

believe ; and there is a rare example of his pathos in the way in which he tells us : " I, who am aged, and have gained my title of *Emeritus*, should prefer now to enjoy the pleasures of an old man in the garden, contemplating the wonders of God's creation in the trees, the flowers, the grass, and the birds." But it was not to be. He felt that his end was near. Still he was constrained to visit Eisleben in the beginning of 1546. Disputes had arisen between the Counts of Mansfeldt as to the ecclesiastical regulations of their territory. These Luther examined and settled. He also preached repeatedly. But on the 14th of February he entered the pulpit for the last time ; on the 18th he was taken worse, and died in the same town in which he first drew breath.

It may be contended that Luther came in the fulness of time ; but none the less did he stamp the hallmark of his individual genius upon the grand framework of Christian liberty, of which he laid the foundation and which he lived to see complete. In Germany and the world, as he found them and as he left them, there is a contrast so great that it cannot be claimed as the work of one man ; but without Luther the emancipation of Germany and Christendom from Rome must have taken generations. To those who prefer to dwell on his faults we commend the words of Robert Montgomery :

" If Soul majestic and a dauntless mien ;
 If Faith colossal o'er all fiends and frowns
 Erect ; if Energy that never slack'd,
 With all that galaxy of graces bright
 Which stud the firmament of Christian mind ;
 If these be noble—with a zeal conjoin'd
 That made his life one liturgy of love—
 Then may the Saxon from his death-couch send
 A dreadless answer, that refutes all foes
 Who dwarf his merit, or his creed revile
 With falsehood !"

W. MORRIS COLLES.

Review.

The Gospel and its Witnesses. Some of the chief facts in the Life of our Lord, and the authority of the Evangelical Narratives considered, in lectures chiefly preached at St. James's, Westminster, by HENRY WACE, B.D., D.D., Prebendary of St. Paul's, Preacher of Lincoln's Inn, Professor of Ecclesiastical History in King's College, London, and Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Pp. 210. John Murray. 1883.

This is a book of singular interest and value, and we hope that it will be widely read by thoughtful laymen as well as by the clergy. The

design of the eminent author, it seems, was, in the first place, to exhibit the real character and results of modern criticism in respect to the authenticity of the Gospels, and in the second place to illustrate the credibility and spiritual significance of the main facts which are recorded in them, the truths, *i.e.*, concerning our Lord which are recited in the Creed and in that summary of the Gospel which St. Peter proclaimed to Cornelius. The Professor shows, accordingly, first of all, that the critical inquiries of the last fifty years have failed to establish any objections against the traditional authorship of the four Gospels; and his arguments here, and in other leading portions of the work, will probably be accepted by all his readers, unless there be unreasonable prejudice,¹ as clear and cogent.

Dr. Wace has rare gifts. His erudition is immense; on the judgment, accuracy, and fairness of his writings one may safely rely; but not the smallest charm of his able arguments is their pure and lucid style. He gives the results of laborious investigations in so small a compass, in such simple English, that any layman of average culture, as we have remarked, may peruse them with profit and unflagging interest. Strauss, Baur, Renan, and the author of that pretentious and much-puffed book "Supernatural Religion," are in turn quoted and utilized. But the author does not burden his text with disquisitions, or weary the reader with critical foot-notes; not a page of the book, indeed, is dry or dull.

In the first lecture—"The Christian Creed"—Professor Wace touches upon the woeful failure of the writer of "Supernatural Religion" in regard to Marcion. In his first edition² fifty pages were occupied in arguing against the tradition that Marcion compiled a Gospel from our Gospel of St. Luke; but in his complete edition, published in 1879, though he left those fifty pages nearly in their former shape, he was obliged to confess, with Dr. Sanday's recent work before him, that his conclusions upon this point were mistaken. Dr. Wace refers to another example of this rash sceptical criticism. A recent discovery³ establishes the fact that the "Diatessaron" of Tatian is a welding together of the four Canonical Gospels. Tatian is now admitted, even by Rationalist critics abroad, as witnessing to the acceptance of our Four Gospels in the time of Justin Martyr. "In other words," says Dr. Wace, "our Four Gospels, and only our four, are allowed to have been the recognised authorities respecting the life and ministry of our Lord, at a time when their very existence is denied by the author of 'Supernatural Religion.'" In corroboration, an impartial witness, Dr. Weiss ("Das Leben Jesu," 1882), is quoted with effect; and our author, in summing up, lays down the truth "that no alternative theory to the traditions of the Christian Church respecting the authorship of the Gospels has ever held its ground, and that no definite fact in opposition to these traditions has ever been established, even to the general satisfaction of negative critics themselves."

Before we pass from the first lecture, one passage, as to the temper of believing controversialists, may well be quoted. Dr. Wace says:

It is a common reproach against us that we enter on the discussion with a special interest in favour of the old faith. Of course we do; and it would be a shame to us if we did not. We have the same interest in believing the truth of the Christian Creed that all men have for believing in the truth of any cause with

¹ Strauss said: "That which cannot happen did not happen."

² Published in 1874, and praised at the time by some timid reviewers, who ought to have known better.

