

kingdom all things that cause stumbling and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire : there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Again, in taking leave of His disciples at the Last Supper, our Lord said, " I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom " (Matt. xxvi. 29).

The kingdom of the Father is but another name for that " far-off, grand event " which we all long for—the entering upon that future stage of life in which all our loftiest ideals shall be realized, the life that is life indeed.



A New Book on the Gospels.¹

BY THE REV. CANON GIRDLESTONE, M.A.

A **N**OTHER book on the most fascinating of topics, the Gospels, written by a lay theologian who is well known to all ordinary Biblical students by his Syriac lore, and by the fact that he combines in himself the ancient and modern spirit. Professor Burkitt is a frank and suggestive writer, who deals with serious topics with a certain airiness of style, but without real irreverence. He keeps his knowledge well in hand, and has plenty in store, but treats speculation, his own and other people's, as provisional, not final or infallible. If anyone does not mind having his deepest convictions torn up by the roots, pruned, and cheerfully put back again, he will read this book with interest, though often startled and sometimes shocked.

The best thought in the book, and one often impressed on the reader, is that Christ is everything, and that to have Him as " a living, bright reality " is the secret of Christianity now, as always. The Gospel is not intended to introduce us to a code of conduct, but to introduce us to Jesus Christ. " It is the great charm of Christianity that its innermost doctrine is incarnate in the person of its Founder." This is really the solution of all the puzzles of the Gospels. The writers were engaged in recording what Professor Burkitt calls (p. 150) " the common memory of the first circle of disciples." It would have been helpful if he had developed this thought instead of perpetually running away into discussions of sources. As we read his strong references to " the Christ of history " our mind goes back to Young's notable book on

¹ " The Gospel History and its Transmission," by F. C. Burkitt, M.A., Norrisian Professor of Divinity, Cambridge. T. and T. Clark. 6s. net.

the subject fifty years old, and to Isaac Taylor's "Restoration of Belief" of the same date. There is something in the Gospels totally unlike the other remains of early Christian literature. The difference of spirit, as our author says, is unmistakable, and we take knowledge of the Evangelists that they have been with Christ. Morally, ethically, spiritually, the Synoptic Gospels are in the same place. We cannot doubt that the common impression which they present of the way in which our Lord spoke to learned or unlearned is based on true historical reminiscences (pp. 207-217).

Professor Burkitt, with excellent good sense, brushes aside the critical method of cutting up integral books into small fragments. He is inclined to accept St. Luke as the author of the Third Gospel, and to regard Josephus' testimony to Christ as genuine. Miracles appear to be no serious stumbling-block to him. He wonders, indeed, that if they occurred they did not produce a more lasting result on people's minds; but the reason lay in his hand—viz., that modern scientific ideas were then non-existent. He ventilates the idea that we owe to Marcion the beginnings of a New Testament canon; but probably we really owe it to the sanctified common-sense of Christendom. But we must not be tempted away from the main argument of the book to discuss this question.

Professor Burkitt holds, with many other modern writers, that St. Mark gives us the primary Gospel narrative, that St. Matthew doctors it up and makes room in it for samples of the Lord's teaching, that St. Luke does the same, giving the teaching in a somewhat more historical order, and prefacing the whole by his first two chapters. It is surprising that the writer makes so little of the strong testimony to the fact that St. Matthew's Gospel was originally written in Hebrew. In accordance with this fact the translator (or, as he was called in former days, the "interpreter") would render the book as a whole, and especially the Old Testament quotations in it, by the light of the familiar Septuagint. It seems a pity, also, that St. James's Epistle was not referred to in discussing St. Matthew, and that the subject of quotations (of which there are 600 from the Old Testament to the New) was not dealt with a little more scientifically.

Speaking generally, Professor Burkitt strikes us as not "Jewish" enough. He underestimates the power of the Hebrew memory (p. 145), especially when taking in words such as *never man spoke*. It is true that many things seemed forgotten which afterwards rose up, and this is often touched upon by the Evangelists. Their minds were like palimpsests, and the Spirit brought all things to their remembrance. He refers to the Talmud (p. 66) but not to the Targums, notably those of Jonathan Ben Uzziel, which give the best Jewish thought of the Christian era. He seems to forget that, whatever St. Luke was in nationality—and the point is still *sub judice*—St. John was a Jew—a monotheist in the sense of true Old Testament monotheism, not in the Unitarian sense—and that though he probably wrote his Gospel and his first Epistle (which is a practical application of it) in his extreme age, yet he was not a man lightly to invent speeches and to fabricate narratives in order to make his glorious Master teach Johannine doctrine.

