

Reviews of Books.

FORM AND CONTENT IN THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION. By W. Sanday, D.D., and N. P. Williams, M.A. London: Longmans, Green and Co. 6s. net.

Dr. Sanday contributed a paper at a meeting of the Churchmen's Union, which was printed in *The Modern Churchman* for June, 1915. Mr. Williams was provoked to a correspondence on Dr. Sanday's position, and the original paper with the full correspondence are here offered to the public.

The Lady Margaret Professor draws distinction between the Form and Content of the language of the Creeds. He perceives a relative rather than a real utterance of Truth. In reference to the Virgin-birth he does not deny, but also cannot affirm, the fact. "Imperious necessity compels us to loosen our hold upon it" (p. 8). "I do not think that a blank and unqualified denial—putting a 'not' into the Creed—is anywhere required of us" (p. 10). "I find myself able to subsume the idea of the Virgin-birth under the yet larger and more important idea of Supernatural Birth" (p. 9). These statements are full of interest. Two separable lines of discussion follow. (1) Is this a legitimate mode of interpretation, loyal to the Church? (2) Is the available evidence sufficient to refute this hesitancy upon the historical "fact"? Unfortunately these two independent issues are inextricably mixed in the book before us.

Urgency attaches to the first question. The progress of modern thought brings everything under review, and opinions change. Many instinctively feel that Dr. Sanday is transgressing permissible limits, and he is obviously uneasy. But if any one were to hold even more decidedly than Dr. Westcott of the passage John iii. 16-21 that "it is likely . . . that it contains the reflections of the Evangelist, and is not a continuation of the words of the Lord," is he to be excluded from the ministry of the Church of England, because therein he must say "Our Saviour Christ saith. . . . So God loved the world"? We all answer "No." But where can we find reasoned out the fundamental difference in the position of these great scholars? Mr. Williams gives us no help.

Nor upon the historicity of the Virgin-birth is the discussion satisfactory. There are many acute observations on either side: but, when Mr. Williams elected to take his stand upon the infallibility of the Church, the usefulness of the debate ceased. Arguing that all philosophy commences with certain assumptions or intuitions, he claims as an elementary postulate that the Ecumenical Councils were inspired in so full and plenary a manner by the Holy Spirit that the very words of their decrees are placed beyond dispute. But the intuitions of philosophy are inevitable, so inwrought in all human consciousness that no one doubts them: the assumption of Mr. Williams is by no means generally accepted.

In further illustration of the argument we may refer to his views upon miracles and Holy Scripture. Miracle is defined as "an event which involves the counteraction or neutralization of natural forces by causes belonging to the spiritual world" (p. 140). The cricket ball caught by the fieldsman is an instance of "a natural force being temporarily neutralized or counteracted by other forces set in motion by spiritual causes" ["a purely spiritual cause, namely, the will of Robinson to 'catch' Jones out"] (p. 131). How can this explain the miracle of the Virgin-birth? Again, the Church of England declares "The three Creeds . . . ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy

Scripture" (Art. VIII.). Mr. Williams, disputing Dr. Sanday's orthodoxy, says, "We appeal to the New Testament in support of the Creeds, *not* to prove them to ourselves (for they are already sufficiently guaranteed by our fundamental postulate of the infallibility of the Church) but to prove them to outsiders" (p. 89). The New Testament is of little use to the Christian, but "the Church, wherever she goes, carries about with her the New Testament in order to prove to the inquiring outsider . . ." (ditto)! Verily the kettle has not ceased to call the pan black.

A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF THE CYMRY from the earliest period to the present time. By the Rev. William Hughes, Vicar of Llanuwchllyn and Rural Dean. New edition. Revised. With 72 illustrations. London: *Elliot Stock*. 10s. net.

