

Notices of Books.

CONCERNING PRAYER: ITS NATURE, ITS DIFFICULTIES, AND ITS VALUE.

By the Rev. Canon Streeter and others. London: *Macmillan and Co.* Price 7s. 6d. net.

A timely subject, but a disappointing book. It is a collection of fourteen essays by eleven writers, eight being Anglicans and including three laymen and a lady. The result is, as might be expected, a volume difficult to review. For it is impossible to go much into particulars, and generalizations are often misleading. Some things, however, may certainly be said. The book, taken as a whole, reeks of Modernism. There are good points and helpful passages scattered up and down in it, and one or two of the essays are good and helpful throughout; but there is very little definite Christianity about many of them, and indeed one's impression of the whole book is that most of it could have been written by any Unitarian, if not by any speculative Theist. Moreover, one or two of the papers contain some of the most outrageous statements about the Old Testament that we have ever read. The methods of some of these writers seems to be to hold up a caricature and pour scorn upon it—a strange way of “simply following truth,” which we are assured all the writers have tried to do. We are not sure that some of the others have quite avoided the same mistake. There are several references to the origin and meaning of calamities, and it may be questioned whether they fairly represent what is commonly held by Christians, though it may be true that confusion of thought is frequent. Much is made of our Lord's teaching on the subject, e.g. in Luke xiii. and John ix. We cannot pursue the matter, but one question may be asked, Did our Lord, or did He not, teach that the fall of Jerusalem was to be expected as a judgment on sin?

Canon Streeter's own contributions, though “modern,” are not so startling as some already mentioned. He offers some practical suggestions on worship which are a welcome relief, and with many of them (though not all) we cordially agree. The author of “*Pro Christo et Ecclesia*” says some good things in the course of her first essay; but her later attempt to justify prayers for the dead on grounds of pure reason will not convince every one. We are rather entertained by a surprising description of Modernism (with one exception, in the author's view) in a footnote by Mr. A. C. Turner, thus—“the psychological hubble-bubble which in many forms is put forward . . . as the beginning and end of religion is a somewhat precarious substitute for salvation.” The best contribution of the series is perhaps that of Mr. Edwyn Bevan on *Petition*. Mr. R. G. Collingwood chooses the present unfortunate moment (he seems, indeed, somewhat conscious of a doubt whether all his readers will consider it a fortunate one) for an attempt to disprove the personality of the devil; and he leaves us with a wonder we have felt before—where did the suggestion of evil come from in our Lord's Temptation? This is quite apart from the fact that our Lord Himself believed in a personal devil (which of course is equally important), and seems to involve the very essence of Christian doctrine.

Those who have the ability—and the patience—to sift the wheat from the chaff may find a meagre harvest of spiritual consolation in the book, but in truth there is immeasurably more help in a modest little treatise like Fosdick's on “*The Meaning of Prayer*,” lately noticed in these pages, than in all the philosophy of this pretentious volume. And what is more, we believe it rests upon a sounder philosophic basis. We turn with relief from

these complex speculations to the restful simplicity of the apostolic injunction—"In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

The Introduction to the book invokes the Divine Spirit in view of the difficulties of our time, and believes that moral and religious revival may come in unlooked-for ways. We admit the danger of quenching light because it is unfamiliar or unexpected; but we are sure of two things—first, that what is new is not necessarily true; and secondly, that those whose aim is "simply to follow truth" must keep more closely to the only revealed source of truth than do most of the contributors to this volume. There is too much tendency in these days to suggest that those who decline the conclusions of modern thought are like the stoners of the prophets. We must not suffer ourselves to be intimidated by current reminders of the blindness of the Pharisees or others, or we shall be for ever running about with the cry, "Lo, here!" or "Lo, there!" and may even be persuaded to open the door to Antichrist himself under the plea of new light. There is one infallible touchstone of truth. Most of these authors do not convince us that they have applied it, or indeed that they regard it as in any real sense a touchstone at all.

W. S. H.

CONSCIENCE AND CHRIST. By H. Rashdall, D.Litt, LL.D., D.C.L., Canon Residentiary of Hereford. London: *Duckworth and Co.* Price 5s. net.

