

The Ring of Pope Xystus.

Mr. F. C. Conybeare is the translator and commentator of the first English edition of *The Ring of Pope Xystus*, which has been published most attractively by Messrs. Williams & Norgate (4s. 6d. net). The translator believes that *The Ring of Pope Xystus* is a Christian recension, made not later than the middle of the second century, of an earlier collection of aphorisms, and perhaps of a collection of such collections. It is neither wholly Stoic, nor wholly Pythagorean, but as it has come down to us, we are bound to attribute it to a Christian. The Shorter Catechism says, 'Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.' Pope Xystus says, 'Deem not one sin to be lesser than another.' Are they both right?

Bible Notes.

For the last six years courses of 'Bible Notes' have appeared in the *Friend*, and have been republished in attractive little volumes with inter-

leaved writing-paper. The sixth volume, reprinting the papers of 1909, deals with the writings of Paul. The author is the Rev. Robert S. Franks, M.A., of Woodbrooke, a man who has a keen sense of the value of accurate up-to-date scholarship, and a teacher who can write for teachers. The book may be had from the Woodbrooke Extension Committee, 3 George Street, Croydon (1s. net).

The Social Gospel.

In the present welter on the social question it is necessary to know whom to read. Professor Shailer Mathews is one who may be read, and who will even richly repay reading. He has already published *The Social Teaching of Jesus*, in 1897, as well as *The Church and the Changing Order*, in 1907. Now he has published *The Social Gospel* (Philadelphia: The Griffith & Rowland Press; 50 cents net). It is a beginner's book, and covers the whole social continent. At the end of each chapter there are questions on the chapter itself and questions for further study.

The Disciples and Christ's Resurrection.¹

BY PROFESSOR THE REV. J. S. BANKS, D.D., HEADINGLEY COLLEGE, LEEDS.

Two things clearly appear from the Resurrection narratives. First, that the attitude of the Apostles and other disciples towards the idea of resurrection was at first one of doubt, not to use a stronger term; and secondly, that the doubt was replaced by faith on the first Easter Sunday. The fact that the women, who had watched the burial by Joseph of Arimathea, brought spices to anoint the body shows that they had no expectation of a resurrection. The same is proved of the Apostles and others by the way in which they received the first reports brought by the women of what they had seen and heard at the grave. They tell the Apostles of the empty grave, the message of the angels and of Christ Himself who had met them as they were returning; Mary Magdalene, in particular, tells of her interview with the Risen One. 'And these words appeared in their sight as idle talk; and they disbelieved them' (Lk 24¹¹, Mk

16¹¹). Peter and John then go to the grave, and find the conditions as the women had said. Peter returned home 'wondering,' perplexed, unable to explain what he saw. John says of himself that he 'believed.' This is John's recollection after many years of his feeling at the time; but it does not appear that he said anything to others on the subject.

There is no sign whatever of any predisposition to faith on the disciples' part, but the opposite. If we think that this is improbable in view of the references of Christ during His life to His death and rising again, we are reading our views into the Apostles' circumstances. Full consideration of the earthly Messianic views of the disciples and the extraordinary character of the resurrection idea will suggest an opposite conclusion. The fact that the Evangelists record both the predictions of the Resurrection by Christ and the failure of the disciples to understand them is certainly evidence of honesty. It would seem that, despite all Christ said before-

¹ See *The Appearances of our Lord after His Passion*. By H. B. Swete, D.D. Macmillan. 2s. 6d. net.

hand on the subject, the facts were so transcendent that their meaning could not be gathered from words, but only from the final issues. The first attitude of the disciples was natural, and one that we should have taken in their circumstances.

It is no less certain that on the first Easter Sunday the attitude of doubt gave place to faith, and that three occasions of the great change were Christ's appearance to Peter, to the two Emmaus disciples, and to the assembled apostles and others. There can be little doubt that the report brought by the Emmaus travellers on 'that very day' made a deep impression on the disciples (Lk 24³⁵), and all the more that it was preceded by the testimony of Peter. The Emmaus travellers found the eleven and others 'saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon' (v.³⁸). The only other reference to the appearance to Peter is Paul's definite statement (1 Co 15⁵). We can easily understand how Paul knew this. When he went to Jerusalem three years after his conversion (Gal 1¹⁸) to interview Peter, they must often during the fifteen days have interchanged views respecting the past. Nothing is said of what took place between the Lord and Peter. Probably Paul himself did not know. The subject was too personal and sacred for Peter to speak of in detail. His testimony to the eleven first broke the gloom resting on the disciples; and so Peter fulfilled the charge of Christ, 'Do thou, when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren' (chap. 22³²).

We may note parenthetically that some difficulty is caused by the remark in the Mark appendix that the assembled disciples did not believe on the report of the Emmaus travellers (chap. 16¹³). Dr. Swete's comment is: 'Mark's statement is either from a later and less accurate account, or it must be taken to refer to some who still held out against the growing evidence of the Resurrection.'

