

have got him even more joy now. He seems to have been much troubled with the number of the children of Israel who came out of Egypt. But there are greater things in the Book of Exodus than that. His lack of imagination makes his efforts at humour somewhat alarming. Still, we rejoice with him in his joy over a new-found Bible.

The great religious conflict of our day is the conflict about the very existence of religion. Unbelief in the fact and the need of religion, that is the unbelief which is most prevalent and most paralyzing. We must meet it in every way, with every tried weapon we possess. But first we must realize its existence, and we must know what it is. The book for our purpose is *Naturalism and Religion*, by Dr. Rudolf Otto, Professor of Theology in the University of Göttingen, which has just been translated by J. Arthur Thomson, Professor of Natural History in the University of Aberdeen, and Margaret R. Thomson; and edited, with an Introduction, by the Rev. W. D. Morrison, LL.D. (Williams & Norgate; 6s.).

Tent and Testament is the title of a new book on Palestine, by the late Herbert Rix, B.A. (Williams & Norgate; 8s. 6d. net). It is a record of travel, of travel in unfrequented ways sometimes, by a man of independent mind, who carried the Book with him to every spot of the Land which he visited, making his observations and forming his judgments for himself. Unfortunately, he was hampered by ill-health. 'We returned to Nazareth,' he says, 'by the road which had brought us there [*i.e.* to Bethlehem]. Had I been physically fit, my observations might have been more adequate; but ills of the flesh, from which I had long been suffering, rendered riding painful, and walking almost impossible.' But for this his book might have taken its place beside Stanley and Smith. As it is, we must value it for its information. The Bethlehem from which he returned to Nazareth was the Bethlehem of Galilee. His account of it is not very full, but distinctly suggestive, although he does not think that our Lord was born there.

The Liberal Movement in Germany.

BY THE REV. JOHN MACCONNACHIE, M.A., UDDINGSTON.

II.

The Methods of the Liberals.

WE shall now look at some of their *methods* of work, and first at the 'popular lecture' or 'Vortrag,' which has attained such vogue among them in recent years.

As far back as 1865 an association was founded in the interests of the liberal theology, called the 'Protestantenverein,' whose object was to disseminate the liberal views among the people, and especially among the non-churchgoing, by means of lectures, etc., and ever since it has maintained a vigorous life. But a new impulse was given to the use of the 'lecture' as a missionary agency by Harnack's famous lectures in Berlin in the winter of 1899-1900 on 'Das Wesen des Christenthum,' which was hailed by many as the first popularization of the new theology. Men saw how much interest

could be awakened, in spite of all the Cassandra cries about religious indifference, and the day of the 'Vortrag' was fully come. A second impulse was given by the lectures which Weinel delivered in Solingen in 1902-1903 on 'Jesus,' which created so much stir that the local authorities forbade him to continue them. Now, all up and down the country, lectures are being given by the 'Liberalen' to the educated laity on Old and New Testament subjects, on general questions like 'Faith,' 'Revelation,' 'The Nature of Religion'; in fact, an endless variety of themes is being dealt with, and the strongest men on the liberal side, like Bousset, Troeltsch, and Niebergall, are throwing themselves enthusiastically into the work. Professors and Privatdozenten are much more popular than

clergymen as lecturers, because, having no confessional obligations, they are supposed to speak from an unprejudiced mind, and with the voice of 'science,' and not the mere voice of the Church. To show how thoroughly this work is being taken up, it may be mentioned that a book has lately been published (*Die Arbeit an den Suchenden aller Stände*: Wielandt) which discusses through nearly two hundred pages such questions as the arrangements, costs, time and place of lectures, choice of lecturers, choice and handling of themes, etc. These lectures are mainly directed to the cultured classes, but for the benefit of the working people 'Discussions Abende' are now being held in many of the great industrial centres, to which come men of all possible creeds, often including many Social Democrats, and the discussions are sometimes continued far into the night. It must be confessed that frequently more heat than light results from such discussions; nevertheless, the 'Liberalen' feel that here also a field of activity lies to their hand.

For other classes of the community also, special lectures are arranged. There is one class especially whom the 'Liberalen' are very anxious to win to their side, the 'Volks Schullehrer' (elementary teachers). Hitherto, unlike the Universities, the Seminaries in which they receive their training have remained untouched by modern religious thought, and the ordinary country teacher comes to his work as unfamiliar with the new theology as the mass of the people. The 'Liberalen' rightly perceive how great would be their gain if they could enlist the sympathy and support of the 'Volks Schullehrer,' and they are sparing no pains to attain this end.

But we have said enough to show that the popular lecture is now an instrument of far-reaching influence in the hands of the 'Liberalen.' Let us now turn to another side of their activity.

It had long been felt that theological books were too dear, and written in too dry and academic a style, and that if the new theology was to be brought within the reach of the people, it must be by books of a much cheaper order, and of a simpler and more popular style. Various brochures had appeared, but nothing of a systematic order had been attempted until May 1904, when there appeared the first volume of a series, which may almost be regarded as epoch-making—*The Religionsgeschichtliche Volksbücher*. Written by eminent men in simple, popular style, and sold at the low price

of sixpence per volume, they have attained an immense circulation. Their object, as the editor says, is to answer all questions, 'klar und furchtlos,' to provide for the educated classes of society a thorough orientation in those things which are neglected in the religious instruction of the young, and seldom spoken of from the pulpits. While they treat of a great variety of subjects, 'Old Testament,' 'New Testament,' 'History of Religion,' and 'Church History,' a remarkable unity runs through them all; for they all start from the same foundation principles, the 'moderne Weltanschauung,' and the application of the scientific methods which regulate investigation in all other realms of knowledge.

