

The financial position of the societies which end their year at March 31 is always a subject of some anxiety at this time. In the case of the Church Missionary Society the position is of more than ordinary difficulty. Humanly speaking, there seems little hope of averting a heavy deficit, and yet the Society's Committee has been encouraged by its supporters to continue the policy of sending out to the mission-field all approved candidates. In that policy, of course, lies the key of the situation; for, short of giving up some considerable mission, it is only by sending out fewer men that an effective reduction of expenditure can, and even then not immediately, be obtained. During the current year the Society's payments have been watched with even more than ordinary jealousy and care, but there seems no probability that the savings thus effected will bring about an equilibrium between expenditure and income. On the other hand, it must be remembered that the last few years have been, financially, a trying time. We have only to look at the comparatively humble sum produced by the Bicentenary effort of the S.P.G. to see what the influence of the war on foreign missionary income has been.

Reviews.

NONCONFORMIST HISTORY.

Sketches in the Evolution of Congregationalism. By ALEXANDER MACKENNAL, D.D. London: James Nisbet and Co.

A History of the Plymouth Brethren. By W. BLAIR NEATBY. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

IF Canon Hensley Henson's proposals in regard to intercommunion with Nonconformity are to be sympathetically considered, it is essential that Churchmen should know something of the history and principles of English Dissent. We are grateful, therefore, for any works which set before us in the spirit of the historian the origin and progress of the familiar Nonconformist organizations. Dr. MacKennial's book is an excellent specimen of the kind of work needed. It is not too long and not too elaborate. Originally delivered as the Carew Lectures in Hartford Theological Seminary, Connecticut, the book has something of the picturesqueness of treatment natural to such a method of delivery and not unwelcome to the reader. It is in no way an exhaustive or comprehensive work, but it will very well serve the purpose of the English Churchman. Dr. MacKennial traces in an interesting way the origin of Congregationalism, and has a particularly interesting chapter on the relations of Congregationalists and Anglicans. Those who are weighing Canon Henson's proposal to acknowledge the separate Churches of Nonconformity will note Dr. MacKennial's reminder (p. 157) that Wesleyan Methodism came but slowly to the idea of total separation; for "down to the middle of this [the nineteenth] century Wesleyan Methodism repelled the idea of constituting itself a Church." And again:

"The next noteworthy fact about the Evangelical Revival is that it is sprung out of the Church of England, not out of eighteenth century Dissent. John Wesley was the descendant, through both his parents, of Presbyterian clergymen ejected from their livings on Black Bartholomew Day, 1662. His father and mother had voluntarily and conscientiously, and at some cost of feeling, gone back to the Establishment before their

marriage. The filiation of the present Wesleyan Methodist Church to the old Puritanism of the Presbyterian type is more than the accident of its founder's parentage. It is Presbyterian in its government, Puritan in ecclesiastical habit. There is no inherent antagonism in it to the theory of a National Church; many Wesleyan Methodists would probably prefer the machinery of such a Church if it left them freedom of spiritual movement; and they would not regard the two conditions as incompatible. The patience with which Cartwright and Baxter bore with the imperfections of the National Church—its petty interferences, sometimes its malignant persecution, hoping against hope that there would be found a place for them within its constitution—was like that of Wesley. And the reason was the same: not love of ease, or of consideration, but the deep conviction that a National Church gave a Gospel minister such opportunities and advantages for the full exercise of his ministry as no other Church relation could furnish."

The later concession is worth noting in the face of the Liberation Society. We commend this book to all who would understand the principles and spirit of modern Nonconformity.

Mr. Neatby's volume on the Plymouth Brethren enjoys the advantage of having the field very much to itself. It is the first general history of the movement it describes. The perplexities surrounding the origin of that movement are clearly discussed, with a careful consideration of the attitude of the founders of Plymouthism towards the English Church. The expansion of the work is a subject of real interest, and presents a happy contrast to the strife which in time broke out amongst its leaders. The development of minor sects and heresies supplies still more painful evidence of the frailty of man, even when he aspires to the most intimate knowledge of the Divine oracles. Perhaps it is to these divisions that we may trace the absence of leaders which Mr. Neatby seems to deplore. We commend this book to all who would understand a movement which has had for some types of mind a curious power of attraction.

HOMILETICAL AND DEVOTIONAL WORKS.

Prayer. By the Rev. A. J. WORLEDGE, M.A. London: Longmans and Co.

This is a volume in the "Oxford Library of Practical Theology." It is like most of its author's work—conscientious, laborious, and solidly useful; but it is also heavy, pedantic, and unattractive. Whilst Canon Worledge disclaims any intention to produce "a formal treatise," the arrangement of the work and the treatment of the subject are formal to the last degree. It is full of matter worth deliberate consideration, but it is hardly the kind of book to which the average layman is strongly attracted. It is more likely to be in favour with clergy, who, indeed, should find its treatment of prayer suggest to them many ways of handling the subject for the benefit of their people. But, as a personal appeal, something warmer, something less suggestive of the library and more of the experiences of living, palpitating humanity was needed.

Christ the Way. By the BISHOP OF OXFORD. London: S.P.C.K.

The addresses in this volume were delivered to a gathering of college tutors, schoolmasters, and others engaged in educational work. They are the plain talk of a man of faith and a man of letters to other men whose calling compels them to view with reverence the responsibilities of life and character. They present from various points of view our Lord as "the Way," suggesting the purpose in life, the peace in life, and the victory in life which belong to those who have indeed found Him to be "the Way." Men of education should read these short addresses with pleasure and with profit.