

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

Notices of Books.

THE FAITH OF A CHRISTIAN MYSTIC. By T. Wilkinson Riddle. London : *Marshall Brothers, Ltd.* Price 2s. 6d. net.

THE TRUE MYSTIC. By Holden E. Sampson. London : *William Rider and Son, Ltd.* Price 2s. 6d. net.

Were it our intention to compare these books on terms of equality, we should owe an apology to Mr. Riddle, for the crudities of Mr. Sampson are not worthy to be placed upon the same shelf with his own reverent, sincere, and useful work. But by a momentary juxtaposition of two widely different productions we hope to elucidate a danger which besets earnest writers upon the subject of Mysticism.

Patience becomes rapidly exhausted with the pages of "The True Mystic." The impertinence of publishing a volume upon a topic which it is "impossible to define" and "impermissible to speak of"; the ignorance which assures us that "the Mystic has peculiar attributes . . . he does not exhibit his phenomena" (most peculiar that apparent things do not appear!); the nonsense which speaks of the Mystic with an escort of angels being "wafted upward to the planetary circles through the crowded regions of Hades," there to make discovery of the seemingly unearthly experiences of birth, baptism, passion, and death, as well as of resurrection and ascension; and the absurdity which perceives that "the solar systems of the cosmos operate from the sun to its outermost circles of sidereal systems"—entitle this amazing book to a prominent niche in the temple of unenviable notoriety in which are already displayed Mrs. Eddy's "Science and Health" and Mrs. Besant's "Theosophy." Surely Mr. Sampson might have spared the trouble of informing us that he is "free from the behests of the mind which he has renounced."

The word "mysticism" is the cause of much uneasiness. No two writers agree as to its use. A qualification is always necessary. One holds the "true," a second the "Christian," another the "sane" mysticism. Mr. Riddle quotes several definitions which differ about its nature. "We bear the image of God . . . the complete union of the soul with God" is a *theology*; "man is fallen away from God and craves to be again united with Him" is a *religion*; "the immediate feeling of the unity of the self with God" is a *sensation*; "the scholastic of the heart, the dialectic of the feelings," is a *philosophy*. The indiscriminate use of the term in all these senses causes in a writer obscurity, in the reader perplexity.

With the difficulty of clear utterance upon the soul's inner experience we can readily sympathize. We know the times "when arguments are stones rather than bread," when we would avoid "dialectical victories and the attempt to stone antagonists to death with texts." But Mr. Riddle is in error if he despises "the staff of a faultless logic," or claims to be "independent of those crutches upon which the Rationalist must lean." Even his clinging to "the teaching and narrative of the canonical Scriptures" will not save him from the hands of Mr. Sampson, unless the Bible be studied with the exercise of reason as well as of devotion. The intervening steps are numerous, but *facilis descensus*. Already there are clergy who teach of

previous existences and subsequent re-incarnations. What he wishes to say is that his reflections upon undoubted experiences have not yet resulted in the ability to explain intelligibly the intimate connection between cause and effect. This limitation, which in spiritual things exists for all of us, exposes "mystics" to the peril of supposing that they have enjoyed life-giving experiences to which others are uninitiated, and therefore to emphasize the necessity of diligence in seeking the Saviour at the expense of the complementary truth that He is diligently seeking the sinner. Carried beyond a certain point, a total loss of Christian truth ensues; but before this is reached, there comes a weakening of evangelistic power and a hazy advocacy of the Gospel. We could wish that such writers as Mr. Riddle would endeavour to use this difficult word as little as possible; the attempt to express themselves otherwise would help to clearness of perception.

We hope our criticism will not be misunderstood. Mr. Riddle's teaching is in all points identical with the old Evangelicalism. The form varies, the substance is unchanged. The altered terminology is difficult to follow and full of peril. But readers who can exercise due care and attention will find assistance to their spiritual life and an aid in their desire to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

THE SUPPLEMENT. A collection of hymns specially designed as a supplement to any hymn-book. London: *Morgan and Scott, Ltd.* Musical edition. Cloth boards, price 2s. 6d.

This collection contains many old favourites from "Sacred Songs and Solos," together with new ones. The book is intended to be used in conjunction with other hymnals, but we should have thought that most modern collections included such hymns as "Come, ye sinners, poor and needy," "Onward, Christian soldiers," "Jesus calls us o'er the tumult," "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah," "Come, Holy Spirit, come," "Take my life and let it be," "Oh, the bitter shame and sorrow," "Souls of men! why will ye scatter," "On the resurrection morning," "The roseate hues of early dawn," "I heard the voice of Jesus say," "The voice that breathed o'er Eden," "O perfect love," "Every morning the red sun," "Hushed was the evening hymn," "I love to hear the story," and others. The inclusion of these standard hymns unnecessarily swells a "supplement." The absence of any clearly-defined arrangement is a disadvantage, though to classify hymns of the subjective type is not an easy task. Still, no doubt there are many who will welcome this collection of mission hymns for occasional use.

