

## Reviews.

*Mind and Deity.* By John Laird. (George Allen & Unwin, 10s. 6d. net.)

This is the second of a series of Gifford Lectures delivered at Glasgow University by Dr. Laird, who is Regius Professor of Moral Philosophy at Aberdeen. Dr. Laird is a sincere and honest, as well as a competent thinker, as those of us who have read him before are aware. In the present instance he is dealing with the foundations of all religious faith, and his closely-reasoned argument never allows the mind of the reader to slacken.

In what he calls "an ennead in three triads," that is to say nine lectures in three sets of three, Dr. Laird discusses the Ontological argument in its various aspects. He first analyses the Nature of Mind with the implications for Idealism; thereafter he deals with the Nature of God, His Omniscience, Divine Personality and Providence; and finally he examines the whole subject in the light of Metaphysics where we look at Value and Existence, the Moral Proofs of Theism, and Pantheism. A final chapter of Concluding Reflections completes the book.

As can be gathered from the summary, the book is hardly a bed-time companion. It demands close attention, and even if one feels the conclusions to be, from the Christian point of view, somewhat negative—Dr. Laird, for instance, inclines to an impersonal rather than a personal theism—one cannot but be stimulated by contact with so able a thinker. In some personal words at the end Dr. Laird admits that he himself "did not appreciate the force of theism" when he began his enquiry, and he adds that, as the result of his close analysis, while he does not think any theistic argument conclusive, he inclines to the belief that theistic metaphysics is stronger than most. It may not seem much, but from so honest a thinker it means a great deal.

HENRY COOK.

*The Night is Far Spent,* by Kenneth Ingram. (George Allen & Unwin, 5s.)

In the circumstances which now challenge the world and the churches alike leading Christians fall into three main groups. The first perceive the crisis but not the vital issues; the second stridently accuse the Church of incompetence and her officials of being traitors to Christ; the third appreciate the real forces at work, largely understand the situation and believe the Church is capable of rising to grasp the opportunities before her. To this

third type Mr. Ingram evidently belongs, for his book proves he is alive to the changes taking place and to the possibilities lying ahead. He maintains that only Christianity, shorn of non-fundamentals, expressed in terms the mind of the new age can understand, realising that because God is in history social and spiritual issues cannot be separated, can supply the dynamic necessary to build a new and better civilisation, and he deals with a variety of topics in passing, all in a thoroughly interesting manner. Convincing, yet not offensively dogmatic, reasonably and clearly expressed as this stimulating book is, it should appeal not only to those younger clergy and ministers who are "afire with discontent," but to all who want to see the Church spiritually reborn and making a triumphant impact upon the coming age.

GRAHAM W. HUGHES.

*The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages.* By Beryl Smalley. (Oxford University Press, 17s. 6d.)

In this learned and fascinating study Miss Smalley has contributed much to our knowledge of the subject of her research. That subject is somewhat narrower than the title might lead the reader to expect, for she terminates her work at about the year 1300 A.D., and imposes upon it the geographical limitation to England, northern France and the Rhineland. But within the limits she sets herself, she has carried out intensive and detailed research, much of it on the basis of unpublished manuscripts, and she unveils a surprising amount of activity in Biblical study in ages that we commonly, and unjustly, label "dark." She is particularly interested in the influence of Jewish writers on Christian exegesis, and especially in the influence of Rashi. She shows how the allegorical method of interpretation that had become completely divorced from the plain meaning of the text, and lifted the Biblical revelation out of the history in which its feet are so firmly set, gave place in this age to a return to sounder and more sober principles, and she ascribes the credit for this in no small measure to the Jewish scholars who were frequently consulted. To many readers it will be a surprise to learn that Old Testament scholarship was more soundly based than New, and that there was a much greater interest in the original Hebrew of the Old than in the original Greek of the New Testament, though interest in the latter was not entirely wanting.