³ The discovery of St. Ephraem's Commentary on the "Diatessaron." See THE CHURCHMAN, vol. iv. p. 463.

which the civilization they inherit is indissolubly bound up . . . and with which the deepest, and purest, and most elevated of their feelings are united. It would be a bitter thing, no doubt, and bitter to others than Christians—it would be a shock to human nature, and would shake our faith in the trustworthiness of our faculties—to have to recognise that the self-sacrifice of Christian martyrs and the devoted lives of Christian saints, inseparably united as they are in a manner presented by no other religion, with all that is noblest and most progressive in history, with the highest hopes of the human race even for this world—to have to recognise, I say, that all this was founded upon a series of illusions. But, nevertheless, none have the right to say of us, any more than they have a right to presume respecting any other men, that we are disqualified by our prejudices from recognising plain facts. It is facts that we want, and nothing else. Our creed, as has already been stated is a creed of facts, and every light that can be thrown upon the evidence for them is welcome to us.

On the other hand, we are justified in saying of the principal writers among our antagonists—for they say it of themselves—that they are so far from entering on the consideration of the subject impartially that they actually prejudice the very question in dispute.

The second lecture concludes with a striking passage on the internal evidence of the Gospels. The Evangelists, says Dr. Wace, are their own best witnesses. There is not a word for which they are responsible which does not harmonize with the highest conceivable ideals of all that is good and true. To suppose that such writers should have been visionaries, capable of hallucinations about occurrences which were indissolubly bound up with the truths which they proclaimed, and on which they staked their lives, “would be worse than miraculous; it would be monstrous.” Dr. Wace concludes as follows :

Such evidence may not, indeed, be formally demonstrative. In that respect it shares the character of almost all historical and literary evidence. But it will ever be convincing to those who recognise the supreme moral and spiritual force inherent in our Lord’s words, and in the records of the Evangelists. As we have seen, the objections raised against the authenticity of a Gospel like that of St. John depend, in the ultimate resort, on the question whether the discourses of our Lord in that Gospel are pregnant with moral and spiritual truth, or are arid and metaphysical. A man whose moral sense is closed to their force cannot be convinced by any amount of evidence that the Gospel, as a whole, is the work of an Apostle. But in proportion as those words enter your hearts and pierce them like a two-edged sword, in proportion as the moral force of the Gospels overpowers your whole nature, will you be prepared to give due weight to the other elements in their testimony, and will you be disposed to think that the most incredible of all things would be that they should not be literally true.

In the third lecture—“The Birth of our Lord”—are fine thoughts forcibly expressed. Thus, it is well said that in the whole character of Christ¹ there is something absolutely unique; and what more natural than that there should be something unique in His *origin*? This is the primary truth of the Christian Creed; but it is “directly at issue with the ideas which have been acquiring increasing influence throughout this century;” men’s minds “have become penetrated with the conception of development or of evolution.” They shrink from accepting, therefore, the notion of a break or a new commencement in human life. Hegel’s

¹ Rousseau’s remark has always seemed to us very pointed. Did the Apostles *invent* Christ? “The inventor would be more wonderful than the hero.” And Parker’s—Supposing that Newton never lived: who did his works and thought his thoughts? “It takes a Newton to forge a Newton.”

philosophy has widely spread; the doctrine of physical evolution, nowadays so fashionable, is but one application of this idea. Miracles had, of course, to be explained away, and especially the primary miracle, that of the Incarnation. The origin of Christianity, according to this development philosophy, could not be supernatural; the Gospel history must be explained on natural grounds and by natural causes. This, it must be borne in mind, says Dr. Wace, is the key to the whole critical assault of this century on the authority and credibility of the Scripture history, whether of the Old or the New Testament:

It has not, in any instance, been prompted by an impartial and independent study of the facts for themselves. The critical difficulties did not make the philosophy. Men have allowed their minds, in the Apostles' language, to be made spoil of by a vain philosophy, which assumed that no influence had ever operated on human nature above human nature itself; and then, when they were confronted with the momentous facts of the Christian Creed and the Christian Scriptures, they set themselves with desperate efforts to explain away their credibility, to transform their records, and to find excuses of whatever kind for evading their evidence. After being applied to the Gospel history and the Apostolical records, an attempt is now being made to apply this philosophy to the Old Testament, and to represent the faith of the Jews, not as the result of a supernatural education by the miraculous interposition of God, but as the mere natural development of Semitic tendencies. The attempt has failed with respect to the New Testament, and has resulted in the critical defeat of each successive school in Germany; and a similar defeat may safely be predicted for this new application of the philosophy of the century.

The lecture on "The Witness to our Lord's Resurrection" is excellent. It contains some of the best bits of a masterly work. For instance (p. 156) we read of the Evangelists:

The mere fact of our Saviour having left the grave was but a part, and comparatively a small part, in their view of the Resurrection. The essential part of the Resurrection was our Lord's reappearance to His disciples in a glorious form, and the fact that He was still living as a Prince and a Saviour to them.

Again, on p. 162 we read:

As an historic event, the deliverance of our Lord from the grave would have been, no doubt, of profound and momentous significance; but it would not have been the reality upon which Christians lived. It was not merely, in a word, belief in the resurrection, but belief in a risen and living Christ, which was, and is, the corner-stone of the Christian edifice.

Other sentences on the same subject (and from other lectures) we should gladly quote; but we must refer our readers to the book. It is a worthy companion to the "Foundations of Faith" (Bampton Lectures for 1879), a book which was strongly recommended in *THE CHURCHMAN*.

Short Notices.

IN the *Church Quarterly* for October—an average number, to say the least—appears an interesting article on Professor Palmer. "The Suppression of Convocation" in 1707 is well worth reading. "The Prospects of Religion and Society in France" is ably written, and has several striking quotations. M. Jules Simon's remarkable book, entitled *Dieu*,