

scribing to it." The book may be placed in DeQuincy's category of "the literature of power," and will abundantly repay reading.

GEO. B. EAGER.

The Finality of the Christian Religion.

By George Burman Foster, Professor of the Philosophy of Religion. The Decennial Publications, second series, Vol. XVI. The University Press, Chicago. Pp. xv and 518. Price \$4.00 net, \$4.22 postpaid.

Two things make demand here for more extended notice of this work than its attitude and contents could claim on merit; the relation of the publication and the author to the University of Chicago, and the deep note of humanity in the entire work. Its place in the Decennial Publications with the imprint of the University serves to emphasize the institutional character that must in any case belong to a work issuing from the occupant of a University chair. The *preface* touches the vital cord of sympathy that binds men of earnestness however far they may differ. When one knows that "the book is a mirror of the development of the author's own experience," one must take interest in it and the interest grows as one shares or even appreciates, though he may not share, the author's belief "that a greater multitude will travel, with bleeding feet, the same *via dolorosa* . . ."

Yet this work has received more attention than it deserves. Its radical positions, its iconoclastic contentions and the vital issues involved have caused radicals to leap for joy and herald a new gun in their batteries while some of the "traditionals" have been terrified afresh, and the "heresy hunter" has judged from the noise and commotion that he is on the trail of big game.

The author of this work is a deeply pious, scholarly, sincere teacher who wants to believe the truth, if he cannot know it. As we see him in this book he is not so much the teacher as the student, even though of negative dogmatism there is quite a deal. He is thinking and toiling toward some goal. It seems a pity he could not have waited until he were a little farther on the road before

calling quite so much attention to his uncertain track. For the work is chiefly destructive. Again there is want of unity, originality, independence. Nothing is more true of the scientific, critical and philosophic situation of the day than its variety. It is full of differences, inconsistencies, uncertainties.

It is interesting, too, that when we are seeing all the ancient authorities flayed, drawn and quartered before our eyes, when even Jesus himself is unworthy when he is authoritative, that at the same moment the great names of "experts" in the various fields of investigation must so terrify and intimidate us that we dare not have an opinion of our own. Religion must no longer have any "authority," for that would conflict with "assured results" of modern research.

Our author must needs use for this volume philosophy, history, science, criticism and, be it said in fullest appreciation, faith. In all the realms of knowledge he has chosen his masters, Dutch and German they are, in the main, and the highest stars in their respective constellations. But Dr. Foster has not been able to unify the teaching from these sources, and with all his own vigor of thought he seems not yet to have found any position which is assured.

On the faith side of his materials he draws on his own experience and insight, and here we find strength, comfort, inspiration. This reviewer has nowhere seen an estimate of the Master that for incisiveness, vigor, sympathy, spiritual insight, surpasses that of page 467. In fifteen pages preceding this section there is as gross and unscientific a misrepresentation of Jesus as one will likely find. Here, however, one finds a true interpretation of Jesus, as far as it goes. In most of his discussion of Jesus Dr. Foster yields himself the interpreter of Hermann, Wernle, Wrede, Bossuet, without being able to reach a unified result, but in the pages referred to he breaks away and interprets the Christ whom he has seen

and loved and worshipped in another temple than that of rationalistic culture.

A phase of development in modern religious thought under the influence of current scientific and critical pre-suppositions and methods, a phase psychologically interesting and religiously significant, is manifest in a considerable number of scholars, devout in spirit, sincere in purpose and conviction, and godly in life, who, after having built up such a character in the foundations of an orthodox faith and having reached a stage of spiritual discernment and fellowship which can dispense with authority, can even find little need of it, give themselves up to views, methods and results that would have been utterly inadequate to production of their own religious experience and which are not only powerless to initiate and foster such experience in others but stand directly in the way of such experience. Having built on accepted foundations a good structure of experience and life they undermine these foundations, forgetting that others will need them.

