

Amos (S.P.C.K. ; 1s. 6d. net). The method is the same—the veriest minimum of explanation, in order that the Prophet himself may be read. Every note is a triumph of condensed clearness.

The petition in the Lord's Prayer, 'Thy kingdom come,' has suggested to the Rev. Walter J. Carey, M.A., R.N., the thought of Christ's Kingdom as *The Kingdom that must be Built*, and he has written a book with that title (S.P.C.K. ; 2s. 6d. net). The first thing is to find the King. And

just that first thing is where so many fail. Why do they fail? Mr. Carey gives three reasons—they are not yet quite escaped from the animal, their evil deeds have blinded their eyes, and they have never had the gospel properly presented to them. What is his cure? Three things again—make them think, remove from their minds false views of religion, and pray for them. All that sounds ordinary; it is truth, it is truth for to-day, and it is well sent home to heart and conscience in this book.

The Eugenics of Faith.

BY THE REV. A. T. CADOUX, B.A., D.D., EAST BOLDON.

THE diagnosis of the Church's ailments has recently been so abundant as to be in itself a grave symptom. For this abundance lies in the great variety of particulars each of which is given by its exponent as the true cause of our troubles; but, if so many particulars are wrong, the true cause will surely be more deeply seated than any of them; and the capacity for challenging the particular and passing by the essential is itself a symptom at least as serious in religion as elsewhere.

Any grave deficiency in the Church must be the result of lack in one or both of two things—a sincere acceptance of the ethical demands of her religion or a living faith in its truth. Given these two, nothing can hold her from leading the world, and nothing but lack of these is enough to account for her lack of power.

These two desiderata are in experience inseparable. The former depends upon, while it affords expression to, the latter. No careful student of the words of Jesus can refuse to agree that His ethic is inseparable from His doctrine of God. His most characteristic moral teaching finds its deepest root in the saying, 'Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect' (or in Luke's version, 'Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful'). To a man to whom a merciful and perfect heavenly Father is the greatest and most indubitable of all realities the commands of the Sermon on the Mount are not only possible but natural. To one who has not this belief or anything like it some at least of these commands would seem dangerous, intolerably hard, unreal, or

wrong. And, conversely, throughout the New Testament Christian action is regarded as the natural outcome and best evidence of Christian faith. In so far then as the present condition of the Church is due to an inadequate following of the ethical teaching of Jesus, we must seek the cause of this in a lack of faith which has undermined her obedience.

The observable facts are, in the first place, that though the Church during the past few decades has not lacked ethical seriousness of a sort, she has shown little serious acceptance of the ethics of Jesus. She has rather been concerned about the enforcement of the ethical standard generally accepted by the world, or perhaps, one should say, of certain of the higher and more respectable of the many ethical standards current in the various circles of society. But these standards, though they imply an underlying belief in the moral rectitude of the universe, do not necessarily involve any explicit religious faith, and are certainly not, like the ethics of Jesus, based upon a triumphant assurance of God's love.

And the second observable fact is that, apart from what is betrayed in their ethics, there is a general lack of robust faith in the Christians of to-day. We have had a belief of a kind, but it has mostly been a belief that a man holds, not one that holds him. Instead of faith we have had an apologetic theistic philosophy. God, who must be to us the most real of all beings, is a Perhaps, an Hypothesis, a Balance of Probabilities. If this obtained only in academic regions the hurt would

not be great, but it does not: it is largely true of the men and women of the Church: they are not *sure* of God, certainly not of a God who is their heavenly Father: He is not to them the most real of all beings.

Here, then, is the lack which explains the weakness of the Church: she has lost her sureness of God. And there is no help for her or the world except through that which can meet this need.

We need to-day something more than a Saviour from sin: we need a Saviour from the unfaith that makes any sense of sin impossible. If Jesus Christ cannot save His Church in this, He is no Saviour for to-day. And her error has been that she has not sought as Saviour here Him whom she has proclaimed as Saviour from all straits. In this, the foundation stone of all, she has preferred to have a philosophy rather than a religion, and has lost heaven by her pride.

