

BOOK REVIEWS.

MODERN THOUGHT AND THE CRISIS IN BELIEF. By *R. M. Wenley*. New York: Macmillan, 1909. Pp. 364. Price, \$1.50 net.

This is the 1909 volume of Baldwin Lectures founded and endowed by Bishop Harris to be delivered each year at the University of Michigan by "a learned clergyman or other communicant of the Protestant Episcopal Church . . . for the Establishment and Defence of Christian Truth." Professor Wenley, who holds the chair of philosophy there, is well fitted to contribute his share toward carrying out the Bishop's design although he modestly feels the lack of technical theological training. In this volume he endeavors to "indicate some reasons for doubting doubt that remains merely destructive." He knows that the performance of the task he has undertaken is likely to call down "anathemas alike from defenders of 'the faith once delivered to the saints'—for whom religion has achieved finality—and from rationalists who, in their horror of the sympathetic fallacy, cherish the notion that technical research can accomplish a perfect work." He knows it is hopeless to expect to conciliate these two parties or to convince them, but he writes rather for those who believe that the contemporary course of science and scholarship is tending towards the establishment of Christian truth rather than its apologetic defence or contemptuous dismissal.

In the first lecture, "Sheaves on the Threshing-Floor," Professor Wenley has drawn attention to the alterations that overtake reflective constructions of belief. In the next three, "The Waters of Meribah," "Breaches of the House," and "Humiliation in the Midst," he has summarized movements that justify Lord Hugh Cecil's declaration in the House of Commons, that "the doctrines of Christianity have passed into the region of doubt," indicating the present views on physical science and higher criticism from the conclusions of others. The last chapters, entitled "The Adjournment of Well-being," "The Penumbra of Belief," and "The Valley of Blessing," are devoted to an examination into the evidences of Christianity.

The keynote of the work seems to be the primary importance of religion to mankind, which the author would emphasize in the face of higher criticism and the truths it has opened up with the result that in the minds of many, the place of religion in the human life has often been greatly minimized. His final exhortation is: "And, if the mystics be few, the wandbearers many, let us remember constantly that the few must receive from the many that human extract whence they distil their message of new hope, bringing the Christ near, because expressing His secret in contemporary language, moods, and aspirations."