primitive religions in word, in object, and in rite. A final survey of the lines of development of these primitive systems closes the book.

We cannot, of course, follow Dr. Brinton through the whole of the line of his arguments, and we can only refer a reader to the infinite variety of allusions and quotations with which he supports them, but mention may be made of certain leading facts, to which he invites particular attention.

There is a striking similarity in primitive religious ideas. We have all recognised this. Wherever we turn to the earliest and simplest religions of the world, we find them dealing with nearly the same objective facts in nearly the same subjective fashion, the differences being due to local and temporal causes. How is this to be explained? By tradition, say some. By the relationship or historic connection of early peoples, is said again. But it would seem that the true answer lies in the fundamental

unity of the human mind and of its processes. There is no doubt that modern psychology is impressed with the reflection that the laws of human thought are very rigid. Indeed, if psychology is to be anything of a science at all, mental processes must of necessity be fairly uniform, or else they could not be used for scientific purposes. They are—to such an extent that an eminent writer lays it down as a fundamental maxim of ethnology that “we do not think; thinking goes on within us.” And while we are not disposed to underrate the influence of tradition, we think that this unity of action of man’s intelligence, which is, of course, due to the arrangement of the Almighty, is a reasonable and satisfactory explanation of the remarkable coincidences and similarities that we notice in primitive cults.

Again: to what particular mental process is man’s universal belief in a Supreme Being due? For—and we note it gladly—our author is one of those who strongly assert that there never has been a single tribe, however rude, which has been shown to be destitute of religion under some form. We know that some modern writers have asserted the contrary of this, for instance, Herbert Spencer and Sir John Lubbock, and therefore it is of value to have such a strongly-expressed opinion as that of our author. He says, alluding to the statement that any tribe has ever been devoid of some form of worship and belief: “I speak advisedly when I say that every assertion to this effect, when tested by careful examination, has proved erroneous.”¹ This being so—and, indeed, most writers outside the French school, with its outspoken advocacy of atheism and materialism, will admit it—to what is this universal belief in a God, this pervading religiosity, due?

Those who have read Mr. Kidd’s book on “Social Evolution,” famous by now, will remember, perhaps, his discussion of the subject.² His final remark is that religion is a form of belief, providing an ultra-rational sanction for conduct. When allowance is made for the peculiar mental colouring of each writer, it seems to us that their explanations come to very much the same thing. We quote Dr. Brinton, who says:

This universal postulate, the psychic origin of all religious thought, is the recognition, or, if you please, the assumption, *that conscious volition is the ultimate source of all Force.* It is the belief that behind the sensuous, phenomenal world, distinct from it, giving it form, existence, and activity, lies the ultimate, invisible, immeasurable power of Mind, of conscious Will, of Intelligence, analogous in some way to our own; and—mark this essential corollary—*that man is in communication with it.*³

It seems to us that this is very true and very important. All mankind is unconsciously obliged to think that there is a Supreme being. Who obliges him to think this? According to his own laws of thought, there must be some conscious originator of this mental force, and that is surely God Himself. It is, to say the least, a fair inference that this universal hypothesis is not a waste product of inexplicable energy, but a germ of higher things deliberately instilled by an Almighty. In other words, the crude beliefs and depraved yearnings of primitive races share with the Christian religion, though in a degree rudimentary and unspeakably less developed, the universality of Divine influence. Christianity holds the last whisper of revelation: “What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you.”

In many other ways Dr. Brinton supports assertions that distinctly make for orthodox religious belief, although, as we have said, he refrains himself from drawing any inferences from the facts he adduces. To take one point. It is often asserted that Negro races are incapable of

¹ P. 30.

² “Social Evolution,” p. 89, etc.

³ P. 47.

profiting by Christianity because of a low mental and moral development. Dr. Brinton controverts this. In his opinion, savage children, when taken quite young, and brought up in civilized surroundings, "display as much aptitude for the acquisition of knowledge, and as much respect for the precepts of morality, as the average English or German boy or girl."