In the common religious training of the day the ground of belief in God has not been sought in Jesus Christ. He has been regarded as the finisher but not as the author of its faith. The accepted notion has been that we get our assurance of the reality of God as a personal being elsewhere, and that Jesus completes the revelation of His ethical nature and brings us into right relationships with Him. This has been the more easily accepted as the right procedure because it was no doubt largely true of the Jews who first embraced Christianity. Paul is typical here: long before he knew Christ, God was to him the most insistent of all realities: it was just this that gave point to the misery of knowing that he was out of harmony with God. And he found in Jesus one who brought him into peace with God by revolutionizing the nature and place of a faith which was already strong within him. But we need to remember that Christianity retained no permanent hold upon the race that was already sure of God: its greatest and most lasting conquest was in the Gentile world that had lost its faith. Amongst the competing religions of the Roman Empire, Christianity proved unique in its faith, creating power, and we cannot disconnect this from its unique possession in Jesus Christ.

Our own experience confirms His power to this end. The suggestion that there is a God comes to us by social tradition, and we support it by argument. We are prepared to meet any objection that may be brought against the proposition. But all the time we are not really sure: the very eager-

ness of our defence betrays our uncertainty. Our belief is not 'a strong tower,' it is not the 'rock' on which we stand; it is rather a tray full of exquisite porcelain which we carry fearfully along the thoroughfares of the world, hoping that the good order and good taste of the crowd will respect our treasure. It is little more than this until we think of Jesus Christ, and then we find a substance filling the shadow of our belief: we find that, when we turn our minds to contemplate all that He was, we do at length discover that we cannot help believing in God. That which is a great Perhaps while the mind is looking elsewhere becomes, when it looks upon Christ, a certainty to which our whole being yields, and cannot help yielding, spontaneous assent.

It may be well to state here roughly of what, in this experience, the thought about Jesus consists. It is in the first place the thought of Him as man, and of the manner of man He was. When sober criticism has said its say as to the Synoptic record, there is ample left (and what is left is the better available) for our purpose. Then there is the impression He made upon men, resulting in the foundation of the Church. There is His creative relationship to the religious consciousness of these men and their successors until to-day, apparent in the existence and nature of the beliefs and cult of Christianity. And finally there is His unique relationship to the mind and conscience that seriously contemplates Him.

Our experience, then, is that when the mind sets before itself these things as facts, its painfully retained theistic beliefs become solid and unshakable ground. The constancy with which this occurs, added to the above-noted nature of the progress of Christianity in the Gentile world, suggests that the connexion between these things and our faith in God is not accidental, and that the way back to an indubitable thought of Him lies through a simple appreciation as fact of all that Jesus was and is. It remains, therefore, first to elucidate and then to justify this experience, that Jesus Christ makes us 'feel the God we think.'

There are two aspects, an outward and an inward, of the great question which religious faith answers. The first (and to deal with one is to include a great part of the other) may be put in this way: Is there any meaning or purpose in the universe, in life,—and, if so, what? And we must here premise that meaning and purpose, in the sense in which we ask

for them, are such as we can, at least in part, enter into and understand, and such as imply so much personality in the Possessor as to make it possible for us to worship Him and commune with Him ; and that our quest will not be achieved by any merely logical consistency that does not take with it the consent of our whole being ; any process of argument, for instance, that begins by telling us that we cannot *prove* the existence of an external world may be unanswerable, but it does not help religious faith.

Now, when we look from our surest standpoint and with our widest view at the universe and the life it has produced, we see an all-inclusive process of development, the most elaborate of whose products, so far as we know them, is man. It is not necessary to trace how we come to the conviction, but it is no exaggeration to say that we have no doubt whatever that, of all the offspring of evolution within our ken, man is the highest, and that to say so means something. And this term 'highest' will be found to mean not mere excellence in some particular quality or in complexity and number of functions. It is the tacit assertion that evolution has its culmination in man : it asserts that he stands in unique relation to the whole process of evolution and the evolving universe.

And this assurance as to man's place in the universe propounds a question. Contemplating that mental, moral, and spiritual nature of man which makes us place him so high, we cannot help seeing, when these things have passed a certain stage of development, that either they receive their warrant from a moral and spiritual Power which is the fundamental reality of the universe, or that man at his highest, *i.e.* when he is most thoroughly ethical and spiritual, is most remote from reality. It opens before us the 'either—or' which Eucken was fond of propounding. The ethical and spiritual in man are either his surest way to knowing and building upon the ultimate reality, or all that we have admired and loved in humanity is a pathetic aberration from the controlling and abiding nature of the universe.

