

VII.—CRITICAL NOTICES.

The Evolution of Religion. The Gifford Lectures delivered before the University of St. Andrews in sessions 1890-91 and 1891-92, by EDWARD CAIRD, LL.D., D.C.L., Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow. Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1893. 2 Vols. Pp. xv., 400 and 334.

Every one knew that anything which Professor Caird wrote on the philosophy of religion must be interesting and important to the highest degree. But this book will probably surpass most expectations. For it goes, as it seems to us, very far towards supplying the want for which idealistic philosophy has been longing, and longing vainly, to find some solace. Philosophy always feels that its work is incomplete, so long as it does not show itself in practice, as it is potentially, capable of organising and vivifying human life. More particularly must idealistic philosophers long for such an activity, believing, as they must do, that the truth is desirable, not only as true, but as good, while they see around them so much mental distress caused by the unwilling acceptance of scepticism or agnosticism, which, as they cannot but hold, is based upon a mere delusion.

But so far there has been a great deficiency—almost indeed a total absence—of books which should give to persons interested in the results of metaphysics, but unable to devote their whole lives to its study, some account of the conclusions arrived at by the Critical and Dialectic philosophies, and some reason to hope that those conclusions might have probability on their side.

These lectures are admirably fitted to supply such a place. They do not, indeed, profess to be a demonstration, but rather a history. But Professor Caird traces the connexions by which one form of religion leads on to another with such force and precision, that one sees revealed in the temporal succession of creed to creed the logical justification of the system in which the process culminates. And that the primary object of the book should be to consider the subject rather under the aspect of a religion than of a philosophy only renders it fitter as a popular introduction to the subject, both as bringing the questions forward in a more concrete and popular manner, and as making clear in what the practical importance of philosophy consists.

Professor Caird starts with a provisional definition of religion—that it is the expression of a man's "ultimate attitude towards the universe"—which at once makes it clear that he does not share in the disposition to regard intellectual convictions as indifferent to religion. From this he proceeds to the still more difficult task

of finding a provisional working definition of God. He defines God as "an absolute principle of unity which binds in one 'all thinking things, all objects of all thought,' which is at once the source of being to all things that are, and of knowing to all things that know". It is the idea which binds together in one the two other great ideas of our nature, those of subject and object. The thesis that the validity of the ideas of subject and object involve the validity of the idea of God is worked out with great force and clearness, and at the end of the nineteenth century Professor Caird quietly informs us that every rational being, as such, is a religious being. His opponents will probably prefer to ridicule his audacity rather than to attempt to meet his reasoning.

Of course such a wide definition of God must include many most imperfect conceptions. It may be logically implicit in any idea which is taken as the absolute unity of the universe that in it both subject and object should find their completest realisation. But often very little of this is explicit. The object is conceived as a merely mechanical system, ignoring and crushing all claims of the subject to be treated not merely as a part, but as a co-ordinate whole, an end in itself, and the subject's most fundamental being is conceived, not as a harmony with objective truth, but as a wild and hopeless protest against it. In this case we get, if the emphasis is laid on the object, a system of materialism, if the emphasis is laid on the subject, a system of pessimism. Is such a unity as this to be called God? Or, passing to the other extreme, what are we to say of those who, while they believe the universe to be essentially spiritual, and personality the supreme form of spirit, yet conceive the Divine rather as a unity of persons than as a personal unity, rather as a *civitas Dei* than a *Deus*?

Professor Caird's definition, it may be objected, reduces belief in God to a truism. If all recognition of *any* unity in the universe is belief in God, then the only atheists are to be found—to adapt Hegel's phrase as to the only true physicists—"among the animals, since they alone do not think" (*Encyclopædia*, Section 98, lecture note). And the differences between those who affirm and those who deny that God is essentially personal, and still more the difference between those who affirm and those who deny that God is essentially spiritual, are so vast that to declare that all alike *do* believe in God is apt to seem like a futile crying of peace when there is really war. Yet on the whole we think the balance is in favour of the phraseology of these lectures. For it indicates with greater clearness how the higher conception of God must be justified, if it is to be justified at all. We must not form a notion of what God ought to be from some external source, and then, by arguments having no inherent connexion with the nature of the idea, endeavour to find a place for such a God in the universe. We must rather start with the facts which are beyond denial or doubt, with the bare fact of the unity. We must see

into what this can be developed, by making explicit what is implicit, and when we have thus, to the best of our ability, ascertained the truth, it will be time to ask whether the conception, thus reached, satisfies our practical and emotional demands. Our guide must be, not Apologetics, but Dialectic.

