

As the author sees it, it is necessary to ask for the first time, *What Is Man For?*. A new view of humanity is required. He aims "to elaborate a system of major morality based upon the totality of our human striving." He addresses himself "to the man who would comprehend humanity, in order that he may find his own place in the vast world." It is a serious grappling with a great subject. The material, he says, has been used with good results among students of New York University.

GEO. B. EAGER.

Unitarian Thought. By Ephraim Emerton, Professor of Church History in Harvard University. New York, 1911. Macmillan Co. Pages 309. Price, \$1.50 net.

This volume is not a history of Unitarian thought, as one might suppose from the title, but an exposition and commendation. Its purpose, as stated by the author, is missionary. "This little book is intended for three classes of readers: first, for those to whom Unitarianism is only a name; second, for those who have distinct, but unfavorable impressions of Unitarians; third, for Unitarians themselves, to remind them once again of the treasure they have received from their fathers, and their obligations to see that it be not diminished." (p. vii). It "cannot in any sense of the word be regarded as an official utterance," still the author gives "expression to what he believes to be, on the whole, the *consensus* of Unitarians on the main topics of religious discussion." (p. 6). The author repudiates the three most serious current criticisms of Unitarianism, viz.: that it "is merely a kind of religious philosophy," "that it is merely a system of morals," and "that it is a mere bundle of negatives—that it has nothing positive to offer, but must content itself with always being in the opposition." (pp. 7, 8). The author claims that Unitarianism is a real religion, that its morals grow out of its religious convictions, and finally, that it is negative in its attitude only because it is in the midst of a Christianity so overgrown with excrescences that its chief duty is necessarily critical. The book is written with these three criticisms constantly in mind, the author says, and evidently largely in the attempt to meet them.

Chapter I deals with "The Nature of Belief," and the author thinks "if there is anything peculiar in the mental attitude of Unitarians toward religious questions, it is to be found in their understanding of what constitutes belief." (p. 11). With this proposition readers of the book will probably agree. One's theory of knowledge is usually the determining factor in the formulation of his religious as well as other views. And by the testimony of this author Unitarianism is committed absolutely to unmitigated subjectivism. The position is stated thus: "Independence of all formal authority is the Unitarian's first demand as he approaches the subject of religious belief. The second is that religious truth shall not conflict with any other, or with all other forms of truth." (p. 20). What is meant by "formal authority" is not made clear, but in the course of the discussion it is made clear that the authority of the Scriptures and of the Church are repudiated, leaving the individual to his own unaided intuitions. The third characteristic of religious belief is that "it shall come to him with an imperative command resulting from the nature of the belief itself." (p. 21). The idea of "the will to believe" is abhorrent to the Unitarian; he must approach every subject with absolute indifference, with critical coldness. He must, indeed, have the will to be a believer, "but when it comes to specific beliefs, the belief in a certain definite proposition, then he cannot for a moment admit the right of the will to have anything to say in the matter." (p. 23). This is curious. The will, not the intellect, is to determine the whole bent and direction of thought, but on specific questions the intrusion of the will is an impertinence not to be tolerated! This is voluntarism in general and rationalism in particular. There are many other positions equally as inconsistent. After thus making the intellect the sole discoverer and arbiter of religious beliefs the author turns about and undoes his own work by claiming what everybody knows, that religion is made up of emotions and will far more than of thoughts. The treatment is thus utterly confused and confusing. The author finally reaches the purely pragmatic position in regard to religious beliefs. "The highest

sanction he can find for his beliefs is in the inner witness of his own enlightened reason and his own disciplined emotion." (27). "In the last resort, he must rely upon his own powers of spiritual perception to interpret to him the ways of God with men." (p. 28). This position makes religion purely individualistic, without social value or social significance. And the author does not hesitate to draw the final and inevitable conclusion in these words: "What comes to him in this way as true, is true to him, and beyond this he cannot go. It is not his concern whether it be true to some one else; for that he is not responsible. Neither is he answerable for the absolute truth as it exists in the mind of God." (p. 28). Such a position makes missionary effort on a religious basis an impertinence. Truth is not something to be propagated, or even sought in its essence. It is not strange that Unitarianism is so little missionary. And yet the Unitarians are not consistent. Why did the author write this book to commend Unitarianism, if what other men believe is no concern of his? He and his co-religionists are reasonably zealous in spreading these paralyzing dogmas which tend to destroy all the religious motives and activities of evangelical Christianity and reduce it to a system of thought. The only motive to service left to Unitarianism is humanitarian.

The author's view of "belief" determines all the rest. Of course he denies the fact and the possibility of miracle; he endows men, all men, with such powers of religious intuition and self-salvation as to make them prophets and seers (for themselves); the Bible is the product of a race of religious geniuses, Jesus was a mere man who "in all probability" "had his moments of opposition to the Divine will which constitute the attitude of 'sin.'" Even our meager and laudatory accounts of him give abundant support for this view." (p. 165). Redemption is a figment and the future life is probably a continuation of the present with all its imperfections, etc.

One rises from a perusal of this book with the distinct feeling that Unitarianism is not the consistent system of thought which he had regarded it, that it is almost only and solely

a system of thought, that it is and must continue negative in any and every Christian land, that it has no power but to paralyze and refrigerate, that it is dangerous not as an organization but only as a leaven in evangelical ranks.

The book is persuasive and well written, and one who wishes to know the fundamental beliefs of the Unitarians will find this work a valuable one.

W. J. MCGLOTHLIN.

The Theology of Schleiermacher: A Condensed Presentation of His Chief Work, "The Christian Faith." By George Cross. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. 344 Pages, \$1.65, postpaid.

No one can understand modern theological movements who is without a knowledge of Schleiermacher's system of teaching. Oman has given us a translation of Schleiermacher's "Speeches on Religion," in which one finds presented with much diffuseness, and yet in an engaging manner, Schleiermacher's fundamental religious and philosophic conceptions. Hitherto, however, Schleiermacher's development of his fundamental views into a dogmatic system in his monumental work, "The Christian Faith," has remained inaccessible to those unacquainted with the German language. Since Schleiermacher is today a very vital force in theology and influential in manifold ways Professor Cross has rendered a most timely and valuable service in giving to the general reader the translation in condensed form of Schleiermacher's system of theology.

There is first a sketch of Schleiermacher's life, covering 63 pages. This is followed by a section, from page 67 to page 113, on Schleiermacher's relation to earlier Protestantism. In the sketch of the life the influence of the Moravians upon Schleiermacher's development is quite properly emphasized. In fact, Schleiermacher drew from his Moravian teachers and environment during an important period, the most vital elements of his Christianity. In the section on Schleiermacher's relation to earlier Protestantism it is made clear that Schleiermacher does not belong among theologians to the line of succession produced by the prevalent scholastic Protestantism, but rather to that less conspicuous but far more significant and spiritual line which