

The remedy which Jesus offers is in bringing us to God. 'I am the Way,' He said, 'no man cometh to the Father but by me.' He, who is Mediator, faces you with His promise that you may be the friend of God from this very moment. That is salvation; out of the whirl of unsubstantial things, which come and go, to attain to Him who is true. Sickness and loneliness can well be borne when that is attained. The tyranny of things visible is relaxed when that Invisible is revealed. Do you remember what Bunyan says of Christian when he came to the Cross?—'The burden loosed from his shoulders and fell from off his back into the sepulchre, and I saw it no more.' That is the experience of every man who comes to see how God takes upon Himself the task of setting His creatures right. I fear that much of our preference for Abanah is due to our human unwillingness to meet God. We have our own thoughts about Him, and we welcome new thoughts, with which we can play for a while and then lay them aside when serious matters of business intrude. But nakedly to see Him and 'to hear him as the heart heareth,' so that there is no room for doubt, to lie naked and open in

His sight, how many of us shrink from that? And that is what the Bible lives for; the end of Scripture is not merely to give us thoughts of God, 'but to bring us into a human communion of love with God.' Christ shows us what God is, but, more than that, He helps us to Him, and makes our relation with Him simple and childlike. Looking to these desperate conditions of our mortal life, where men often have to cry aloud for help, He says, 'Ask, and ye shall receive.' If you, with all your faults, give your child what good you can, will your Heavenly Father not give the Holy Spirit to those that *ask*? Jordan lies as near as that, across your very path, a word to believe, a Friend to trust, a gift to accept, and the mere receiving of it may change the face of the world for you. Sometimes our pride is up in arms,—that is when we are little conscious of need; but there are also days when above all feelings is the thankfulness that we have to do no more—only to wash in Jordan, to go down into the river at our feet. Ah, friends, if any of your hearts are sore to-day, you will rejoice to hear of a remedy so near and so plain.

Recent Foreign Theology.

The Psychology of Religion.

ONE of the most encouraging signs of the times is the number of books, from the pens of men of real ability and scholarship, which have recently appeared on the subject of Christian experience. Far too long had the fashion prevailed in the theological world of attributing intellectuality to works dealing with the *prolegomena* but denying it to works devoted to the *interiora*; so that a book remotely resembling the *Evidences* of Paley had far more chance of being crowned with academic recognition than one of the same nature as Jonathan Edwards' *Religious Affections*. Not infrequently this was most unjust, for many books on the subjects which lie on the borderland between philosophy or science and theology were, in spite of their pretentiousness and obscurity, very shallow, while deep thinking was often put into books intended to feed the piety of the common Christian.

But a welcome change has taken place, and we seem on the way to recognize that the most meritorious theological writing is that which treats of those experiences which all Christians acknowledge as the essence and secret of their religion. Professor James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* has been greeted with enthusiasm and sold in thousands. It appears to have been the outcome of the association of the distinguished author with Starbuck, whose queer volume on *The Psychology of Religion* has also found many readers. From within the Ritschlian camp has come quite recently *Der Begriff der Bekehrung*, by Johannes Herzog, which has not yet attracted much attention but is an extremely able performance. And now from Henri Bois we receive, together, two books of the same character, *Le Réveil au Pays de Galles* and *Quelques Réflexions sur la Psychologie des Réveils*.

Monsieur Bois is a professor of theology in the College of Montauban; and he is a Doctor of

Divinity of the Universities of both Edinburgh and Aberdeen. If I remember rightly, he made his entry into the literary world by a meritorious work on the Judæo-Alexandrine Philosophy; and this was soon followed by an essay on Christian certitude, in which he introduced the ideas of von Frank on this subject to his fellow-countrymen. In a later essay, entitled *La Connaissance Religieuse*, he set himself in opposition to the peculiar ideas of Sabatier and the Paris School of Protestant Theology; and he is one of the editors of a review of philosophy and theology issuing from Montauban.

It is interesting to see a man of this type writing a book on the Welsh Revival. It is a record of personal observation; for he visited the scene in person, and what he narrates is mainly what he himself witnessed; although he has also made thorough acquaintance with such other accounts as those of Mr. Stead and the Rev. Elvet Lewis, and the pamphlets published from the office of *The Western Mail*. The size of the book, which extends to no fewer than 613 pages, is an indication of the impression made on the mind of the writer, and of the sympathy which he brought to the study of the subject. It will be a singular circumstance if, in days to come, the amplest literary account of this movement should have to be sought in the pages of a French book. Nor is this the only book on the subject which has appeared in that language; for I see advertised, *A Monument of Contemporary Mysticism: The Revival of Religion in Wales*, by J. Rogues de Fursac. English readers will, indeed, on every page see indications that Monsieur Bois' eyes do not see things exactly as our eyes see them; but, in some respects, this may be an advantage; for it enables us to understand how our proceedings look in the judgment of an independent observer; and, at all events, none will be able to accuse the author of a want of desire to see everything as it really is; for he maintains an attitude of singular fairness, and records everything with manifest intentional objectivity. It was perhaps inevitable that a stranger should single out for notice the more outstanding figures of the movement; and Monsieur Bois devotes not only over a hundred and fifty pages to Evan Roberts, but nearly fifty even to Mrs. Jones, the heroine of the mystic lights of Dyffryn. In ecclesiastical circles in Wales, I observed a strong disposition to take an opposite view, the influence and services of

individuals being minimized, and only the work of the Spirit of God acknowledged.