Professor Caird then proceeds to make his definition clearer by criticising, from the standpoint thus gained, the view of Professor Max Müller that the principle of religion lies in a consciousness of the infinite as the something beyond, and the correlative view of Mr. Herbert Spencer that it lies in the consciousness of the infinite as the unknowable presupposition of the finite. As becomes an Hegelian writer on the history of philosophy he is at least as anxious to point out the truth inherent in both these views as he is to demonstrate their incompleteness. We cannot but think, however, that he carries geniality rather too far when he finds (vol. i. p. 104) in Mr. Spencer a more logical Spinoza, in spite of the delicate irony of the praise. No doubt Mr. Spencer and Spinoza commit the same fundamental mistake, they "reach the infinite simply by wiping out the lines of divisions between finite things and beings". But even apart from the "sublime inconsequence," as Professor Caird happily calls it, of the *amor intellectualis Dei*, Spinoza works out his mistake upon quite other lines from Mr. Spencer's. Nothing is further from Spinoza at any time than the one assertion which is fundamental for Mr. Spencer—that we cannot know the Absolute. He conceives it as known by us as the positive substance in all the modes, though as contributing nothing to the determination of the modes in one direction rather than another. Mr. Spencer, on the other hand, takes it to be behind the phenomena, and unknowable in consequence. Or, in other words, the initial misconception of the infinite, issues in one case in a supposition that we can know the undetermined, in the other in the assertion of various propositions about the unknowable.

Of course a parallel, and an important one, can be drawn between Spinoza and Mr. Spencer on the lines indicated. We only mean that, in a book which is sure to be widely read by persons without any knowledge of the history of philosophy, such a broad statement may produce the belief that, but for his inconsistent mysticism, Spinoza's general attitude resembles Mr. Spencer's.

Professor Caird, having provided himself with tools by means of a careful and lucid explanation, in the first lecture, of the ideas of organic unity and of evolution, starts on his account of the dialectic of religious thought. As might be expected, he puts it into the form of an Hegelian triad. The first stage is that in which the consciousness of God is reduced to the level of the consciousness of an object. From this type—that of objective religions—we pass to the second stage, the subjective religions, in which the consciousness of God is reduced to the form of self-

consciousness. And finally, in Christianity, God is known explicitly as at once the presupposition and the end of both subject and object. This is a true Hegelian transition, but it is worth noting that it cannot be reduced to that type with which the general reader is most familiar—that which appears in the categories of the first Doctrine. For in that thesis and antithesis are on a level, and the synthesis is reached from both of them equally. Here, however, the passage from objective to subjective religion is expressly declared (i. 352) to be an advance. And again the transition to Christianity is regarded as largely reached by a dialectic process inherent in Judaism, a subjective religion. Judaism indeed, it is said (ii. 253), could not have produced Christianity if it had not been touched by Persian and Greek ideas, but the historical connexion with Judaism is regarded as the vital thread in the transition, and this involves the view that the antithesis itself has begun a reconciliation, by taking into itself something of the thesis. The transition is such a one as may be found in Hegel's "categories of Essence".

Our space does not allow us even to summarise the author's excellent account of the objective religions. We can only find room for his suggestive remark that savage animism was due quite as much to failing to see that human nature was more than dead matter, as it was due to actual predication of human attributes of the outside world, or, as he expresses it (i. 264), earlier religions may have personified natural powers, but the Greeks were the first to humanise them.

The transition from the objective to the subjective standpoint is illustrated by the transformation of the Vedic religion which shows itself in the Upanishads. The search for a unity, in which religion consists, cannot be satisfied until the universe is conceived as swayed by a single principle, and "he who looks away from the universal to the particular, from sense to thought, must in the long run turn his eyes back from all objects to the self, as the one principle to which they are all equally related" (i. 354).

Under the head of subjective religions are treated Buddhism, Stoicism, and Judaism. Professor Caird points out how a merely subjective religion must lead, as in fact it did, to continually increasing pessimism. He lays stress on the gradual growth of the notion of evil in explicit opposition to good as exemplified by the conception of Satan in the book of Job as God's servant, while in the time of the Apocryphal books he had become the head of a kingdom of evil. In the same direction is the change of the statement in Samuel, that Jehovah moved David to number the people, to the statement in Chronicles that it was done at the instigation of Satan.