The twofold witness of Peter and the Emmaus reporters is then finally sealed by the sudden appearance of the Lord Himself in the midst of the assembled disciples (Lk 24³⁶⁻⁴²). The disciples are naturally 'terrified and affrighted,' and think that it is a spirit. Christ reasons with the doubt, and shows them His hands and His feet. While they still 'disbelieved for joy, and wondered,' He takes food with them, and proceeds to expound the fulfilment of O.T. prophecy in what has taken place. This appearance and action of Christ Him-

self evidently completes the work of conviction in the case at least of the majority of the apostles.¹ Thomas is dealt with separately. Luke's words, 'disbelieved for joy, and wondered,' while verbally different, substantially accord with John's words, 'The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord' (20²⁰). This complete account of what took place on the first Easter Sunday is found in St. Luke (chap. 24), and it is not crossed in any serious respect by anything in the three other accounts. It might seem as if the account of the Ascension (v.⁵⁰) followed immediately on what precedes, but this is not necessarily the case. There is some difficulty in fitting in the scene on the lake in the Johannine appendix (chap. 21), but this is only part of the larger question of the relation of the Galilean and the Judæan ministry as well as of the Synoptic and the Johannine Gospels.

On the events of Easter Sunday Dr. Swete remarks: 'The appearances on Easter Day, regarded as a whole, bear the stamp of the mind of Jesus Christ; the Easter sayings are such as no sane criticism can attribute to the imagination of the Apostolic Age. It needs a sturdy scepticism to doubt that these narratives rest on a solid basis of fact, or that words so characteristic of the great Master are in substance the words of the Risen Christ.'

Only Paul mentions the appearance to James (1 Co 15⁷). But the statement has every element of probability in its favour, especially in view of the position taken by James in the Church at Jerusalem. It does not appear that the brothers of the Lord had believed during His life. James becoming a believer was probably due to the Resurrection, and is strong evidence of the truth of the Resurrection. What more natural than that Christ should appear to James, who seems to have been the oldest of His brethren, and was a strong character? Paul would certainly learn the fact in the interview at Jerusalem already referred to.

The peculiar character of the intercourse between Christ and the disciples during the forty days is best explained on the supposition of a change in His person that is going on but is not complete. Not complete, for He eats with them: and yet great, for He is not recognized at first. It is so with Mary Magdalene and the disciples beside the

¹ Luke says 'eleven.' He does not refer to the case of Thomas, but seems to blend the two scenes together; cf. Lk 24³⁹ and Jn 20²⁷.

lake, as well as the two Emmaus disciples, although in the last instance it is specially said that 'their eyes were holden.' He does not remain with the disciples, but comes and goes at pleasure. He appears in their midst 'when the doors were shut,' and as suddenly vanishes. Dr. Forrest reminds us that Christ here hovers between or belongs to two worlds, the earthly and the spiritual, exhibiting the characteristics of both. 'Christ hovers, as it were, on the border line of two different worlds, and partakes of the characteristics of both, because He is revealing the one to the other.' Strange as it may seem, this condition is natural in the circumstances of the case. Any other account would have raised objections. His body was in process of spiritualization. He had not yet the complete spiritual or glorified body of the heavenly life, but was on the way to it. The final, permanent transfiguration was going on. Hence the doubts of some spectators, apparently to the last. 'Some doubted,' is said of the appearance to the eleven on the mountain in Galilee (Mt 28¹⁷), which appearance Dr. Swete identifies with that to 'above five hundred brethren at once' (1 Co 15⁶), 'of whom the greater part' were living when St. Paul wrote.

Two other details referred to by Dr. Swete are worthy of mention. He thinks that the Ascension (not in Galilee, but 'over against Bethany') presents even a greater difficulty to modern thought than the Resurrection. It seems directly to transgress the most elementary laws of matter. But we must remember the 'spiritual' body, the change

being completed at the Ascension. The essence of the Ascension is the definitive withdrawal into the spiritual world, which is not of necessity remote from the material world. The very idea of remoteness belongs only to the material; the same applies to Ascension and all physical movement. 'It is a fact, as we believe, that forty days more or less after the Resurrection the Lord finally withdrew His risen body from the eyes and touch of His disciples, and that in the moment of His disappearance He was enveloped by a passing cloud, which travelled upwards as if it were carrying Him up to heaven. And this fact was a symbol of a great and vital Christian truth, which is also a fact, but in the spiritual world.' 'He is *at the right hand of God*, in the highest region to which human nature can attain; and yet behind the thin veil of phenomena He is still in our midst.'

Dr. Swete also emphasizes the idea of the 'spiritual' body in regard to the future resurrection of the dead. 'What is meant by resurrection in this sense? Not resuscitation, as many of the teachers of the ancient Church supposed, but as St. Paul teaches, the clothing of the spirit with a spiritual body.' The literal sense was the one generally held in early days, as by Tertullian, Jerome, and even Augustine. Origen and the Alexandrians advocated a more spiritual view, but in vain. The Roman form of the Apostles' Creed said 'resurrection of the flesh,' and even 'this flesh.' See Dr. Swete's work on the Apostles' Creed, p. 93 ff.

The Pilgrim's Progress.

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Ignorance, Christian, and Hopeful.

REVELATIONS.

THIS last part of the discourse between the pilgrims and Ignorance is the cleverest of all, and that which shows the furthest insight into character and human nature. Ignorance upon the question of revelations reveals himself and his whole attitude to life and thought. He is opposed to mysteries

of all kinds—and that in this so mysterious world, where every 'flower in the crannied wall' contains, if we could but read it, the whole mystery of God and man.

It is, unfortunately, a familiar attitude of mind in all generations. 'Jupiter' Carlyle, in his *Autobiography*, speaks of some one as 'a good man, and had not a particle of enthusiasm.' Froude