

researches of Father Schmidt, who has adopted Mr Lang's theories with certain reservations. To these theories M. Bouvier attaches himself. They are mainly based on a close study of the beliefs of Australian and kindred peoples, among whom Mr Lang sees the belief in an All-Father. Where that belief exists, there is little belief in either animism or *mana*.

M. Bouvier's pamphlet is a serviceable account of current theories which should be useful to students. But with regard to some of these current theories, there is a tendency, by way of explaining savage beliefs, to envelope them in a haze of modern philosophical terms and ideas, which only seem ludicrous in connexion with the subject. How clear and unclouded in comparison are the theories and the writings of Mr Lang!

Jésus-Christ et l'Étude comparée des Religions. Conférences données aux Facultés catholiques de Lyon. Par ALBERT VALENSIN, Professeur à la Faculté de Théologie de Lyon. (Librairie Victor Lecoffre, J. Gabalda et Cie., Paris, 1912.)

PROFESSOR VALENSIN rightly claims that the Christian student of Comparative Religion, who comes to that subject already prepossessed in favour of his own religion, is quite as scientific in his method as those members of the evolutionary school, who approach their study with an anti-Christian bias which is opposed to scientific detachment. By insisting upon an effective historical criticism, upon contrast as well as likeness, and upon a strict attention to what is known, not what is surmised, of other faiths, Prof. Valensin sets himself to refute, in particular, the theories of those who derive Christianity from ultimate Babylonian sources, or from Buddhist or Mithraic influences. His success would have been greater if he had paid more attention to details and if he had been less rhetorical. Space might have been gained for this purpose by omitting the fourth *Conférence* on 'Le Messianisme d'Israël'. But his work is on the right lines, and again and again he lays his finger on weak places in the evolutionary theory. Thus he points to the absurdity of claiming influence from the side of Buddhism, when the totally different character of its genius compared with that of Christianity is considered. He also rightly ridicules the assumption that the influences from the pagan side could have been so intense and so swift as to produce the Christian verity as found in the Gospels and Epistles in so short a time. This line of argument becomes more effective when it is remembered that purely naturalistic beliefs and mythical fancies are assumed as the originating forces of a *spiritual*

faith within this short period. Another fact, unexplained, is the violent antipathy of Christianity to the religions and beliefs which, *ex hypothesi*, produced it, and its entire supplanting of them. These religions should have lived on side by side with the eclectic faith which borrowed so largely from them. But they died out, as did Mithraism, to which Prof. Valensin devotes an excellent chapter. Mithraism failed because 'le Dieu des chrétiens, Jésus, est une réalité ; celui des mystes, Mithra, n'est qu'un symbole cosmique', and because 'il fallait, pour conquérir les âmes, un Rédempteur historique et, dans la réalité de sa rédemption, l'efficace d'une vertu divine.' No one quite knows what Mithraism was, though some, like M. Reinach, boldly reconstruct it and then assert that Christianity borrowed some of its most vital beliefs from it. This process is heightened by an illegitimate application of Christian terms and formulae to pagan beliefs or customs, which are then assumed to contain what the former connote.

Prof. Valensin's little book should do something to check the bold assertions and assumptions of the rationalistic school, or, at least, to shew that there is still something to be said for the other side. He frequently throws a critical dart at M. Reinach's *Orpheus*, a work which is unworthy of its author and sometimes grotesque in its generalizations and assumptions ; though his more serious works are often marred by the same faults.

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BRYN MAWR COLLEGE MONOGRAPHS.

The Egyptian Elements in the Legend of the Body and Soul, by LOUISE DUDLEY ; and *The Legend of Longinus in Ecclesiastical Tradition and in English Literature, and its connection with the Grail*, by ROSE JEFFRIES PEEBLES. Bryn Mawr College Monographs VIII and IX, one dollar each.

BOTH these studies owe their inception to Professor Carleton Brown, whose English School at Bryn Mawr has achieved a well-merited recognition. In this place attention will naturally be called rather to the theological interest of the enquiries pursued than to their literary side.

The influence of Egyptian mythology and eschatology on Christian ideas of the adventures of the soul after death has long been recognized ; but there does not seem to have been any careful enquiry, such as Miss Dudley's present work, into the precise line of descent, M. Batiouchkof