

## "Christianity as a Natural Religion."



R. W. H. Mallock is always interesting, no matter where of he writes, but most of all when his subject is Christianity. As to his orthodoxy or otherwise, theologians must decide, not hastily, it is to be hoped, nor yet on narrow or unyielding lines. Such decision is, of course, wholly beyond my province, as it is wholly, or practically, beside our present purpose, which is, simply, to call attention to his article, under the above title, in the September number of the "Nineteenth Century."

Briefly, his contention is that Christianity, though originally made known to us by means of a Divine revelation, becomes, so soon as man assimilates it, a "natural" religion. He gives, by way of simile, the case of some savage tribe endowed with all the powers necessary for nutrition, but ignorant of the "art" of feeding. A white man, arriving among them, shows them how to prepare and how to eat, the food, for want of which they are in danger of dying. Such knowledge, as first given, is of the nature of a "natural" process. The illustration is striking if neither adequate nor convincing. Yet, to the layman, it would seem that, since our spiritual "appetites" are capable of feeding on "the sincere milk of the word", and even on the "meat" spoken of by S. Paul, the process of assimilation, "digestion," and "that ye may grow thereby" must be, in a very real sense, a "natural" one.

Mr. Mallock further draws attention to the parallelisms between Christianity and the "ethical paganism"—Roman, Mithric, Buddhist,—Which bears so startling a resemblance to the One Truth. This, again, is the domain of the theologian, but, even here the path is so plain that "the wayfaring man, though a "fool, shall not err therein." S. Paul, for one, will be found to have dealt with this point: "God left not Himself without witness" he declares, and further, that "in every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh "righteousness, is accepted of Him." He also speaks of men "seeking after God, if haply they might find Him;" indeed, his whole sermon, preached on Mars' Hill, at Athens, bears witness to the truths that underlay "ethical paganism." But, after all, S.