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The sketch of the character and temperament of St. Paul in his relation to the doctrine of the resurrection is as important as it is interesting. The spirit of the volumes is summed up in the following words, with the quotation of which we for the present earnestly commend the book to the attention of our readers—

“Although we lose a faith which has long been our guide in the past, we need not now fear to walk boldly with Truth in the future, and turning away from fancied benefits to be derived from the virtue of His death, we may find real help and guidance from more earnest contemplation of the life and teaching of Jesus.”

We presume that the chapters in Mr. Conway's work¹⁰ have been delivered as lectures in South Place. No one could listen to them, few could read them, without stimulus to thought, without being obliged to say, Do I or do I not believe in the things which are here so fiercely assailed as merely old wives' fables? It is well to break idols—it is well often to be full of scornful irony in the breaking—it is well to show, as Mr. Conway is never tired of doing, the comparative mythology of religions; but the idol-breaker and the comparative mythologist perhaps lose necessarily a something of reverential spirit that we should like to find in all teachers, and a power of sympathy with what is true among the felicities of the past.

One of the most striking lectures in the book is concerned with the Ammergau miracle-play, in which he draws a very skilful contrast, between the ideal Christ of the Church and the Christ as represented in the Gospels; but we cannot help thinking that his picture is extremely overcharged from a desire of being original, and of differing, not only from most Christians, but from most free-thinkers.

We are sure that few will agree with Mr. Conway's estimate of the manner in which Christ shrank from death, as put out by him in the following passage—

“Again and again had Christ tried to escape this danger (death), even with dexterity, and on his trial he fenced with every art of speech and silence. When he saw the coils of priestly hatred closing around him, his soul was exceeding sorrowful. Death haunted him. When a woman anointed him tenderly, the odour reminded him of death. ‘She embalms me for burial,’ he cries, and his very words shudder. He meets his disciples at supper; but when he sees and tastes the red wine, that too suggests death; he recoils and cries, ‘It's my blood! Drink it yourselves—I'll never taste it again!’”

In a hasty survey of the good and evils of Christianity, the same or greater want of real sympathy and interest is shown. “Idols and Ideals” is a striking but extremely irritating book, attracting by its brilliancy, repelling by its cold, metallic hardness.

The Hon. Albert Canning has written an essay¹¹ which, as it seems to us, would be far more in place in the pages of a magazine than pub-

¹⁰ “Idols and Ideals.” By Moncure D. Conway, M.A. London: Trübner & Co. 1877.

¹¹ “The Political Progress of Christianity.” By the Honourable Albert S. G. Canning. London: Smith, Elder, & Co. 1877.

lished as a substantial book. For it is too hasty, and is too much occupied with temporary judgments and modern newspaper literature, to have any real and permanent value. It is an examination into the comparative civilisation attained by Christian nations and those under the sway of Islam ; and he considers it evident that, in modern times, at least, no country except under Christian political rule has attained to real civilisation. Mr. Canning has drawn carefully on all authorities which tend to prove his point, but it is a one-sided and argumentative rather than an exhaustive examination into the question. It is, however, worth reading as a statement of one side of the question.

"No task," says Miss Whately,¹² "can well be undertaken by a Christian writer more painful than that of controversy with fellow-Christians." If such be the case, we can only say that almost every theological work ever written must have brought to its author many terrible pangs ; for, with the rarest possible exceptions, every statement of faith and doctrine in every language consists in large measure in running down the faith and doctrines of somebody else. Miss Whately gives herself the terrible pain of assailing, on evangelical grounds, the doctrine and practices of the sect known as the Plymouth Brethren. The whole controversy seems to us so very puerile, that we need only draw attention to it as another indication of the intestine convulsions that are shaking religious Protestantism to its foundations.

"Scepticism and Social Justice"¹³ is an enlarged reprint of a little work formerly published in Mr. Scott's well-known series of tracts. It contains a sketch of the aspect in which the controversy about the authenticity and the credibility of the Bible presents itself to an intelligent layman who has no time to study the subject profoundly at first hand. He challenges the clergy either to refute the attacks which have been brought on the received theology and Scripture history, or else to allow the sceptic to hold his own without placing him under a social stigma. It is not enough, Mr. Bastard thinks, to say that in the large centres of civilisation no social stigma attaches to the upholders of sceptical opinions. He is writing in behalf of those who live in country neighbourhoods, where thinkers are few, and where orthodoxy and ecclesiasticism are still rampant. It is a temperate, well-written, though not profound pamphlet, kindly and considerate to those from whom it asks, but perhaps asks in vain, equal kindness and consideration.

Mr. Bacon¹⁴ is an American living in Switzerland, who has contributed papers to various American periodicals for some time past. His collected volume, dealing on questions connected with the Church on the Continent, the Catholic reformation in Switzerland, the Old Catholic Congress, on the temperance reformation, &c., are better worth reading than are most volumes of connected essays.

¹² "Plymouth Brethrenism." By E. J. Whately. London : Hatchards. 1877.

¹³ "Scepticism and Social Justice." By Thomas Horlock Bastard. London : Williams & Norgate. 1877.

¹⁴ "Church Papers." By Leonard Woolsey Bacon. London : Trübner & Co. 1877.