PLAIN TALK ON WORLD PROBLEMS. By Gerald Purton. Melbourne: *George Robertson and Co.*

A vigorous attack upon Evolution. The author—who, by the way, is the son of the first Editor of the *CHURCHMAN*—points out some of the weak points in the theory, as well as the fact that Evolutionists are not by any means in general agreement. He has an intimate acquaintance with the literature of the subject, and has certainly made out a strong case. He also deals in a lucid and popular style with Genesis and the Higher Criticism, and Rationalism and Eugenics. The book has had a large circulation in Australia, and we are sorry not to see the name of an English publisher on such a useful handbook.

HYMNS ON THE CHURCH CATECHISM FOR SCHOOL AND HOME USE. By the Rev. James Silvester, M.A., Vicar of Great Clacton. London: *C. J. Thynne*. Price 1d.

This is a collection of fifty-two original hymns, together with a Metrical Litany. They are arranged under the headings of a suggestive exposition of the Catechism, while the tunes are either well known or easily learnt. We heartily congratulate Mr. Silvester, and recommend this little book to clergy and teachers.

[*.* Many reviews are unavoidably held over this month.]



Publications of the Month.

[Insertion under this heading neither precludes nor guarantees a further notice.]

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL.

BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PERSIA OF TO-DAY. By the Rev. Edward J. Clifton, M.R.A.S. (*Marshall Brothers, Ltd.* 3s. 6d.) The author was for six years a C.M.S. missionary in Persia, and these illustrations are mostly the result of personal observation. Subjects are arranged alphabetically, and the index of texts illustrated is excellent. A mine of wealth to preachers and teachers.

ANTICHRIST, PERSONAL FUTURE, THE. By E. H. Moggridge. (*Seeley, Service and Co., Ltd.* 6s. net.) The publication of this volume is an indication of the new interest in the study of prophecy awakened by the present war. It treats mainly of the coming Wicked One, his history, acts, and end, and will stimulate study and research. The tone is reverent and reasonable.

LORD OF ALL GOOD LIFE, THE. By Donald Hankey, Sergeant, Rifle Brigade. (*Longmans, Green and Co.* 2s. 6d. net.) Described as "a study of the greatness of Jesus and the weakness of His Church." The writer has some smart criticisms to offer upon men and things as they are, and "Protestants" and "Catholics" come equally under his lash.

ONE CHRIST, THE. By Dr. Frank Weston, Bishop of Zanzibar. (*Longmans, Green and Co.* 6s. net.) A new and revised edition of the Bishop's "inquiry into the manner of the Incarnation." Several material changes have been introduced into the volume, and in the Preface the Bishop assails with characteristic energy the Modernism of Liberal Churchmen. Apart from the Bishop's reactionary views about "holy Church," there is much—very much—in this volume for which Christian people may be truly thankful.

HOLY BIBLE, THE. Translated from the Latin Vulgate, and diligently compared with Other Editions in Divers Languages (Douay, A.D. 1609; Rheims, A.D. 1582). Published as revised and annotated by authority. (*R. and T. Washbourne, Ltd.* 3s. 6d.) Every effort to lead Roman Catholics to study the Bible—even their own Version—is to be commended, and this "New People's Edition" should certainly serve to stimulate diligent reading. Cardinal Bourne contributes a Preface, and the edition contains Bishop Challoner's notes (which give a "Roman" bias to the text, and especially to such passages as St. John vi. 54, 63 and 64), newly compiled indices, tables, and verified references, as well as Pope Leo XIII.'s memorable encyclical of November, 1893, on the study of the Holy Scriptures, and a new series of maps. The publishers are to be congratulated on the excellence of their production. The volume contains nearly 2,000 pages, and is beautifully printed upon special opaque Bible paper. This "really handy edition of the Catholic Bible" is said to be "the first which has originated in England for over half a century."

GOD'S WORD SUPREME. By Arthur H. Carter. (*Protestant Truth Society.* 1s. 6d. net.) A small and handy book of 132 pages, being testimony to the full authenticity of the Scriptures, and dealing trenchantly with the contentions of critics. Mr. Carter was formerly Organizing Secretary of the Bible League.

PLAIN TALKS ON THE PASTORAL EPISTLES. By Eugene Stock, D.C.L. (*Robert Scott.* 5s. net.) A really great book, which the profound scholar and the humble Bible