Dr. Rashdall perceives a contrast between the ultimate appeals of Philosophy and Theology. The human conscience is the authority of one: Christ alone is that of the other. In this volume, containing the Haskell lectures of 1913, he attempts a harmony of the two positions. Wealth of learning and width of reading combine with independent thought to produce a readable and instructive book. But in some respects we cannot follow his guidance.

Prevalent hypotheses of New Testament criticism lend themselves to reconciliation of this character with a nicety which ought to excite suspicion. Assume that the Synoptists were incapable of more than copying pre-existent material: imagine that one document was accessible to all, that others were available to two only, and that such had before him a manuscript unknown to the others: emphasize the importance of divergent texts: concede some misapprehension of vital doctrine: reflect on the possibility of later interpolations and alterations: cling to a conception of the kenosis which attributes to our Lord errancy in detail or ignorance of the full meaning of His own words: the door is now effectually opened to deduce from their writings any desired system of ethics. But herein is a logical fallacy from which Dr. Rashdall by no means escapes. Difficulties of exposition and interpretation have given rise to these ingenious theories, and constitute the alleged proof. The reverse process of utilizing the theories to justify the exposition is without warrant. The reasoning becomes a "vicious circle." Too many recent authors have fallen victims to its snares.

Conscience, being "a kind of Reason," can lay no claim to finality. It is capable of deception, of education, and of growth. A fuller examination of its authority than is here given is desirable. There is asserted, to say the least, a doubt about the infallibility of Christ: there is none about the infallibility of conscience. In an age when "conscientious" differences abound the final authority of any individual conscience should not be tacitly assumed. Further, the word "development," as frequently applied to Christ's teaching, is beset with danger. What is developed? the teaching, or our apprehension of the teaching? We do not now interpret the Scrip-

tures as our forefathers did. Is the change in the Scriptures, or in our minds? That our Lord laid down general principles, and that in their application we are set in wholly different circumstances to those of the early disciples, everybody will allow. We have outgrown all those objections to the advancement of learning upon which Dr. Rashdall pours a needless amount of indignation. But that the teaching of Christ has been modified by such development is not proved. We have slowly changed under His direction. It may well be doubted whether we can yet say more than this—that the harmony of conscience and Christ as authoritative over the action of man will be perfected as soon as, but not before, the human conscience is fully enlightened in all truth by His Holy Spirit.

Considerations of space prohibit a more detailed examination of the separate references to New Testament passages contained in this book. But bearing in mind the cautions we have ventured to offer, the reader will find a useful and helpful study of a question which is involved in some of the most burning of modern controversies.

HIDDEN PICTURES; OR, HOW THE NEW TESTAMENT IS CONCEALED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. By Ada R. Habershon. London: *Oliphants, Ltd.* Price 3s. 6d. net.

As the title implies, this book consists of word-pictures taken from the Old Testament which are unfolded in the light of the New. Perhaps the keynote is best seen in the first quotation printed in large text: "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

Young people will find these stories pleasant reading. They will be reminded of the truth of St. Augustine's lines:

"The New is in the Old concealed,
The Old is by the New revealed."

Yet though the study of the Types is interesting, we should remember they are but Types to enable us to see the meaning of these things "concerning Himself."

"Hidden Pictures" is most attractively produced in good cloth binding, gold lettered, and is suitable for a present.

THE PRIMATES OF THE FOUR GEORGES. By Aldred W. Rowden. London: *John Murray.* Price 12s. net.

The writer of this fine volume has here gathered a vast array of fact relative to the lives of the eight Archbishops of the Georgian Period. William Wake may, he thinks, be considered the first, as his predecessor lived only two months after his elevation. Wake took his degree of B.A. on October 26, 1676, and two and a half years later the M.A. degree. His father is said to have designed him for trade, and to have laid out a sum of £10,000 to put him into the clothing business. But Wake was not to be forced into work for which he cared nothing, and resolved to take orders.

In passing from Archbishop Potter to Archbishop Herring we are struck with the difference of the men. Though the latter was conscious of his inability to cope with the unrest of a few of the clergy, he did not show the least sympathy with the movement inaugurated by Wesley and Whitfield. In his opinion Wesley was "of good parts and learning," but "a most dark and saturnine creature." Writing to a friend, Herring said: "The subjects you mention of the Methodist preaching are excellent in the hands of wise men (not enthusiasts)." And that really reveals the Archbishop's belief on the subject.

