

Notices of Books.

COMFORTABLE WORDS FOR CHRIST'S LOVERS, BEING THE VISIONS AND VOICE VOUCHSAFED TO LADY JULIAN, RECLUSE AT NORWICH IN 1373. Transcribed and edited from the recently discovered Manuscript ("Brit. Mus. Addit.," 37,790). By the Rev. Dundas Harford, M.A. *H. R. Allenson, Ltd.*

The substance of this treatise has been some years before the public in Miss Grace Warrack's edition of the larger version, of which this has been regarded as a condensation. It is maintained by Mr. Harford to be earlier. In this latter form it is now printed for the first time, from a manuscript bought by the British Museum at Lord Amherst's sale in 1909. It seems to be the manuscript described by Francis Blomefield, in the eighteenth century, in his "History of Norfolk." Mr. Harford identifies the two for reasons not given in the Introduction: first, the agreement in the number of the pages; secondly, the identity—with trifling variations of spelling—of the title in each case. Blomefield, however, gives a wrong date in his Introduction, and has thus misled later writers—*i.e.*, 1442 instead of 1413.

Lady Julian was an anchorite at the Church of St. Julian, Norwich. Hardly anything is known about her except from her own writings. We share the editor's admiration of this little work. Some may be repelled by the morbid craving for suffering which is manifested at the beginning, but, in spite of this, we think she represents the best type of medieval mystics. She is not one of those who are specially influenced by the Neo-platonic tradition, which, intellectually stimulating as it was, could never be wholly assimilated by Christian theology. She does not crave absorption of thought and faculties in a Divine automatism. On the other hand, she is no mere visionary. Her spiritual insight is essentially inward, central to her being. Her revelations, as she tells us, took three forms: (1) "bodily sight"; (2) "words formed in mine understanding"; (3) "ghostly sight," which she could never fully explain. Here we have the sense of a gradation, recognized by the most thoughtful and balanced of the mystics, between the knowledge of definite truths and the ineffable direct experience of God. It excludes a crude dependence upon special explicit revelations on the one hand, and an unbalanced appetite for emotional or super-emotional ecstasies on the other. God's self-revelation is felt to be personal and ineffable at the core; yet there is intellectual, if not always emotional, sobriety; and the revelations take the form not of speculation, but of devotional teaching, submissive to, yet relatively independent of, her traditional creed. This last point may be illustrated by her teaching on Assurance: "Verily it is God's will that we be as secure in trust of the bliss in Heaven, whiles we are here, as we should be in security when we are there" (p. 107). And this is more even than an assurance of present acceptance; our Lord, she tells us, said to her "with full sureness, 'Thou shalt not be overcome.' And this teaching and this true comfort is as generally to all my even-Christians, as I have before said; and so is God's will" (pp. 116, 117).

Her thoughts about sin are also profoundly affected by her mystic standpoint. She emphasizes its nothingness as having "no matter of substance,

nor part of being," and says even that it were "a great unkindness of me to blame God for my sins, since He blames not me for sin" (pp. 76, 77). Sin is, for her, made visible, so to speak, in all pain and suffering, above all in the Passion of Christ, outside of which it is unthinkable. There is, of course, a one-sidedness, in such handling of the subject. From one point of view, this one-sidedness may perhaps be regarded in connection with the failure of the Roman Church to provide the assurance of a status of pardon on the basis of the Atonement. The mystic whose experience of God is the cause rather than the effect of his deliverance from the terrors of the Law, sees in the Cross not so much the annulling of guilt as the abiding expression of the daily forgiveness and purification that presupposes union with God. Of course, not all Christian Mysticism is Roman Catholic, and if its Protestantism is not always as definitely Christian and Evangelic as we could wish, it is well, surely, to make Mysticism more orthodox by making orthodoxy more mystical and experiential, and not to hold aloof from the study of writers, who, whether Roman or only vaguely Christian at all, disclose any peculiar experiences that are fruitful in practical goodness.

A. R. WHATBLEY.

VAL AND HIS FRIENDS. By Agnes Giberne. S.P.G., 15, Tufton Street, S.W. Price 2s. net.

It is encouraging when a well-known writer lends her energies to a missionary tale. Val is a capital little lad in an English town; his principal friends are an Indian boy sent over for an English education and a dreamy second-hand bookseller who is opportunely left sufficient income to enable him to go out as a lay agent of the S.P.G. to North India. The Indian boy is baptized ere the story closes, and Val has set his face to the Mission-field. It would be easy to criticize; but the tone of the book is so uniformly good, and so much useful information is pleasantly conveyed, that we forbear. The book is meant for boys; but it was, perhaps, scarcely necessary to omit all reference to the fact that there are also little girls in the world. The rector's daughter is grown up, so does not strike the chord which a little sister would have touched. It is one to which boys respond.

COMMUNION WITH GOD. By Darwell Stone, D.D., and D. C. Simpson, M.A. Edinburgh: *T. and T. Clark*. Price 4s. net.

This little volume is not, as its title might seem to imply, a book of private devotions; it purports to give a brief history of man's quest for God and of the revelation of God to man, from the earliest dawn of history till the coming of Christ. The chapters, though necessarily somewhat slight, are worth reading. Not the least valuable portion of the book is the Appendix, which contains a carefully arranged list of books that readers may find useful for further study of so deeply important a subject.

DEATH AND THE HEREAFTER. By Henry Drew. *Oxford University Press*. Price 2s. 6d. net.

Thoughtful sermons, mostly about death, but full of faith and hope, by the late Rector of Hawarden. Marred here and there by a narrow and somewhat bitter High Churchmanship.

PRACTICAL PSYCHOLOGY. By Gregory Smith. London: *The Century Press*. Price 3s.

An attempt to apply practically some of the results of the modern study of psychology. The writer decides that religion is founded on morality; we believe the converse. Interesting and suggestive, but scarcely a safe guide to psychology or to life.