We confess that Professor Burkitt's treatment of St. John seems to us deplorable. In the first place, he fails to realize, or at any rate to express,

what is one of the most remarkable features in all the Gospels—namely, that all our Lord's teaching in them is pre-Christian. The Lord lived in a transition age, and He spoke accordingly. Whilst essentially "the Teacher," and speaking with authority as from God, there was much which had reference to what was just about to happen—viz., His death, resurrection, ascension, and the Pentecostal manifestation, all of which happened within the compass of seven weeks. The Evangelists exercise extraordinary reserve and self-control. They hardly call Jesus "Christ." They are not Petrine or Pauline in the colouring they give to the Lord's teaching. And how is it with St. John? He, more than any of the others, puts notes in his Gospel. These notes are brief comments and Christian explanations of what the Lord said and did. They are readily discernible, and are to be distinguished from the pre-Christian record contained in the text.

Another thing has to be remembered about St. John. No one doubts that he came last of the four Evangelists, and that he must have been acquainted with one or other of the three, or at any rate with the subject-matter of the current preaching which they represent. Two questions must constantly have been discussed with Jewish adversaries. One was this: Considering that Jerusalem was the headquarters of Judaism, and that the Messiah was to be in some sense King of the Jews, how was it that apparently Jesus taught so little there, and almost confined His work to Galilee? The other was this: If Jesus did the number of mighty works which were ascribed to Him, if He was so excellent in life and teaching, how was it that the main body of the Jews of His day refused to believe in Him? To these questions St. John largely addresses himself, and his Gospel is the result.

Professor Burkitt seems to undervalue the testimony to the traditional authorship of the Fourth Gospel, chiefly because he regards it as incompatible with St. Mark's outline of history. St. Mark, he says, is silent about the raising of Lazarus "because he did not know it" (p. 223). We are familiar with this line of (?) argument, but surely it is unworthy of the writer. There is a definite historic framework in St. John, and this narrative formed an integral part of it. Each writer had the difficult task of selection from a great mass of material, and the Spirit of God, who is the Spirit of Truth, guided them. The case is somewhat similar to that of Chronicles compared with parts of Samuel and Kings.¹ We may not always detect the *grounds* of selection, but the *fact* is plain.

We have only space to add a word or two about St. Luke. A careful analysis of the preface shows that the Gospel is by no means "a private venture" (p. 274). The word εδοξε ("it seemed good") has special force in the light of such passages as Acts xv., 22, 25, 28. St. Luke had followed the whole history from the beginning accurately. He wished Theophilus to be absolutely certain of the truth. It had been committed to him (i.e., to St. Luke) by men who were both eye-witnesses and also in the responsible position of ministers of the Word. In order that the narrative might become systematic and orderly (καθεξῆς) the writer introduced, from such sources as he had just designated, the early narratives contained in the first two chapters. There is plenty of room for opinion on questions of minor detail;

¹ See "Deuterographs" (Oxford University Press).

but the substance of St. Luke, as that of the other three Evangelists, may be taken as absolutely certain.

This notice of Professor Burkitt's book may close with the words of another Professor, formerly Professor of Modern History at Cambridge. In W. Smyth's "Evidences of Christianity" (p. 182) we read: "There is no stamp of genuineness which an ancient writer can possibly exhibit, which we do not find in the books of the New Testament, nor has a single mark of spuriousness ever been pointed out."



Literary Notes.

"THE Substance of the Faith" sounds an interesting title. It is a volume which Sir Oliver Lodge has written, and will naturally find many readers, and should bear out the promise of the title. Sir Oliver is always fair in his view-point, and if only for that reason many will read his book, though they may differ from him so widely in most matters about which he always writes so fluently and picturesquely. The very title of this projected volume bespeaks controversy, and it is said to attempt an outline of a foundation for religion which is based upon science "preliminary to the special denominational teaching of the Churches." One of the chief items in the book is a suggested catechism specially adapted for general use. There should be a big demand for this volume.



We are to have a volume, which promises good reading, by the Rev. William Ewing, who is in charge of the Grange United Free Church, Edinburgh. He was for many years a resident at Tiberias, on the Sea of Galilee, and he has written an interesting account of his experiences, his travels, and his intercourse with the people east of the Jordan. It is to be called "Arab and Druze at Home," and will contain a large number of the many excellent photographs which Mr. Ewing has taken at different times during his sojourn in this part of the world. The work is really an effort to lift the veil which, to some extent, still rests upon Tiberias and the immediate vicinity. It seems almost a tragic circumstance that so historical a spot, a place which has had such a large measure of importance in the world's history, should now be so little known and so little thought of. Its scenery is beautiful, and "the crumbling memorials of grey antiquity and the life of villager and nomad to-day cast a mysterious spell upon the spirit."



Mr. Unwin has published a volume which is exceedingly attractive to readers of these pages. It is a well-illustrated romance of the mission-field, and is called "Coillard of the Zambesi: the Lives of François and Christina Coillard, of the Paris Missionary Society (1834-1904)." While it is in the greater part an important record of mission work, it also gives the reader a close view of many points, known and unknown, upon the native question in South Africa, as well as impressions of many other matters. There is also