In another direction Dr. Brinton stoutly upholds mankind's belief in a future state. The idea of Life is anterior in the human mind to that of Death. The savage does not know death as a natural occurrence. His language has no word meaning "to die," but only "to be killed." Ancestor worship, funeral sacrifices, even the fear of ghosts, all testify to man's strong belief that the soul lives after the body has passed. Dr. Brinton mentions a mummy of a woman that he saw, one of the cliff-dwellers of Arizona, holding in her arms the body of her babe, which had been strangled with a cord, still tightly stretched round its little neck. Plainly, he remarks, the sympathetic survivors had reflected how lonely the poor mother would be in the next world without her babe, and had determined that its soul should accompany hers.

We cannot follow the author far into his long and complex, though very clear and orderly, series of arguments. The picture he presents of primitive tribes vainly yearning after the Unknown God, and dumbly looking around, like dull, half-witted people, for the author of their existence and their homes, is full of pathos. We think, too, that his statements and inferences are all the more valuable, because they are confined to the purely scientific method of treatment, and do not seek either to gainsay or to buttress the statements of revealed religion. Indeed, on his own showing, he would be unable to combine both. The fundamental difference between the laws of religious thought and scientific thought consists in the fact that they lie in different departments of the mind. The former dwell in the "sub-limital consciousness"; the latter in conscious mental effort. All psychologists recognise the distinction between these two powers of the mind. Sub-consciousness is the unperceived labour of our minds, the fruit of the stored-up impressions and gains of conscious effort. "The most complex mechanical inventions, the most impressive art-work of the world, even the most difficult mathematical solutions, have been attained through this unknowing mechanism of mind."¹ This is the province of religion, the sphere of man's unaided religious thought. And where Reason fails to guide and Science is paralyzed, because it is not her atmosphere, her *milieu*, Revelation steps in, and God directs the gropings of the hauds that He has taught to stretch out after Him.

W. A. PURTON.

THE INTERNATIONAL CRITICAL COMMENTARY.

A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians. By Rev. T. K. ABBOTT, B.D., D.LITT. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark. 1897. Price 10s. 6d.

A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and Philemon. By M. R. VINCENT, D.D., of New York. (Same publishers.) 1897. Price 8s. 6d.

The aim of Dr. Abbott's commentary, being primarily philological, is, we are told in the editor's brief preface, "to ascertain with as great precision as possible the actual meaning of the writer's language. The main object which Dr. Vincent has had in mind in writing his notes has been "to exhibit St. Paul's thought in these two letters." And, accord-

¹ P. 54.

ingly, "to this end all comment . . . has been directed." It is, of course, quite impossible in the brief space at our command to attempt anything approaching to a detailed notice of these two elaborate and learned works; but we should be less than just if we did not bear testimony to the general excellence of the commentaries. The various cruces both of criticism and exegesis are handled with great skill and fulness; the introductions are admirably concise, and both volumes are supplied with good indices.

It is, perhaps, inevitable in any case, but more particularly so in view of the recent correspondence in the *Guardian* called out by the publication of Archdeacon Gifford's fine and scholarly treatise on the problem of the Incarnation, that we should turn to that *locus vexatus* of modern criticism, Phil. ii. 7—*αὐτὸν ἐκίνησεν*. Dr. Vincent's treatment of the passage is brief, but thoroughly convincing. His elaborate excursus on Phil. i. 1 ("Bishops and Deacons") is most careful, and deserves a thorough study. The editor's bibliographical knowledge is wide, and he does not appear to have overlooked points of real value in the commentaries of previous writers.

Dr. Abbott's commentary is, perhaps, one of the most thoughtful and exhaustive pieces of work which have yet been done in connection with the Pauline writings; it will assuredly rank with Sanday and Headlam's commentary on the *Romans* (in the same series) as a masterpiece of erudition, in its own province. The critical notes are particularly useful. An excellent example of Dr. Abbott's thoroughness is furnished by his notes on Ephesians ii. 14 (where he is half disposed to adopt V. Soden's view of a difficult passage).

Needless to say that, typographically, these two volumes are everything that can be desired, even by the most exacting of readers.

The Secret of Hegel; being the Hegelian System in origin, principle, form and matter. By J. HUTCHISON STIRLING, LL.D., Foreign Member of the Philosophical Society of Berlin; First-appointed Gifford Lecturer (Edinburgh University, 1888-90). New Edition, carefully revised. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd. London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co. 1898. Price 16s. Pp. lxxiii, 751.