About a quarter of the book is devoted to a writer whose work has suffered an undeserved neglect, and who is almost unknown, Andrew of St. Victor. Miss Smalley has devoted herself to the study of manuscripts of his works, from which she quotes considerable extracts in an Appendix. While there is no

definite evidence in support of the tradition that Andrew was an Englishman, Miss Smalley believes that it is sound, and certainly much of his work was done in England. He was a man who loved the Bible for itself, who was given to "explaining Scripture in terms of everyday life," and who made it live with fresh beauty and vigour for his readers, and he appears to have exercised a much greater influence than his forgotten name would suggest.

The chapter on Andrew is preceded by a short treatment of the Fathers, an account of Biblical study in the monastic and cathedral schools, and an account of Andrew's predecessors in the school of St. Victor, while the later sections of the book deal with Peter Comestor, Peter the Chanter, Stephen Langton and the Friars. In her concluding chapter Miss Smalley observes how large a part in her story was played by Englishmen—Bede and Alcuin, Stephen Langton, Robert Grosseteste, Roger Bacon, William de la Mare and Nicholas Trivet—and observes that "Englishmen have always preferred a concrete thing, such as a text, to an abstract idea." It would be a fitting sequel to her study if she could trace the influence of the spirit of the circles she describes on the ages that followed their own. In a sentence she declares that there was a continuous sequence from Andrew of St. Victor to the nineteenth century Benjamin Boothroyd, but it lies outside her purview to show how this deep interest in the meaning of Scripture lies behind the work of Wiclif and Tindale. It is not surprising that the successors of Englishmen like Andrew—if he was an Englishman—who sought to get behind fanciful exegesis to the meaning of the text itself, should be eager to put that text into the mother-tongue of their fellows, to become in its turn the direct inspiration of that devotion to Biblical religion, of which our Baptist faith is one of the fruits. It is highly probable that our own roots lie more deeply in the period Miss Smalley studies than we commonly suppose. But whether so or not, she has performed a real service in dispelling some of our darkness concerning it, and in unveiling the active interest in the Bible which marked the mediaeval cloister. "If a man does not bring his common sense to bear upon Scripture," said Anselm of Laon, "the more subtle, the madder he is." To the strain of common sense restored to Biblical study in the period to which this work is devoted we owe a lasting debt.

H. H. ROWLEY.

*Let's Try Reality*, by W. Rowland Jones (George Allen & Unwin, 3s. 6d. net).

The author is a Manchester vicar, and he indulges in much plain speaking against the churches, politicians, bankers and

others. He can tear a passion to tatters, "I am tired of shams . . . and I am sick of them," but he cannot so readily construct the new world. Before he published this book he wrote weekly articles for a newspaper; perhaps he had better return to the newspaper.

*The Upper Room*, by R. A. Edwards (Methuen & Co., 7s. 6d. net).

Christ lived and spoke in the Jewish world and talked to Jews. When this is remembered, the story and meaning of Christianity is seen in a fresh and sometimes in a more useful light. So the author bids us enter the Upper Room and listen to the Master Himself as He talks to His disciples.

The Incarnation, the Atonement, the Lord's Supper and the Kingdom, are discussed, and an effort made to understand what the terms conveyed to the disciples. The Bible student will find this book repay careful study.

*Christian Reunion, A Plea for Action*, by Hugh Martin (Student Christian Movement Press, 6s. net).

Mr. Martin is the flaming apostle of Christian Reunion, although when he thinks of the indifference of the average church member he may feel himself a voice crying in the wilderness. He believes that what he describes as the disunion of the churches means waste and ineffectiveness, and that reunion is an urgent necessity. He suggests that few of the causes that led to our denominational divisions exist to-day. Is that so? Surely the Establishment, Baptismal Regeneration, Episcopacy, Priesthood, and the like, divide Anglicans and Free Churchmen as strongly as ever, and are a complete stumbling-block to organic reunion. Mr. Martin admits that, concerning baptism, Baptists raise acute and fundamental problems which demand more careful consideration than they have yet received in Faith and Order discussions. He himself outlines the Baptist position quite fairly, and endeavours to advance a reconciling point of view. He is an optimist, however, if he thinks that Baptists will accept that "the total action in infant baptism and confirmation is the same as in believer's baptism." This *Plea* deserves careful study: it is more than a brief and sketchy book (which is Mr. Martin's own description of it). We do not recall another book which deals so competently and fairly with the various issues involved.