

## X.—NEW BOOKS.

*Monism as connecting Religion and Science: The Confession of Faith of a Man of Science.* By ERNST HÆCKEL. Tr. by J. GILCHRIST, M.A., B.Sc., Ph.D. London: Adam & Charles Black, 1894. Pp. viii., 117.

AN address by Professor Schlesiger before the *Naturforschende Gesellschaft des Osterlandes* at Altenburg on 'Scientific Articles of Faith' moved the author of *A Natural History of Creation* to state his own creed to the members of the same society.

Later, as he tells us, a desire 'to give expression to that rational view of the world which is being forced upon us with such logical rigour by the modern advancements in our knowledge of nature as a unity,' and to 'establish thereby a touch between religion and science,' moved him to publish a revision of his address. What moved Dr Gilchrist to translate it must remain a mystery.

Professor Hæckel's creed is a brief one. He believes in 'the mobile cosmic ether as creating divinity, and the inert heavy mass [atoms] as material of creation.' He regards this creed as the reverse of dogmatic, or so we gather from his scorn of dogmatism in general. When, however, a writer assures us on one page that 'our ideas of space and time are quite other than those taught by Kant a hundred years ago; the 'critical' system of the great Königsberg philosopher exhibits dogmatic weaknesses of the most pronounced kind'; and two pages later gives us an accurate description of the 'inalienable and fundamental' properties of mass-atoms, such as their ubiquity in space, their like size, their spherical form, their impenetrability, etc.; one is uncertain as to just what his conception of dogmatism, at least with regard to space, is.

Professor Hæckel further regards his creed as monistic, and means by dualistic systems those treating 'God and the world, creator and creature, spirit and matter, as two completely separated substances.' Yet his own 'ultimates' are two, mass-atoms and ether, which he expressly makes equivalent to creature and creator, and even, in a note, to 'spirit' and 'body.' Lastly, he declares that his faith satisfies all the needs of the human soul, moral, æsthetic, and religious. After having drawn a vivid picture of 'the relentless war of all against all' in nature, the 'unceasing and terrible war of existence' which science discovers to us, he chastises 'a sickly and unnatural theology' for having made the world 'repulsive as a vale of tears,' and ends in a truly national frame of mind by adoring 'the True, the Beautiful, and the Good.'

Materialism is a perfectly respectable dogma, but one thing it cannot do; it can never satisfy what Prof. Hæckel calls the 'yearning spirit,' the moral nature. If our world is to be reduced to mass-atoms and ether, well and good; at least let us be spared sentimentality over the subject.

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