The transition from subjective to absolute religion is a little more obscure. But when we remember that the solution proposed by Christ, although, according to Professor Caird, it rests for its value on metaphysical principles implicit in it, yet never explicitly

asserted those principles as such, still less made any attempt to prove them, we can see that pessimism in itself completed the conception of a higher unity, though it could not demonstrate its validity. The contrast between the righteousness which the awakened spirit demanded in the universe and the unrighteousness which it found there—a contrast which had now grown too deep to be satisfied by the temporal reign of a human Messiah—naturally led to the idea of a unity in which the truth and the good should be combined—not in a future which would leave the opposition of the two sides as real for thought as before, but in the eternal unity which must be present because it is timeless. And since the idea of evil had become too prominent to be ignored or smoothed over, the only escape was to face the problem, to admit on the one hand the reality of evil, and yet to treat it as a mere transitory moment in the triumph of the good.

This, as Professor Caird tells us, is what Jesus did. And this is the central point of His teaching and His religion. "It is," he says (ii. 111), "this certainty of ultimate triumph, this combination of the despair of pessimism with an optimism that overreaches and overpowers it, nay, even that absorbs it as an element into itself, which constitutes the unique character of the religion of Jesus."

The interesting thing about this is that the importance of Christianity is definitely made, if we understand the author rightly, to depend on the enunciation of a metaphysical truth. Of course the founder of Christianity is not viewed as having elaborated a metaphysical system. The doctrine was quite as much implicit in His actions as explicit in His teaching, and even when it was actually stated, it was arrived at, not by metaphysical reasoning, but by some delicacy of spiritual intuition. But the central fact of Christianity is the affirmation of this doctrine as to the true nature of the eternal reality which manifests itself in experience.

It seems to be commonly supposed at present that there are only two ways of looking at the position of Christ towards the world. We may on the one hand consider it as supernatural, with the orthodoxy of the past. We may, as Professor Caird says of St. Paul (ii. 209), fail to distinguish revelation and realisation, and hold, not only that Jesus preached a reconciliation which was before unknown, but that He produced a reconciliation which was before non-existent. If we do not do this, the only other alternative left us is supposed to be the view that the secret of Christianity lies merely on the surface of experience, and involves no interpretation of the facts deeper *in genere* than is found in ordinary life. It is said to consist in the unique beauty of the actual life of Jesus, or the unique purity of the details of His moral teaching.

Professor Caird, however, who knows that there is something else in knowledge besides cutting loose from experience or accept-

ing it at its own valuation, adopts neither of these theories. He says in the first place that St. Paul's grasp of the truth is marred by his regarding Christ's life in the flesh as an episode between two lives of glory, and declares that the essential basis of Christianity is lost whenever simple humanity (by which we presume that humanity *per se* must be meant) is divorced from the divine. And similar expressions might be quoted, all of which tend to regard the incarnation of God in Christ as nothing but an explicit example of what exists implicitly in all reality. On the other hand, it is neither as a teacher of morality nor as an example of moral life that he holds Christ to be all-important. Not that He held that the good was binding on us, not that He acted up to His belief, but that He held that the good was the true, that He was "the greatest optimist that the world has ever seen" (ii. 109), in this lies the significance which we seek.

We cannot but think, however, that in doing justice to Christ, Professor Caird has done rather less than justice to Hegel. He says (ii. 109): "Even Hegel, in spite of his constant insistence on the negative element in existence, and on 'the earnestness, the pain, the labour and the patience' involved in that element, does not entirely escape the accusation of 'healing the hurt' of man too 'slightly,' of explaining away the darker aspects of life, and of confusing the opposites whose antagonism he seeks to reconcile. It is," he goes on, "a significant fact that no one has ever brought such an accusation against the greatest optimist the world has ever seen." This is, no doubt, perfectly true. But it must be remembered that Jesus made no attempt to demonstrate His optimism. He merely asserted it. Now it is comparatively easy to keep hold both of the reality and the unreality of evil, so long as we merely assert them side by side. And paradox is doubtless the beginning of wisdom. But it is not the end also. "Contradiction," to quote Hegel (*Encyclopædia*, Section 119, lecture note), "is not the end of the matter, but cancels itself." And although the Christian Church supplied the theory which its founder left out, it did so only, as Professor Caird has remarked, by degrading a universal and eternal truth into a particular and historical fact, as a result of which evil was conceived as overcome, not by its own inherent weakness, but by a power outside itself. And if the reconciliation is to be conceived as merely external, the reality of the antithesis is in no danger of disappearing. But if either Christ or the Church had tried to do both things together—to assert the immanent and inherent superiority of the good, and to demonstrate the transition in detail—they might have erred at least as badly as Hegel in the direction of a shallow optimism.

The lectures point out with great clearness the respective teaching of the historical Christ revealed in the Synoptic Gospels, of St. Paul, and of the Fourth Gospel and the first Epistle of St.