And what can resolve this alternative? Let us see clearly what is the point at issue. We are assuming what our theologies teach (on the above or other lines) and what is written clearly in the spiritual history of the race, that unless the fundamental reality of the universe is a Spiritual Being, man's highest spiritual achievements lose their

rational and apprehended base. And the question is, whether we can find any spiritual achievement so solid as to make us sure that it has this otherwise only hypothetical base. Or to narrow the question, Can we find anywhere a moral consciousness good enough, that is, in its own province real enough, to make us *feel* the reality of the God implied in it? History is not assuring here. We see everything in the unreflective, half-instinctive virtues of the earlier stages replaced, as civilization and thought advance, by a self-regarding scheme of life, or by a centreless submission to the bewildering complexity of influences, or by the consciously adopted morality of self-righteousness, or at best by a self-questioning quest for something that is not yet. And any man who honestly looks into his own heart will know that to be sincere is to be victor in so great and long a struggle that the very beginning of real honesty with him must be to renounce the claim to be honest. And yet in all this we see humanity so near such measureless possibilities of moral value that, far from a despairing surrender of the higher alternative, the question faces us again with added weight and urgency.

But when we turn from the world and ourselves to contemplate Jesus Christ, we find in Him a goodness the reality of which we cannot doubt. In Him is the spontaneity of the impulsive and the continuity of the disciplined. He has an inward wholeness which was not attained by excision, for His interests and experience are of the widest range and He is open-eyed to all facts. His ethical life has no unassimilated shards of custom : it is all intensely and fully his own, and yet entirely free from self-bias ; clear as the sunlight, yet without that diffidence which the light imposes upon us. In Him we see the common ore fused into homogeneity, purity, incandescence. In Him we see human goodness of such sanity and sincerity that we cannot doubt its reality in the ethical sense, and therefore it makes us feel the reality of that spiritual truth which the ethical implies. Looking upon ourselves and others we may see clearly that, if there is not a good God, all we have counted highest is most unreal ; but we have ourselves been so faithless in our loyalty to the highest that we cannot do more than painfully and unsurely balance ourselves upon this undetermined alternative. But when we contemplate Jesus Christ, finding it impossible to doubt the quality of His goodness, we also find it impossible to think that

He is not nearer to the ultimate Reality than we are. The God about whom our fragmentary and tentative strivings question announces Himself indubitably in the achieved wholeness of Jesus' manhood. We *feel* that it was no blind power that lit the light in the face of Christ Jesus.

And this same spiritual wholeness of His, which converts into affirmations the 'obstinate questionings' of our being, finds illustration also in our vision of history. For just as we have indubitable assurance that mankind is the highest product of evolution, so we have an indubitable assurance that Jesus stands at the head of humanity. The fact of this assurance hardly needs substantiation. The converse of it is seen in the difficulty of finding any category less than that of man under which to place the things that make Him supreme. 'Prophet, Priest, and King,' connote office rather than character, and name the effect rather than the nature of what He was. 'Saint' and 'Genius' we eschew: why, would be an interesting but overlong inquiry. No name but 'Man' suffices, and in Him the name finds at length its full content: we recognize that the difference between Him and us is that He is the true man, and we partial and faulty approximates.

Thus we see the process of evolution culminating in man, and man culminating in Jesus Christ. From which it is, on the face of it, likely that, if there is in the universe any meaning or purpose knowable and shareable by us, it will be discoverable particularly in Him. And in harmony with this probability we have already seen that the contemplation of what He was not only makes us sure that the universe has meaning and purpose and that its fundamental reality is Spirit, but also suggests very strongly what that meaning and purpose are and what the nature of that Spirit.

And this conclusion gives fit setting to the deepest characteristic of the life of Him who brings us to it, for these things not only become visible to those who contemplate Him from without, but in Him they become articulate. The central fact of the Man who thus makes us sure of God is that He was Himself sure of God. The wholeness of His character is inseparable from its religious base: the heat that fused it into so integral and beautiful a whole was a passion for God. His moral sureness was not a sureness of Himself apart from God: it was a constantly operative and creative sureness of

God's goodness—'There is none good but one—God.' The meaning and purpose of the whole process of evolution, the underlying reality of the universe, which from an external view proclaims itself as discovered in Him in whom its culminating species culminates, becomes vocal in His life as an absolute assurance of a heavenly Father's presence, whose love and purpose are the unifying principle and power of His life.