Of the primates of the eighteenth century Secker may be considered, says our author, the ablest and the best. "He had critics, perhaps we should say enemies; as what man, certainly what good man, in a prominent place, has not?" He was a High Churchman after the type of his day. To him the Church was a divinely appointed organization, of which Episcopacy was the essential element. He did not regard the sects as fellow-workers moving on lines converging on the same goal, but wanderers. He had no sympathy with Broad Churchmen. Yet as a man we cannot but admire his untiring industry, and recognize his erudition. His literary remains are considerable, and he will be remembered as the most learned archbishop of his time.

The three remaining archbishops of this period—Cornwallis, Moore, and Sutton—are treated with fullness, and the record of their lives is made interesting by statements of facts that will appeal to the reader. We may add that the volume is illustrated by eight finely executed plates, and that the book is well produced in respect of both paper and binding.

REVELATION AND THE LIFE TO COME. By the Author of "The Way; the nature and means of Revelation." London: *G. P. Putnam's Sons*. Price 6s. net.

The author of this work on spiritual phenomena has the courage of his convictions, but no treatise, be it ever so able, can explain the unexplainable. He writes two introductory chapters to the record of an "experience," or on the record of a series of experiences extending at intervals over several years. Selections are taken from this record, and are from a direct product of experiences which are explained in an appendix at the end of the book. But we cannot do better than quote the author. He says: "These writings are of the nature of a revelation of the life to come; in their higher spiritual form they are of the character of what were formerly termed prophesyings and manifestations of the spirit."

This work will appeal to those who are inclined to investigate the supernatural, but only the devout will derive good from the study of spiritual manifestations. That which is psychic, as to forces and phenomena, pertains to an invisible realm, or state of being wherein all things are outwardly conditioned in a form of substance corresponding to psychic organisms, and are governed by laws that are preternatural, but not supernatural.

MISUNDERSTOOD TEXTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. By Sir Robert Anderson. London: *Nisbet and Co.* Price 3s. 6d. net.

Sir Robert Anderson has little use for theologians, little patience with scholars, little respect for clergy and ministers. He speaks of the "grossest blasphemies of the Christianized infidels who, in these days, pose as Christian Ministers." Fortunately, when scholar and theologian and minister have failed us, we have Sir Robert, and he is quite confident of himself. "During a study of the passage extending over half a century I have sought for an exposition of it . . . and I know of at least one that satisfies these requirements."

The book begins with a chapter of discussion concerning the first gospel, in which the author incidentally declares that "it is mainly by these very Scriptures (viz., those of the Old Testament as against the Sermon on the Mount) that we ought to be guided in our conduct of affairs in every sphere of life." Then there follow notes upon some seventy passages, some of those passages which have been misunderstood, some of those passages which Sir Robert Anderson thinks have been misunderstood, and many of those passages which we venture to think he misunderstands. There is much that is sugges-

tive and helpful, but alas ! there is much with it that is unhelpful and mischievous. The author is so concerned with the assumed mistakes of others, that he overlooks his own dangerous theorizing. There is still some use for the theologian, the commentator, and Sir Robert Anderson's book is evidence for the fact.

TWELVE SHORT MEDITATIONS FOR INTERCESSION SERVICES. By the Rev. A. A. David, D.D. London: S.P.C.K.

In this booklet the Head Master of Rugby has given us a series of brief meditations. They are eminently suitable for reading at weekday Intercessions. We know a country church in which there has been a well-attended daily service since the war began. The interest has been kept up, in some measure at least, by the careful selection of short readings from the mass of literature which has recently appeared dealing with the National crisis. No doubt the same thing has been done in many parishes. We commend the practice and this book.

THE DYNAMIC OF FAITH. By Paget Wilkes. London: *Oliphants, Ltd.* Price 2s. 6d. net.

A delightful exposition. Mr. Wilkes possesses the analytical faculty, and in a very lucid way he sets forth in these pages the nature and effects of faith. There are a good many illustrations out of the author's experiences as a missionary in Japan as well as some remarkable answers to prayer. Mr. Barclay F. Buxton contributes a preface to this useful little volume.

