

the time for a more comprehensive study." This purpose of the author has been admirably fulfilled. He has produced a racy, instructive and entertaining volume that must interest and benefit all who take it up, not only in his own Church but in other communions as well, for Wesley is the possession of all evangelical Christendom. It is not a "Life," and yet all important features of the life are so thoroughly treated that no essential matter is neglected and the average reader will find this small volume adequate to all his needs.

W. J. MCGLOTHLIN.

III. RELIGIONS AND MISSIONS.

Religion und Soziales Leben bei den Naturvölkern. Von Dr. H. Visscher, Prof. ord. an der Universität zu Utrecht. Bonn: Johs. Scherrens. 1911.

This work has for its purpose to afford a scientific foundation for Christian Missions. The author exhibits a wide and thorough acquaintance with the voluminous literature descriptive of the institutions, usages and practices of the nature-peoples. He not only has read widely, but has sifted the vast fund of information as to these backward societies and correlated the significant facts so as to give us as clear a picture of the main features of their social organization as is available anywhere, perhaps. No writer with whom I am acquainted has brought out more impressively how very large a part religion plays in the social life of these peoples.

One cannot, I think, speak quite so unqualifiedly as to his success in using this material to establish a scientific basis for the Christian missionary enterprise, though his work unquestionably has value for that purpose. He criticises severely—and with justice—many of the writers on social evolution, because they start out with the theory that human society evolved by natural processes out of animal society, and persistently interpret the facts to fit this theory. To begin with a theory and handle the facts so as to make them support that theory is, as he says, an unscientific procedure. But he proceeds in the same way; though his theory is different. He tells us in his criticism of those theorists that we have really no scientific knowledge of the life of

“primitive men.” But all his reasoning is in fact based upon a certain assumption as to the moral, religious and social status of “primitive man.” He treats the low religious and social state of the nature-peoples as a degeneration from that original state. The writers whom he takes to task for their unscientific method treat it as an evolution upward, though a slight progress only, from the primitive status. But he says we have no scientific knowledge of “primitive man.” If this be the case, his method is just as unscientific as theirs. As a matter of fact, many traits of the social life of nature-people may be regarded either as the traces of a higher social and religious life yet lingering among a degenerate people, or as rudimentary developments toward a higher social and religious life among peoples who have not yet advanced to higher levels in social evolution; whether they will be regarded as the one or the other depends upon the hypothesis with which one approaches the facts. It is very probable that there is a measure of truth in both hypotheses.

The work of the author would be more valuable if he had used more than he did the knowledge we have of the social and religious origins of the culture-peoples. The status of the nature-peoples can be best interpreted in the light of that knowledge. However, Prof. Visscher has given us an exceedingly interesting treatise.

C. S. GARDNER.

Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics. Edited by James Hastings, M.A., D.D., Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Member of the Council of the Palestine Exploration Fund; Editor of “Dictionary of the Bible,” and “Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels;” with the assistance of John A. Selbie, M.A., D.D., and Other Scholars. Volume IV, Confirmation—Drama. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons. 1912. xvi+907 pages. \$7.00.

This Encyclopedia comes on slowly, but with articles that justify the delay. Already it is evident that its bulk will far surpass the tentative announcements. Indeed, it seems as if the Editor were allowing free rein to his contributors with a resultant lack of proportion that is somewhat to be regretted. Still, it would hardly do to ask any more material than we are likely