It may be said that what a man is sure of is not necessarily true; which depends partly on the man and partly on the matter. Generally, when a man is entirely convinced of the truth of some ethical or spiritual proposition, we shall find it to contain some substance of truth however badly expressed. And apart from inhibitions due to criticism nothing is so productive of faith as is another's faith: the faith of a saner, honester, larger mind than ours has a suggestive power commensurate with its recognized superiority in these qualities. And that it should be so follows from the very nature of faith.

For the social interests of faith have always been admitted to be large. In all things our belief always begins and, apart from special influences to the contrary, continues in what is believed by those around us: to be alone in a matter of faith is to live under a great strain: all believers congregate: every strong religious belief seeks to propagate itself. And all this is necessarily so, for man is moved to a religious faith by the deepest need of his personal life, the need to possess a life truly personal, and therefore to seek an ultimate reality that shall guarantee him in that possession, a spiritual reality upon which his spirit can build. And the form of his faith depends upon the interpretation of personal experience under stress of this need. But if my account of the greatest of all realities is essentially different from yours, one of us is wrong, or both; and our own peace and our loyalty to truth demand that this difference shall be felt as long as it exists. And from these considerations we not only can understand the power of social tradition and custom in matters of belief, but can see that a still stronger force will be found in the faith of any one who, we are persuaded, has a completer, truer personality, a greater spiritual experience and a clearer insight than any other. And it is precisely His supreme eminence in these things that gives Jesus' His place in history.

It may be said, 'He lived in an age of faith,' as though that fact lessened for us the suggestive value of His assurance of God. But though Jesus lived in an age of faith, the faith of the age in which He lived was not His faith. All that His age and race could give was so completely assimilated by His spiritual consciousness as to be carried to issues which they were not prepared to recognize. Had He owed His truth to His age in any sense that would lessen the faith-provoking power of all that He was and held, we should not have found Him, as we do, going counter to the received religious ideas of His age on the most important points. Had His faith been the product of His age, His age would not have crucified Him. And here we have to recognize that an assurance which maintains itself in the midst of a differing faith, needs to be very much stronger even than one that maintains itself in a faithless age. Remembering this, the loneliness of His death is a sublime witness of His assurance of the things for which He died. If what is true to one man ever has or ought to have any authority with another, it is difficult in the matter of religious faith to conceive how the conditions could be more compellingly fulfilled.

Another consideration here springs from the social nature of faith. As we saw, all strong religious faith seeks to impart itself: the intensity and sureness of the individual's belief is proportionate to his confidence that all may have like faith, and that it is his business to get it imparted to them. And we find that Jesus' sureness of God sends Him out to impart this assured knowledge to others in the full conviction that it is for them. In His death He bade His disciples remember Him by symbols that spoke of the impartation to them of what was vital to Himself and of the knitting of a bond between them and God of the sort that had been the very life-blood of His being.

And the result was that this impartation to His followers of what was central in His own life did take place. A new and extraordinarily energetic faith appeared amongst them. It is true that they already believed in God, but in a way for which the history of religion has no parallel, what they had from Christ did, without destroying their old faith, revolutionize its content. They had believed in God, but what they now saw in Christ so transformed and intensified their faith and so shaped it to practical issues, that it made life a new thing for them, and made them the formative power of their

age. And this faith which the life and death of Jesus produced in His followers is thus another aspect of His being which, when we contemplate, makes us feel that we cannot doubt the authenticity of what was so creative.

And here we come to a consideration which may be helpful in face of much that is urged by the extremers exponents of historical criticism. It may be put thus, 'If I take the gospel story as a reliable portrayal of Jesus, it makes a new thing of my faith in God. Nor can it be reasonably doubted that for those who actually knew Him, their knowledge of His life and death made a new and vivid thing of their faith. Therefore, whatever details may be doubtful, I conclude myself justified in regarding the record as historic for the contents that produce in me the effect which their subject produced in His contemporaries.'