John.. In the two latter, whether really by the same author or not, Professor Caird finds the same spirit. In the Synoptic Gospels Christ is presented merely as a particular person, whose life is one among many, and affords no explicit universal principle. In St. Paul's writings the significance of Christ becomes universal in its importance, but at the cost of becoming an isolated event, whose connexion with the destinies of mankind is comparatively external and mechanical. In St. John the two views are reconciled and the importance of Christ is seen to be that in His particular life was revealed the universal which is implicit in all particular lives, even the basest and the meanest—that in Him was made manifest the secret which is in all of us. His uniqueness is not, as both supernaturalism and positivism for different reasons suppose, that He was unlike other men, but only that in Him, for the first time, the common nature of all men became self-conscious. How far Professor Caird is right in supposing that there and then, in that particular person, no sooner and no later, the revelation came to mankind, is a question too large to discuss now. But no one can deny that his view is in the highest degree inspiring and suggestive.

We cannot but think that in his attempt, brilliantly successful as it is in the main, to ally Christianity with idealistic philosophy, Professor Caird goes rather too far in his assertion that "Die to live" is the central principle of Hegel's philosophy. The process into the antithesis, if sometimes looked on as a correction of the thesis, is sometimes looked on as its manifestation. If the two terms are sometimes related as contrary to contrary they are sometimes related as universal to particular. And, as the latter relation is characteristic of the later stages of the dialectic, it may perhaps be regarded as more essential. If the advance can be looked on as a purifying penance, it can also be looked on as a triumph, and the anticipation of experience, within certain limits, which *a priori* reasoning allows, disposes the philosopher to regard it at least as much in the latter as in the former aspect. And the attempt, on this basis, to justify the doctrine of salvation by faith (ii. 206), seems to us very strained.

We have left ourselves only room to quote two pregnant sayings. "We cannot hate the highest till we know it. On the other hand, *when* we know it we cannot altogether hate it" (ii. 208). "What is called mysticism . . . is the form under which feeling discounts the future gains of thought" (ii. 291).

It is in the same spirit of superb confidence that Professor Caird, at a time when shallower thinkers are trying to preserve the name of religion by flinging away all its intelligible content, tells us that in "the present age" the development of philosophy "has for the first time furnished us with something like a rational proof of a creed which previously rested almost entirely upon the intuition of faith" (ii. 321). The assertion of the gradually increasing certainty of the dogmatic basis of religion will probably

be deemed by "scientific" thinkers too absurd to answer. And their prudence, at any rate, will be deserving of commendation.

With Christianity the lectures cease, which is perhaps a pity. The reader would have liked to know how such a strange episode as Islam is to be regarded.

We believe that it would be difficult to overestimate the importance of this book. It cannot fail to be of the highest value to specialists. But it may well be destined to work more honourable, because more needed. It may serve, as no English book has yet served, to mediate between philosophy and life.

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Die Grundbegriffe der Gegenwart. Historisch und kritisch entwickelt von RUDOLF EUCKEN, o. ö. Professor an der Universität Jena. Zweite, völlig umgearbeitete Auflage. Leipzig: Verlag von Veit & Comp., 1893. Pp. vi., 317.

This is to all intents and purposes a new book, for the first edition (published in 1878, and probably little known in this country) "has been thoroughly recast, and while the drift of thought is the same there is little left unaltered in matter or form". It is a concentrated *critique* of the ruling ideas and main practical tendencies of the time, carried out with strict impartiality but with no suppression of personal conviction, and encumbered by only such "learned ballast" as is conducive to the reader's easy progress in attaining the proper point of view. The author's endeavour, in fact, is not to treat exhaustively any of the topics with which he deals, but only to develop principles and theories in sufficient detail to enable a judgment of their value to be fairly formed. The author evidently believes that the profoundest need of the time is not minuter knowledge in special departments, but a clearer comprehension of what the first principles of knowledge really are, and a firmer grasp of practical postulates. Departmental science is a good thing, and historical erudition is a good thing, but each is vain and even frivolous if we have no hold on primary realities, and are so unsure of our spiritual foundations that in the apostle's language we are "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine".

The critique of current beliefs takes the form of an examination of various ever-recurring terms, popular or academic. One group of these, first dealt with, are of the widest and most general import—as Subjective and Objective, Experience, *A priori* and *a posteriori*, Development, Monism and Dualism, Law. An examination of terms having closer relation to human life follows—as Individuality, Society and Socialism, Utilitarianism or the Problem of Happiness, Idealism, Realism and Naturalism, Free-will, Personality and Character. Lastly there is a dis-