

Personal Religion in Egypt Before Christianity. By W. M. Flinders Petrie, D. C. L., LL.D., F. R. S., F. B. A., Author of "Religion and Conscience", "Religion of Ancient Egypt", etc. New York. 1909. Harper and Brothers. Pages ix+174. Price 75 cents net.

This is one of the volumes in the Harper's "Library of Living Thought". The subject is not very definitely suggestive, nor is its fitness very evident upon reading the book. The work may be described as an effort to indicate "what ideas were already a part of the general religious thought and phraseology of serious persons in the first century", and which thus both prepared the way for and serve to guide in the interpretation of the New Testament religious teaching. The author holds, quite erroneously, that "the current literature of the time was as naturally taken for granted by Christians as were the books of the Old Testament and Apocrypha, which were also familiar to them". Quite erroneously, that is, if he means to affirm, as apparently he does, that the early Christians placed the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, and current religious writings all on a par and assumed divine revelation in all of them.

The writings selected for exposition by our author are Hermetic writings, which he dates all the way from 500 B. C. to 100 A. D.; Plutarch; and Apollonios. He finds it possible to date one large section of the Hermetic writings by means of certain references, while a second body are undatable save for the nature of the religious idea contained in them. The work of Plutarch and Apollonios, together with the accounts of the Ascetics of the first half of the first Christian century, show a general development of thought which has a loose and incidental connection with the New Testament phraseology and thought. But the very line of development by which Professor Petrie would seem to explain much of the New Testament religion illustrates far more distinctly the exceptional quality of the New Testament thought.

Two chapters of our work set forth an analysis of the psychology of religious experience, summing up the views of Prof. James' "Varieties of Religious Experience". Two chapters deal with the Hermetic writings, with an intervening chapter

on "The Ascetics". Plutarch and Apollonios receive one chapter each. The final chapter, three pages, gives a "Summary"

There is much learning and ingenuity in the work in dating the writings, in comparing their teachings and in referring them to their sources in Greek, Egyptian, Hebrew and Indian thought and institutions. It must be said that Prof. Petrie's conclusions are very different from those of other Egyptologists—Naville for example—and one is not convinced that he is correct.

W. O. CARVER.

Christianity and Islam. By C. H. Becker, Ph.D., Professor of Oriental History in the Colonial Institute of Hamburg. Translated by Rev. H. J. Chayter, M.A., Headmaster of Plymouth College, London and New York. 1909. Harper and Brothers. Volume in "Harper's Library of Living Thought". Pages viii+114. Price 75 cents net.

The comparison of Christianity and Islam here instituted covers the influences of Christianity to be found in the rise of Islam, the mutual influences arising out of and attested by "the similarity of Christian and Mohammedan metaphysics during the Middle Ages", and, finally, the influence of Islam upon Christianity. The author has some new theories touching the interaction and developments of these two religions, and has written a highly suggestive and stimulating work. He is not free from the fault of subjectivism. He sometimes writes his history by the logic of reason rather than by the observation of fact; and he is doctrinaire in some of his contentions. But his book is valuable because of its new ideas.

W. O. CARVER.

The Transmigration of Souls. By D. Alfred Bertholet, Professor of Theology in the University of Basle. Translated by Rev. H. J. Chayter, M.A., Headmaster of Plymouth College. London and New York. 1909. Harper and Brothers. Volume in "Harper's Library of Living Thought". Pages viii+133. Price 75 cents net.

The author calls this a "brief review of the systems under which the doctrine of metempsychosis has been formulatted in