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Christianity and Ethics by A. B. D. Alexander

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French Church." Such a study should be especially interesting now in the apparent *Renaissance* of religion in France. Such an essay at Church Reform two centuries ago may possibly be the precursor of a fresh endeavour to rehabilitate the Gallican Church apart from Italian control as the true and natural religious home of the French people.

R. W. S.

CHRISTIANITY AND ETHICS. By A. B. D. Alexander, D.D. (Duckworth). 2s. 6d. net.

The author tells us that his chief difficulty has been that of compression. That is precisely the thought which will suggest itself to every reader. We are taken over a large field of inquiry, while little of detail is given. The work is divided into four main parts—i. Postulates. ii. Personality. iii. Character. iv. Conduct. In the first of these we are provided with a useful discussion upon the scope of Ethics in general as distinct from the kindred sciences of Metaphysics, Logic, Psychology. A special chapter is devoted to the Ethics of Christianity, and the section concludes with a brief digest of philosophical thought before Christ, as preparatory to the Christian dispensation.

The second division of this book is, perhaps, the most interesting. It contains a discussion upon the Nature of Man. It is not possible to regard man simply as a part of the natural world, for he possesses powers which point to his divinity. He alone can enter into communion with the Eternal; even his temptation and his sins mark him off as distinct from the brute creation. Although "very far gone from original righteousness" he has still "a tendency towards God."

The third section deals with modern views of life—Naturalism, Idealism, Pragmatism, Activism, Vitalism. With these the writer compares the Christian Ideal of life as it shows itself in respect to the Individual, to Society, and to God. The Kingdom proclaimed by Christ is Present, Progressive, Future: it is a Gift, a Task, a Hope. In this connexion he has some interesting remarks upon the modern German school, which regards the teaching of Christ as entirely eschatological.

The concluding section deals with human conduct. The writer discusses the relation which exists between the Christian and non-Christian virtues, and considers the statement of the case which would make Christianity responsible for the "passive" virtues only. Duty shows itself towards the Family, the State, and the Church. The reader will be especially interested in the author's criticism of the modern science known as Eugenics. "The champions of Eugenics are apt to exaggerate the materialistic side of marriage, and overlook those qualities of heart and mind which are not less important for the well-being of the race.

In the discipline of human weakness and suffering these are assets which the world could ill afford to lose."

Upon the whole, this book will be found to supply a valuable outline of modern thought in the sphere of ethical inquiry.

J. F. M. C.

THE PRACTICE OF CHRISTIANITY, by the Author of *Pro Christo et Ecclesia*. (Macmillans.) 4s. 6d. net.

The author of *Pro Christo et Ecclesia* has many unpleasant things to say to us, in this his latest book. He bids a world which—at any rate when he started to write—was at peace and self-complacently enjoying itself, to throw away all prejudice and examine its customs in order to see if these be as they should.

He has startled us out of our self satisfaction. An age suffers in its development through having no contemporaries. We can only judge of our improvement by comparing life to-day with life of a previous age. And so when we see an improvement made here and there we are apt to think that all things are now well with us and that we may rest from our labours.

Readers of *The Practice of Christianity* will be quickly undeceived. For the author first of all lays the responsibility of social evils on Christians, for social good is a great part of Christianity.

He then chooses the only standard of good which suits all ages—Our Lord's teaching—and bids us consider whether even in this twentieth century we may cease from activity.

Side by side with that Divine plan of human life—the Sermon on the Mount—are placed our own recognized customs. Looked at in this way thrift is pronounced an un-Christian habit; our commercial system is shewn to be utterly wrong, and we are told that the penal system fails because we have never tried Our Lord's way—the way of the best robe and the ring and the fatted calf—with our legal criminals.

It is hard to explain in brief these conclusions. Baldly stated they seem utterly opposed to any scheme of Practical Christianity, but the reader of this book will find it hard to escape the author's logical reasoning—the driving home of unpleasant truths with almost brutal force.

The chapter on Warfare is, of course, of absorbing interest in these days. Warfare, says the author, has never been proved the best way of settling a difficulty. In fact, many a wrong, to right which a war was undertaken, has been forgotten and has remained. Or again a war has abolished one evil merely to establish another. The American War of Independence, it is true, abolished slavery, but neglect of the negro has since obtained, and the contempt