

THE SUBSTANCE OF FAITH ALLIED WITH SCIENCE.

A Catechism for Parents and Teachers.

By Sir Oliver Lodge. Harper & Bros., London and New York. 1907.

This volume is interesting as another attempt to set forth religious truth in harmony with modern scientific and philosophic theory. The author is evidently much interested in the moral instruction of the young, and the book is an effort to provide teachers and parents with a suitable text-book. The form is that of a catechism, with questions and answer. At the conclusion of each answer the elements of the answer are taken up and enlarged by somewhat extended discussion. There are twenty questions and answers in the book. The author says in the preface: "I have attempted the task of formulating the fundamentals or substance of religious faith in terms of divine immanence in such a way as to assimilate sufficiently all the results of existing knowledge, and still be in harmony with the teachings of the poets and inspired writers of all ages. The statement is intended to deny nothing which can reasonably be held by any specific denomination, and it seeks to confirm nothing but what is consistent with universal Christian experience."

The first question and answer relate to the ascent of man from the lower animals, and are as follows:

"Question: What are you?"

"Answer: I am a being, alive and conscious, upon this earth; a descendant of ancestors who rose by gradual processes from the lower forms of animal life, and with struggle and suffering became man" (p.8).

The author says that this answer does not pretend to exhaust the nature of man. In this question and answer he says he is attempting to bring out the truth as to the physical side of man's nature only. He discusses in his elaboration of the definition of the earth, the words "being", "alive", "conscious", and introduces a discussion on the senses. The definition is sufficiently explicit as to the author's view

of the origin of the physical frame of man. It came from the lower animals in the usual way, as taught by evolution. It will be interesting, while on this point, to compare what he says in the twelfth question and answer regarding the higher faculties of man. In reply to the question, "What is to be said of man's higher faculties?" the author says: "The faculties and achievements of the highest among mankind, in art, in science, in philosophy, and in religion, are not explainable as an outcome of a struggle for existence. Something more than mere life is possessed by us—something represented by the words mind and soul and spirit. On one side we are members of the animal kingdom, on another we are associates in a loftier type of existence, and linked with the divine." In explaining the spiritual origin of man the author seems to adopt the view which Wordsworth has expressed poetically, and which is held by many in modern times, viz., that each soul existed in a previous state before it became united with a human body. He says that this idea, explained by the poets and held by Plato in certain form, as well as by other philosophic teachers, finds warrant in the modern doctrine of the subliminal self or the sub-conscious mind. He thinks that the larger self which lies back in the realm of unconsciousness will be known to us when we pass into the larger life beyond this. The author says, however, that we must not dogmatize on this subject. He says: "It may be that the abortive attempts at development on the part of individuals is like the waves lapping up the sides of a boulder and being successively flung back, while the general advance of the race is typified by the steady uprising of the tide."

The author declares that the possibility of evil is the necessary consequence of a rise in the scale of moral existence. "Just as an organism whose normal temperature is far above absolute zero is necessarily liable to damaging and deadly cold; but cold is not in itself a positive or created thing."

The author holds that the idea of grace, as taught in the Scriptures, is warranted by the fact that there is a power in the universe vastly beyond our comprehension, and we trust and believe that it is a good and loving power, able and willing to help us and all creatures, and to guide us wisely without detriment to our incipient freedom (p. 90).

Prayer, the author holds, brings us into communion with our heavenly Father. It is filial communion of the son with the father. We are not to limit necessarily the things we ask for, nor can we decide how far their attainment is possible. We should seek, however, as far as lies within our power to attain the fulfillment of our own petitions, and not be content with wishes alone.

Regarding the person of Jesus Christ, in answer to the fifteenth question, the author says: "I believe that the divine nature is specially revealed to men through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lived and taught and suffered in Palestine 1900 years ago, and has since been worshiped by the Christian church as the immortal Son of God—the Savior of the world." The author says that this statement emphasizes especially the historical and geographical aspects of the divine manifestation, because upon this he wishes to lay the chief emphasis. He says that the idealization and full interpretation of Christ is very difficult. He holds, however, that the work done in the Gospel of John in this direction was a very remarkable work. "It all hangs together when properly grasped, and constitutes a luminous conception; but the light thus shed upon the nature of deity must not blind our eyes to the simple human facts from which it originally emanated" (p. 104). Thus the author withholds a definite statement as to the actual pre-existence of Christ. He does, however, indicate a decided sympathy for the statements of the case which have been made in the past, barring the speculative and exclusively intellectual aspects of the matter.

On the whole, this book is an unusually sympathetic

attempt on the part of a man of science to reconcile Christian truth with Biblical teaching, and doubtless it will help a great many in their struggles with modern scepticism. One cannot but feel, however, that much of the discussion is of a tentative and speculative sort, as is necessarily the case in dealing with so many topics and attempting from the scientific and philosophic point of view to give satisfactory replies. We are reminded afresh, in reading a book like this, how dependent we are upon the Scriptures as a revelation of spiritual truth—for all our great conceptions of God, man, immortality, and eternal life. At best, our books which seek to verify Christianity by science can only begin at the center and move out towards the circumference, and at many points they leave us in the dark, and we must fall back upon the sure Word of God as contained in Revelation.

Books like the above, however, are very useful at a time when many people are reaching out for the light and seeking a sure resting place for their feet, because of the disturbing influence of modern thought.

E. Y. MULLINS.

THE OTHER COMFORTER.

By Rev. W. A. Hamlett. C. T. Dearing Printing Company, Louisville, Ky. Price, 40 cents postpaid.

This pamphlet of 140 pages contains a very clear discussion of the work of the Holy Spirit. Of course in the limits of the booklet the subject could not be exhaustively discussed. The author is intensely Scriptural from beginning to end in his method of approach. He aims to set forth clearly the exact teaching of Scripture on various aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit. The subjects of some of the chapters are: The Baptism in the Holy Spirit, The Personality of the Holy Spirit, The Spirit Birth, The Indwelling Spirit, The Baptism of Fire, and The End of the Age. The author is gifted in the power of clear and vigorous statement, and is quite skillful in illustration. There are many turns of exegesis and interpretation which show originality,