A charming and most interesting volume, appearing as it does at a most appropriate time. The first edition came out in 1894, when, as many of our readers will remember, Mr. Asquith was bringing in a Bill for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church in Wales. This edition, which won the cordial approval of Bishop Stubbs of Oxford, is very closely followed in the present issue. Mr. Hughes is well versed in the various incidents and details connected with the history of the Welsh Church in both ancient and modern times. He divides it into five periods as follows: I.—A.D. 200—450. The Period of the Roman Conquest. II.—A.D. 450—681. The Period of the Saxon Conquest. III.—A.D. 681—1295. The Saxon and Norman Periods to the Final Absorption of the Welsh Church in the English Church. IV.—A.D. 1295—1534. From the Period of the Final Absorption of the Welsh Church to the Period of the Reformation. V.—From the Period of the Reformation to the present time.

Although one cannot help noticing the just and natural pride which the author is bound to feel in the traditions and associations of his ancient Church, he nevertheless writes in a temperate and guarded style very far removed from the partisan or special pleader. Thus while showing the utmost interest in the names, dates, and localities of the early Welsh saints, a subject in which he is specially at home, he again and again rejects as improbable many of the incidents related of them even in cases where we should not have been sorry to have had them confirmed. All is written in a pre-eminently readable style, and whatever the period dealt with the book has a fascination of its own which makes it difficult to put it down. The account of Bishop Morgan in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and his struggles and difficulties in connexion with his translation of the Bible into the Welsh tongue is well told. The very accusations of his enemies, often Welsh people who feared that the translation would perpetuate the bi-lingual difficulty, caused him to be summoned into the presence of Archbishop Whitgift, who became his fast friend, helping him financially in his undertaking, without which assistance, as he himself stated, he would not have proceeded further than the five books of Moses. This is a remarkable instance of evil being overruled for good. It may be mentioned that Mr. Hughes is the author of a book entitled "Life and Times of Bishop William Morgan, the Translator of the Bible into the Welsh language," published by the S.P.C.K.

We see how very much the Church in Wales suffered from the fatal practice of the Hanoverian sovereigns, followed out from Walpole downwards until reversed by Gladstone, of appointing English-speaking bishops, ignorant of the native tongue, to Welsh sees. The early Welsh "Methodists" were almost to a man Churchmen at heart, and if properly handled might have

remained so. Even Nonconformists in Wales often speak of the Church as "Yr Hen Fam," or "the old Mother."

Apart from the interest which every Britisher ought to feel in the people of Wales as being the most ancient occupiers of the country and the most intensely British, all members of the Church of England should entertain the very highest affection for that portion of their Church which is able, as no other portion can, to trace back an unbroken continuity to Apostolic times.

Mr. Hughes is highly to be congratulated on his work, and it is to be earnestly hoped that it will be widely circulated and extensively read both in Wales and England.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST: An Essay in Interpretation. By the Rev.

S. P. T. Prideaux, B.D. London: *Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, Ltd.*
3s. net.

In his preface the author says: "The difficulties of the Apocalyptic element in the Gospels have long been a sore puzzle to many, and much light has recently been thrown upon its inner meaning and its perennial value by the world-catastrophe of the war." He has, he tells us, his own solution to offer. Later on he says, "All difficulties can be removed by an adequate appreciation of the Person of the Holy Spirit; their persistence and seriousness has been almost entirely due to men's failure in this appreciation." After such words as these what we find in the book itself is distinctly disappointing. The customary Advent hymns, even Charles Wesley's "Lo! He comes with clouds descending," are objected to. Men "feel that an intolerable burden is laid on them, an insult offered to their intelligence, even, and to the advance made by the human race in the apprehension and interpretation of reality, when they are asked to voice and to assent to the crude literalism and sensuous conceptions which previous ages have handed down." He admits "that the writers of these hymns, and the preachers who echo their sentiments, are but quoting or paraphrasing the words of our Lord and His Apostles as recorded in the New Testament." A great part of the work is occupied with comparing the words of our Saviour not only with the prophecies of the Old Testament but with such Apocalyptic literature as the Books of Esdras and of Enoch. He thinks our Lord took the current ideas as He found them and refined and worked up from them. After wading through a great many of these comparisons he comes to the conclusion that the promises of our Lord's return were largely fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, and that they are being fulfilled still. Of course this is to some extent true. We admit that the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was a coming but not the advent of the Saviour. The drift of the volume before us seems, in our opinion, to explain away, rather than to emphasize and bring into relief, the great hope of the Church as set forth by our Lord and His Apostles.