At last, and after the lapse of all but a third of a century, Dr. Stirling has allowed his celebrated work to see the light in a second and revised edition. That a book of such magnitude, such profundity, and such difficulty, should have attained the honours of a second edition—the first has long been out of print and exceedingly scarce—is a notable fact in itself, and, though it must inevitably fall out that this work will not make a stir in the literary world, after the fashion of the latest novel by the latest literary lion, nevertheless, among those who have patience to think and study it will assuredly be welcomed with deep and lasting satisfaction.

Originally published as far back as 1865, this book is, literally, the *fons et origo* of nearly every important contribution to philosophy in England from that day to this. *The Secret of Hegel* is the vast quarry from which all who have sought to understand the problem of metaphysical inquiry in its fulness and significance have digged. That is saying a great deal; but it is no more than the plain truth. When Dr. Stirling wrote, in 1865, his ever-memorable preface to the *Secret*, it may safely be averred that the inner history of German philosophy, the vital pulse of German thought, the real root of the whole matter—in its philosophical import—was unknown, untouched, unreachd. Sibree's rendering of Hegel's *Philosophy of History* was, perhaps, the only book which even pretended to make the thinking of the German master available for English readers, and Sibree's translation must be pronounced a somewhat unsatisfactory

performance. The kernel of the Hegelian dialectic—nay, the accurate meaning of that dialectic itself—remained a mysterious intangible entity, until the *Secret of Hegel* appeared. The world was astonished, and, at first, unconvinced; for the book was hard, and the matter wholly remote from the common pabulum of our insular consciousness; but it won its way, little by little, and may fitly be described as the intellectual ancestor of such first-rate performances as Wallace's edition of the *Logic of Hegel* (1874), Caird's *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* (1880), and the Introductions contributed by Green to his admirable recensions of the *opera majora* of Hume.

It is no intention of mine in this brief notice of a remarkable, and, indeed (for English-speaking people), epoch-making work, to touch upon any of the thousand and one speculative interests that crowd in upon one as one turns the pages of the revised and improved *Secret of Hegel*. The book is, we are informed, "unabridged," but, without specifying further, pp. 32 to 36 in the *old* edition, and footnotes not a few, appear to have taken to themselves wings, for there is no trace of them in the *new*—at least, in their original position. The one fault in the volume—a fault which it shares with its two-volumed precursor—lies in its lack of index; but perhaps Dr. Stirling may see his way to supply the omission in the copies of the work yet unsold.

To one who has striven to comprehend, in some sort, the meaning of philosophy in its entirety, and to find in its highest fulfilment the reflection of the thought of God in the secular movements of the world-spirit, the value of Hegel is immense, nor is it possible to overrate it. These are days when the fundamentals of human hope and Christian faith—to say nothing of the Christian experience of nineteen centuries—are confidently assumed to have been struck down, demolished by the ruthless hands of the Enlightened Ones, the party of Positive Science, the enemies of Superstition and the Follies of Mankind! A negative attitude, be it noted, eventuating in a Religion of Chaos—derelict of Time, forlorn and ineffectual. Now, by way of contrast, observe the actual position of Hegel, and his forerunner, Immanuel Kant. To quote Dr. Stirling's own emphatic declaration (Preface, new ed., p. xxii): "It is the express mission of Kant and Hegel to replace the *negative* of that party [*i.e.*, the Apostles of the new Aufklärung] by an *affirmative*: or Kant and Hegel—all but wholly directly both, and one of them quite wholly directly—have no object but to restore Faith—Faith in God, Faith in the immortality of the Soul and the freedom of the Will, nay, Faith in Christianity as the revealed Religion—and that, too, in perfect harmony with the Right of Private Judgment, and the Rights, or Lights, or Might of Intelligence in general."

E. H. BLAKENEY.

Short Notices.

Heart Cheer for Home Sorrow. Edited by CHARLES BULLOCK, B.D.
Third edition. Home Words Office, 7, Paternoster Square, E.C.
Price 1s.

THE adequacy to its purpose of this small compilation of thoughts in prose and verse is attested by the fact that a third edition has been required. Monsell's "Soon, and for Ever," and Bonar's "Thy way, not mine," and "Tears," are a sufficient indication of the lines upon which the selection has been made. The book is well printed, and deserves commendation.