

What is Christianity? A Study in Rival Interpretations. By George Cross. Chicago, 1918, The University of Chicago Press. x-|-214 pp. \$1.00 net.

Professor Cross puts forth in the present volume a preparation for a Christian apologetic. The preparatory volume for many will serve as itself an apologetic work. To understand Christianity is to render Christianity for oneself rational and therefore acceptable. To interpret Christianity aright is, then, to rationalize it for one's readers. This does not mean that to rationalize Christianity is to make Christians, if we take *rationalize* in the usual sense. The yielding of oneself to Christ's ideal and the devotion of oneself to Christ for realizing His ideal can alone make one a Christian. But it may be said that only then, when one does take Christ as the norm of his life, can one understand Christ and Christianity.

Professor Cross would accept this view, although he does not so state it in the present volume, but he would probably wish still to interpret the statement. The one serious fault I would find with an unusually valuable work is that it studiously avoids defining Jesus Christ, obviates the personality of the Holy Spirit, neglects and by implication seems to reject the need of human nature for that renewal which Christian theology calls "regeneration", and in general treats of God and Christian experience as if they are, or at all events may be, wholly subjective. It might be said that the work is descriptive and not philosophical. The reply would not be sufficient, for one cannot describe Christianity as it is here undertaken to do without facing the questions of cause and it is not wise to evade the issue when one meets it.

The interpretations outlined and criticised are Apocalypticism, Catholicism, Mysticism, Protestantism, Rationalism, Evangelicalism. These are not thoroughly "rival" interpretations. The author at one place recognizes that in some measure they are complementary. His general attitude in religion would seem to have evoked from him this method of viewing the various interpretations. In the brief section which touches on Christianity and other religions it is the complementary view that comes forward. Still it is clearly recognized that, in complementing, Christianity must supplant other religions.

One must thank Professor Cross for a new, fresh, very scholarly and very thoughtful analysis and comparison of these outstanding types of Christian interpretation. For the most part they are highly satisfactory. In dealing with Apocalypticism he takes up the position that a coterie centering in the Chicago University have stressed and magnified with much pride of (American) originality. It is based on the writings of a smart German school and involves a serious misunderstanding of Jesus and His apostolic interpreters.

His interpretation of rationalism is splendid and will set some to thinking on correcter lines about this factor in the development of Christian thought; but Dr. Cross errs in praising rationalism too highly as a sane interpretation of Christianity. Our modern psychology teaches us that understanding is not to be gained by intellectualism working apart from emotion and volition. So while appreciating the worth of Christian rationalism we must also keep in mind the defects of its procedure in setting its work over against the feelings and the will. Elsewhere in his work Dr. Cross partially recognizes this but fails to attend to it in his chapter on Rationalism.

One might expect to find socialism as one interpretation of Christianity. This is made a feature of Evangelicalism which is taken to include the various items of "Modernized Protestant Christianity".

While lacking at some important points, the work is singularly well balanced and is a notable contribution to current Christian interpretation.

W. O. CARVER.

Religion—Its Prophets and False Prophets. By James Bishop Thomas, Ph.D., Professor of Systematic Theology in the University of the South, Sewanee, Tenn. New York, 1918. The Macmillan Company. xvii+—256 pp. \$1.50.

Here is a volume of very mixed value. The clear discernment of the spirituality of essential Christianity, the vigorous, consistent argument and appeal for recognizing Jesus Christ as representing God truly in insisting on a universal gospel because God is the God of all men and not an autocratic despot playing favoritism among races, nations or tribes is very fine.

When the author comes to Paul he shows himself incapable of appreciating him. He sets him down as a narrow devotee of a cult idea of Christianity and praises Royce as over against Paul. The author largely but not completely understands Royce but is very far from understanding Paul.

Right sharply and well does Dr. Thomas draw the distinction between the evolutionary system in religion and the evangelical ideal of Heaven to be made triumphant on earth. He says that the Christian doctrine of the Kingdom of Heaven must prevail or "the evolutionary doctrine will see to it that the past and present Hell on earth shall be perpetuated". "There is no middle ground * * * The neutral is already an agent of Hell—a subject of the Empire of Evil."

With Luther and the other Reformers "so-called", he has scant patience thinking them slaves of Paul and so sectional and narrow.

In the matter of interpretation of Jesus and his teachings, the author presents us a singular mixture of radical higher critical views and