The other book of Professor Bois has even more theological interest; for it is an attempt, prompted by his visit to Wales, to explore the psychology of revivals in general. In it, the author not only makes full use of his Welsh experiences, but manifests an extensive acquaintance with the phenomena of other revivals, and with the biographical and autobiographical records of religious awakening; and at the same time, he brings to bear upon the question the keen observation and intellectual equipment of a philosopher, who is intimately acquainted with the literature of psychology. There is, for example, a chapter on the psychology of crowds, abounding with profound and original ideas, which are utilized to illuminate the subject in hand. Monsieur Bois' view is that human beings, when in crowds and under the influence of a common excitement, cast off unconsciously, one by one, all the wrappings of civilization and education, until only the man, pure and simple, is acting; and then the most cultivated can no more hold themselves in than the most simple children of nature. Having proved and illustrated this, he applies it with skill to the enforcement of his own conceptions of what a revival is or should be.

In spite, however, of its scientific character, this book also is dominated by a practical aim. Having witnessed the effects of the revival in Wales, the author is anxious to see similar changes in his own country and his own Church. Only he does not believe that these can come in the same form or in the same way: the Frenchmen among whom the home mission operations of his Church are carried on are too intellectual; Frenchmen in general are too reserved; and the families within the Church have enjoyed too careful nurture. Perhaps Monsieur Bois shows rather much of a disposition to prescribe the only form in which a revival would be acceptable, forgetting that such movements do not generally follow the exact lines anticipated for them; and perhaps he exaggerates the difference between the Welsh and the French, who are both Celtic. While some of the Welsh converts had, no doubt, been careless before or openly vicious, the majority had, I should suppose, enjoyed careful domestic and religious education; at all events, there are always plenty in the best churches who, though by baptism within the Church,

have their hearts in the world and, though well instructed in the letter of Christian truth, have yet to react on the religious influences brought to bear upon them from without, and to make a personal decision for the Saviour.

In the end of his book Monsieur Bois discusses with great fulness the question whether a revival can be expected to accompany the teaching of the more modern theology which he represents; and then it comes out that in the French Church there is a section which not only holds by a very old type of theology, but claims that it is only under such teaching as its own that revivals ever develop themselves. With so much feeling does the author here write as to create the impression that he has been himself the victim of some reproach as an innovator, if not a heretic; so that, as he somewhere remarks, there are many 'new theologies.' Monsieur Bois would hardly pass by such a name in this country; unless it were for the vehemence with which he asserts a number of negatives in face of the older school. He claims Professor Drummond as an evangelist of his own type of belief; but Drummond was too 'canny' a Scot to deal extensively in theological negatives, emphasizing always the positive side of his message.

There is no other Church in Christendom at present that more attracts the attention of thoughtful observers than the one to which Monsieur Bois belongs. It is happy in having among its teachers a man of so high a type—so warm in his evangelical sympathies and yet, at the same time, such a loyal servant of science and of truth—and it is profoundly to be hoped that, at the present crisis in her history, the Reformed Church of France may enjoy such an outpouring of the Spirit of God as Monsieur Bois and others like-minded among her members are longing for.

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German Christology.¹

THIS is an exceptionally clear, terse, and informing survey of German Christology in the nineteenth century, to which the author has added a brief exposition of the lines on which he thinks the

¹ *Die Christologie seit Schleiermacher, ihre Geschichte und ihre Begründung.* Von Stadtpfarrer Lic. Dr. S. Faut. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1907: Pp. viii, 102.

modern view of Christ ought to shape itself. Dorner points out that the doctrine of Christ's Person has counted for more in theology from 1800 on than at any time since the Council of Chalcedon. The modern period, therefore, merits the closest scrutiny, and the student may be assured that with Faut as guide he will really be taken to the important places, and have their historical significance appraised justly. The two things Faut aims at proving are these. First, that all recent schools of theology, orthodox, liberal, and mediating alike, have been too apt to take as their point of departure in Christology the decisions of the Ancient Church, thus entangling themselves needlessly in initial difficulties of a speculative kind, whereas Schleiermacher and Ritschl give us the right lead by setting out from the historic Jesus and His import for saving faith; secondly, that faith in Christ is an absolutely essential part of Christianity, for which the so-called 'Jesus religion' cannot possibly be admitted as a substitute. As for the second point, it may strike us as odd that it should even require to be argued. What interest can a theory which repudiates faith in Christ have in claiming to represent the Christian religion? To paraphrase the words of Mr. Arthur Balfour in another context, who would pay the slightest attention to this modern upstart if it did not force itself into the retinue of historic Christianity, assume its livery, and claim, as the true heir of the ages, to represent its authority and to speak with its voice? Of itself it is nothing. It neither ministers to the needs of the Church of God, nor does it satisfy our reason. As for the first point, we can have no motive for refusing to go along with Faut in giving the formulas of Chalcedon a subordinate, not a supreme place. It can never be wrong to start with the New Testament, least of all when trying to understand our Lord.

It is scarcely needful that the details of the book should be recounted. The speculative Christology of the Hegelian school, Biedermann's distinction between the redeeming principle and the historic Jesus, Dorner's impressive attempt to combine faith and metaphysics, the work of renovation, as Faut regards it, begun by Schleiermacher, and carried far towards completion by Ritschl; all these divisions of the subject are treated carefully and with real knowledge. A brief passage on the Kenoticists is less satisfactory.