EARLY CHURCH CLASSICS. London: S.P.C.K. GREGORY OF NYSSA—LIFE OF ST. MACRINA, by the Rev. W. K. Lowther Clarke, B.D., formerly Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge. (1s. net.) This fascinating "life" has hitherto been inaccessible to all but scholars; it is now produced in a form that makes it available to all. Had this story been written in the Greek of the fourth century B.C. instead of that of the fourth century A.D., it would probably have been one of the 'world's classics. Macrina was the elder sister of Gregory of Nyssa. Losing her lover, early in life, she pledged herself to virginity that she might remain faithful to him; and, with her mother, devoted herself to the ascetic life. An interesting feature of the

record is "the double monastery"—the men presided over by a certain Peter, the women by Macrina. ST. IRENÆUS AGAINST THE HERESIES, by the Rev. F. R. Montgomery Hitchcock, M.A., D.D., formerly Donnellan Lecturer of Dublin University and Examining Chaplain to the Bishop of Maloe. (Two vols., 2s. each.) To an excellent introduction there follows a good translation of the principal passages of the great work of St. Irenæus, with admirable notes. Where the passages are not translated, a summary is added, the result being the substance of the whole treatise in a small and readable compass. A complete index, at the end of Volume II., is of great assistance for the purposes of reference. At a time when the Church is being threatened by the grotesque speculations of spiritualism, clairvoyance, Swedenborgianism, theosophy, and Christian Science, it is good to have at hand the arguments used of old by St. Irenæus against the progenitor of them all—Gnosticism.

THE STEPS OF A DISCIPLE. By G. M. Bevan and A. E. Brewin, Licensed Teachers of Theology. London: S.P.C.K. 1s. net.

This is a simple course of teaching on the Gospels, designed primarily for those who hope to work for the Church at home or abroad. It is a manual which ought to be helpful to all who have entrusted to them the task of teaching young people their religion. Much of the instruction given is scrappy and disjointed, and there is great need for systematic instruction such as is outlined in this book. The authors, we notice, always refer to the Holy Communion as the Eucharist. We have no quarrel with this title, but why not be content with the titles used in the Prayer Book? We are told that the title "Eucharist" is "one of the oldest" given to the Sacrament. It is worthy of note that of ten titles given by Waterland, the Eucharist stands *sixth*! Then on page 44 we read: "The words 'This do in remembrance of Me,' *possibly* [the italics are ours] have a sacrificial significance. The word 'remembrance' was used of certain offerings of the Levitical Law, with the sense, it would seem, of pleading with God to remember the worshipper and his needs." But the whole weight of the most accurate scholarship is against this interpretation which the authors think "possible"! Wordsworth, Ellicott, Alford, Westcott, Gore, Plummer, and Meyrick (in his "Doctrine of the Holy Communion") demolish the theory. We read again that "Christ is ever presenting before His Father His Sacrifice." But nowhere in the New Testament is our Lord said to be "pleading" or "offering" His Sacrifice; and Westcott says, "The modern conception of Christ pleading in heaven His passion, offering His blood on behalf of man, has no foundation in this Epistle"—Hebrews.

But taken as a whole the book is well suited to its purpose, and not only those who are looking forward to being public teachers but parents will find here much valuable assistance in teaching the truths of our Faith to young persons in an orderly way.

THE MATERIAL IN SUPPORT OF THE SPIRITUAL. Compiled by the Rev. S. W. Key, M.A., Vicar of All Saints, Ipswich. London: S.P.C.K. 1s. 6d. net.

This is another useful collection of illustrations, culled from many sources from Luther to Father Bernard Vaughan, and designed for the aid of preachers in their pulpit preparation. Those who can make use of compilations of this kind will find here much that will be helpful.