“The Church’s Theological Christ” has long been in disfavor, and is now well nigh demolished. At first we were to pursue this method to reach the historical Jesus, who was the real Christ of God. But now we find that the historical Jesus is as unknown and undiscoverable as all other essential things. So far as we may know Jesus historically, he was so controlled in his own self-consciousness by the type of religious and scientific culture of his time and place, or so limited by the naivè of the thought of the day; and, furthermore, was so subject to the misrepresentations of the intellectual media of his followers that we can put no reliance on the forms in which he appears in the unhistorical presentations that have come down to us. We are shut up to the acceptance of the utterly unworthy Christ of dogma, or the little less satisfactory Jesus of the remnant of reliable tradition, or to the creation of our own Christ. Come to look at it, the relativity

of all knowledge shuts us up to the self-credited Christ any how, and so we must extricate the eternal principles from the life and words of Jesus and in the light of our larger learning make such a Christ as we must have. So the reasoning goes, and this work is a rather bold and frank statement of it.

It is a gratification to the reader and a credit to the author that Dr. Foster deals frankly with us; "that the reader will find no orthodoxy in this book under the mask of liberalism, and no liberalism under the mask of orthodoxy; but yea is yea and nay is nay," for otherwise we could not "know when he was telling what he believed to be the truth, and when he was holding the truth back for reasons of policy." One could wish that all the writers of this school of thought were equally frank and unequivocal.

There are two attitudes toward the historical data of Jesus. One seeks to find all that it can of fact and is over credulous, while the other wants to find little and is cautious with abandon of the true principles of caution. A third attitude will be more reliable in its results.

Dr. Foster has been dragged into the rationalistic attitude and at length is seeking to walk in its leadership. He has even reached the stage of dogmatic ridicule. "An intelligent man who now affirms his faith in such stories [as the miraculous narratives of the Bible] as actual facts can hardly know what *intellectual* honesty means."

Such is the lash of contempt which the scholastic tyranny of the hour holds for all who fail to submit. One had hardly looked to see it wielded by Dr. Foster.

The nine chapters of the work give a good survey of the historical, philosophical and critical relations of the form of Christianity here advocated, and of the view of Jesus—one was about to say lying at its base; but this view of Jesus does not so much lie at the base of this Christianity as it is created for the purpose of being put under the Christianity to give it a semblance of support

in the Christ. We have come already into discussions of "the Christianity of Christ," and the phase of rationalism of which this work is perhaps the best American exponent is frank to admit that it by no means agrees with Jesus's interpretation of himself; it thinks that it values him and knows him far more truly than he knew and esteemed himself. In all sincerity such views and such a system ought not to insist on naming itself after the Christ. It may make what claims it will as a religion and give what credit it will to Jesus for his suggestiveness, but it ought not to call itself Christianity. Christ is Greek for Messiah, and this book ridicules the Messianic idea and ideal.

Our view touches chiefly the discussion of Jesus because that is the matter of chief concern. The philosophic foundations of the discussion belong to that phase of speculation now coming into more distinct form, and which may be described as *personalized pantheism*. Its best exponent is Prof. Borden P. Bowne. Constructive philosophy is now headed in this direction, and its constructive principle is at once true, vigorous and important. It errs in incompleteness, and in its declared and implied negatives. Dr. Foster accepts and uses this philosophy.

W. O. CARVER.

Evolution, the Master Key. A Discussion of the Principles of Evolution as Illustrated in Atoms, Stars, Organic Species, Mind, Society and Morals.

By C. W. Saleeby, M. D. (Edin.), Author of "The Cycle of Life." Published by Harper & Bros., London and New York, 1906. Pp. viii. and 364.

This is a considerable volume by one who has been at pains to keep informed of all the progress in scientific research and speculation. That he is also acquainted with metaphysical and religious thought the evidence is wanting. The author is a writer of the *smart* sort that seem ever to be writing between the lines. "Here is wisdom, heed it well." Yet there is a real store of knowledge,