We now turn from the consideration of the historic place of Jesus to His relationship to the most inward personal life, which has, however, been so far included already as to make it unnecessary to deal with more than one point. There are few assertions which we do not find it possible to doubt if we try, but many people at least will assent to this, that when once they have a knowledge of the manner of man Jesus was, then they are without any possibility of doubt sure that unless their lives move in the direction of His they are being false to their own true selves. The life that He realized reveals to them a yet unrealized self, but one so grounded in reality as to be more real than the self which they have up till now achieved. What is this but to say that just in the inmost of us, where alone we touch life and being at first-hand, and where, therefore, if at all, we must find our criterion of reality, Jesus reveals to us, and assures us of, the most ultimate reality we know?

The above are some of the lines of thought that elucidate the experience that the contemplation of what Jesus was and is to His followers affords the best means to a recovery of the faith that once overcame the world. It remains to justify what this assertion seems to imply, that it is only through Him that we get this assurance.

It will readily be granted that there is and ought to be an intimate relationship between the content of our faith and the degree of its assurance. The strength of our faith depends upon the number and importance of the points at which it touches our experience, our emotions, our activity. And if,

therefore, the object of our belief is real, but the content inadequate, it will follow not only that our faith will not touch life in so many points as it might and will consequently be weak, but that the points at which it might touch life, and does not, will challenge and confuse it. In the nature of things, therefore, a belief in God which is inadequate in content will be weak in intensity. The apparent contradictions of this will be found on examination to be only apparent: the principle is undeniable. And if, as all Christians allow, the content of their belief in God comes in its fulness only through Christ, it must also be that apart from Him there is no full assurance that God is.

Or we may put it another way. One of the tragic experiences in life is that no truth which does not find expression in our activity can maintain itself alive in our belief. Refuse to act on a truth and it will grow unreal to you. There has, no doubt, been a whisper of God in our hearts, but we have shrunk from the acts in which it demands to be expressed, and so God has become unreal to us. And when this has happened the only way back is through One who gave His thought of God at all costs the expression which it demanded.

‘For how many soever be the promises of God, in him (Jesus) is the yea: wherefore through him also is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us.’

In the Study.

Job's Wife.

By the REV. W. J. FARROW, B.A., B.D., SHREWSBURY.

‘Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still hold fast thine integrity? Renounce God and die.’—Job 2⁹.

THERE is one person in the Book of Job to whom the writer has not done justice—Job's wife. Her grief must have been just as keen and deep as her husband's, yet it is passed over altogether. She is credited with one remark, which is harshly rebuked by Job; then she is mentioned no more, and from that point the book is wholly concerned with the theological problem of Job and his age. It is a great book: one of the greatest in the Old Testament; one of the greatest in the world's literature, yet surely not the last word from the woman's point of view.

The book is evidently poetry and not history. No five men in all the world's story ever kept up such a discussion—a discussion so full of lofty, sustained eloquence, illuminated by such apt illustrations and similes, and moving upon such a high emotional level. It is obviously the work of some poet who was putting his own thoughts upon the lips of others, debating the problem of his own soul, his own age, of all ages, by the method of drama. He may have been a poet who had passed through sorrows as vast as those attributed to Job, or a poet who was just putting the general case. Personally I incline to the former view. A man who could write so passionately must have suffered

deeply; it was his own soul's problem he was hammering out as well as the general problem of the world's ever-recurring pain.

The book is one of the later books of the Old Testament. Probably the story of Job, which occupies the first two chapters and is written in prose, was a very old one, and in the writer's day was accepted as the classic instance of great and undeserved suffering on the part of a good man. The writer is unknown, but he took the story of Job and used it as an introduction to the discussion which follows on the meaning of pain and God's purpose in it. In dealing with the story he does justice to Job and his direful experiences, but he certainly fails to do justice to the wife: in the main he ignores her and her part in the sorrow.

I.

SORROW'S HOUR.

Job was a wealthy, a happy, and a good man, but by a series of misfortunes, partly political and partly natural, he was suddenly robbed of all his substance and left poor. On the top of these calamities there befell a greater—the death of all his children at one dread stroke—and we are left with this pitiful contrast: one hour, a man possessing everything he could wish; the next, stripped bare, penniless and childless.

The scene that followed is dramatic enough, surprising to some extent, yet ever moving; it has