The 'Positive' party has not been slow to perceive the influence these books were bound to exert. 'The religionsgeschichtliche Schule,' says one, 'is to be the enemy of the next decade; the "Positive" circles have the duty laid upon them to enter the conflict in which there can be no quarter.' As a counterblast, they have issued a series of a similar kind under the general title, *Biblische Zeit und Streitfragen*, which have not as yet, however, attained to anything like the same circulation.

Numerous other series with the same object in view—the education of the people—are being issued from the 'Liberal' press, to which we cannot refer in detail. One series of great interest has just been concluded, entitled, *Neue Pfade zum alten Gott*, while Weinell is at present engaged in issuing another series, called *Lebensfragen*, which is meeting with great acceptance among the more highly cultured laity.

Much is also being done by means of newspapers, secular and religious. The *Christliche Welt*, which commands a wide circulation, is a frank exponent of liberal views, and for twenty years has been sowing its seed up and down the land. Of late the 'Liberalen' have also been capturing some of the Sunday papers which circulate among the common people, and which hitherto have maintained a high and dry orthodoxy. But their activities in the literary field are legion.

Still another field, however, they have annexed for their industry. A reproach was often made against the liberal theology that it did nothing for the cause of Foreign Missions. Accordingly, in 1884, a Missionary Society, to be conducted in the modern

spirit, was formed, 'Der Allgemein Evangelisch-Protestantische Missionsverein,' which since then has been carrying on work in China and Japan, and in the latter country, especially, professes to have met with much success. It aims less at the

gathering of single converts than at the general leavening of Japanese society with the Christian spirit. By the orthodox party at home, and other German missionaries abroad, it is regarded with little favour.

Professor Gwatkin on Revelation.

BY PROFESSOR THE REV. ROBERT MACKINTOSH, D.D., MANCHESTER.

IN studying Professor Gwatkin's remarkably interesting Gifford Lectures,¹ one may be in danger of losing the general point of view in the mass of details. Does not his inquiry into the 'knowledge of God' really amount to a survey of *Revelation*? Mainly or professedly, the less central portion of revelation is under discussion—natural theology or natural religion; what older divines called 'general revelation.' Still the book investigates all human thought of God, upon the assumption that what man discovers, God reveals, and that what God reveals, man must discover and appropriate. It is only fair, when Gifford lecturers who deny supernatural revelation are allowed to discuss Christianity as one great phase of natural religion, that a Gifford lecturer who accepts the faith of Christendom should also have liberty to glance from lower forms of Divine knowledge to the highest. This liberty is tellingly maintained and suggestively employed by Professor Gwatkin.

The conception of *Christian* revelation with which Professor Gwatkin works seems to be essentially this: It is the best and most conclusive proof of the goodness of God. What we divine elsewhere, with lesser strength of assurance, comes to us through Christ with the fullest, clearest proof, the fact of God's goodness, in which men may trust. Still—if we rightly understand the significance of the grouping of parties given under 'Modern Thought'—Christian revelation is an appeal to reason, and is subject to reason, and gives the same sort of knowledge and certainty regarding God as other forms of that two-sided process which some chiefly contemplate as God's revelation, but others chiefly as man's discovery.

¹ *The Knowledge of God and its Historical Development.* By H. M. Gwatkin, D.D. (T. & T. Clark. 2 vols. 12s. net.)

Better in degree—enormously better—Christian revelation, on this view, does not seem to differ in kind from inferior revelation.

This is, indeed, to do Butler's work over again! And it suggests the same hesitations which one feels in presence of Butler's devotion to natural religion. When he calls it, as he repeatedly does, 'essential religion,' the Christian reader finds something ominous or menacing in the phrase. Butler, strong in his sense of justice, rebukes the shallow Deistic creed, with Hedonism for its rule of life and an abstractly benevolent God for its highest figure. But let him pass on to Christianity, and Butler is at a loss. Neither before the event, nor after the event, does he see anything in Christ's atonement fitted to make it of 'that efficacy' which we know by authoritative revelation that it actually possesses. It is a sure fact, but impervious and opaque to our minds. Better abstain from all theories, while firmly and reverently urging this fact! What does this mean? Except that Butler, doggedly loyal to the Christian facts and forces, fails utterly to find himself at home in them, *as he is at home* in the solemn thought of God's justice. Justice? yes; redeeming love? no! So, while Butler—with what we need not hesitate to call a fragment of Christianity—rebukes the Deistic reading of Natural Religion, he can do nothing, he can urge nothing regarding Christianity in its fullness, beyond silent acceptance of an unknown and unknowable redemption. Natural religion is regnant with Butler, 'revealed religion' is a stranger and a pilgrim in his world of thought.

Professor Gwatkin, of course, is in a much more favourable position as an interpreter of the intellectual contents of Christianity. One may recognize this in his central point of view, as already formulated. It is surely a *Christian* truth that our