

Notices of Books.

THE ADVENTURE OF DEATH. By Robert W. MacKenna, M.A., M.D. London :
John Murray. Price 3s. 6d. net.

At a time when thousands of homes are plunged into mourning, anyone who attempts to throw light on the mystery of Death will receive a general hearing. Of course, for a Christian who has ever experienced fellowship with the Risen Master, no further proof is necessary. He knows that he cannot die while His Lord lives. These words of the Master, "Because I live ye shall live also," come to him with such a convincing force that he needs no further proof, he seeks none. There are, however, a large number of men who desire some scientific confirmation for their belief in a life after death. For such people, an eminent Liverpool physician has published a small volume entitled "The Adventure of Death." It deals mainly with : (1) the fear of death ; (2) euthanasia, and (3) survival of personality.

Discussing the question of euthanasia, the author remarks :

" In spite of all her miracles, science has not yet succeeded in creating so elementary a thing as a blade of living grass : she cannot breathe the breath of life into the bones of the dead. She has, therefore, no right to hurry and hustle a living being across the threshold of eternity " (p. 104).

In the section on the " Fear of Death," Dr. MacKenna says : " I do not believe that the fear of death is a natural instinct. It is not something inborn in us like thirst or appetite, or all little children would possess it. I believe rather, that it is a mental attribute which has been developed, in process of evolution, for the protection of species. Without the fear of death the gateway to suicide would be thrown open " (p. 24). Again, " As the danger of death increases, the fear of it recedes " (p. 36). He gives a number of authentic testimonies to prove that the call of duty and religious devotion are strong antidotes to the fear of death. Among others he mentions the memorable words of Latimer to Ridley when both were about to be burnt to death for their adherence to the Reformation : " Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man ; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out " (p. 50).

Especially helpful are the chapters dealing with the survival of personality after death. Dr. MacKenna treats the subject from a purely medical point of view and purposely leaves out the religious aspect. In the first place, he shows that mind " is not some material essence secreted by brain, as the liver secretes bile, but it is a separate entity " (p. 122). He pertinently asks : " Are the masterpieces of Titian and Raphael, the poems of Homer, Dante and Milton, nothing more than effervescence in the brain cells transferred to canvas or to paper ? The thing is unthinkable. We might as well declare that the smoke emitted from the funnel of a locomotive is the power which drives the train . . . as believe that the physical changes in the brain cells are thought " (p. 122). " How can we imagine that alterations in our brain cells can determine moral issues " (p. 123).

We venture to give two more quotations.

" The brain is the organ through which the mind expresses itself ; it is the vehicle by which mind reveals itself ; but we have no right to conclude that mind cannot and does not exist independently of, and apart from, the forty odd ounces of nerve tissue that are aggregated in the skulls. Until a short time ago we did not know energy apart from matter. Matter is the vehicle through which energy expresses itself, or makes itself felt ; but matter and

energy are not identical. In the same way the brain and the mind are not identical, and a time may come when we shall be able to recognize mind when it reveals itself through some other medium than the brain. . . . In the gamma rays of radium [science] has another proof that energy may express itself through other vehicles than matter" (p. 125).

"All life is a probation, and, beyond the barrier of death, I am confident that there awaits us a world as wonderful and as little dreamed of as that which awaits the unborn child beyond the gate of birth" (p. 151).

The author also examines and refutes the various objections which materialistic writers bring against a life hereafter. We are grateful to Dr. MacKenna for his excellent, lucid and timely book.

KHODADAD E. KEITH.

SPIRITUAL SACRIFICE. The Moorhouse Lectures 1915. John Stephen Hart, M.A., B.Sc., Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne. London: Longmans, Green and Co. Price 4s. 6d. net.

The unpretentious appearance of this volume, and the modesty of the preface, veil its real value as a theological and liturgical exposition. The modernity of thought, the force of utterance, the clearness of style, and the critical ability of the author recall the distinguished prelate, as well known in this country as in Australia, in memory of whose episcopate these lectures were founded. Members of Convocation, engaged in the revision of the Prayer Book, may be recommended to study these addresses before they finally commit themselves to many of the suggestions which at present solicit their approval.

Theology inevitably underlies liturgical expression. Canon Hart wisely gives attention first of all to current doctrines of the Incarnation and Atonement. Modern thought attaches due importance to the true Humanity of our Saviour, but not infrequently, particularly in kenotic theories, departs from the Catholic Faith by the "conversion of the Godhead into flesh." The Church has long needed the reminder, here so ably given, that the Incarnation was accomplished "by taking the Manhood into God." And we are brought back to the Scriptural contention that the Atonement must be sought and found in the death of the Redeemer of the world.

The lecturer does not pursue the ordinary lines of Protestant controversialists, nor would he be content to be included in their number. All the more forcible are his convictions that the Church of Rome has erred in its theology, and is "local," "peculiar," "unorthodox" in its forms of worship. The impossibility of accepting many bald statements of "vicarious substitution," and the inadequacy of more recent notions of "vicarious repentance" are duly exposed. Constructively, however, the author's own opinion, whilst drawing attention to essential and too often forgotten principles, does not appear to give full value to all the Biblical statements which ought to be carefully weighed. The fact of "substitution" cannot be eliminated altogether, though theories of its operation may be rejected. Again: "propitiation was something provided by God for man." We heartily endorse the statement: but, when it is immediately added that it is "not something offered by man to God," we cannot follow. "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Sure this "propitiation" is the successful result of the Advocacy.

A similar tendency occurs in the liturgical chapters. The exposure of former mistakes leaves little to be desired, but in the positive suggestions for reform Canon Hart seems occasionally to depart from his own canon of the theo-centric rather than the anthropo-centric character of acceptable

worship. Neither in the N.T. nor in the primitive Church, were the consecrated elements regarded as an offering to God. The anamnesis was a reminder to the worshipper. It is most dangerous to discover a sacrificial character in the sacrament merely because "it satisfied the ever-present, one might almost say instinctive, craving for sacrificial worship."

We hope that these discourses will not fail to obtain the attention and the study in this country which they thoroughly deserve. They clear the ground of many entanglements, and focus our difficulties in a circumscribed space. They perceptibly help to bring us nearer to a solution of our perplexities.

"ALL'S WELL!" SOME HELPFUL VERSE FOR THESE DARK DAYS OF WAR.

By John Oxenham, Author of "Bees in Amber," etc. London: Methuen and Co., Ltd. Price 1s. net.

Mr. Oxenham's writings are well known and greatly appreciated. The little booklet before us, 12,000 or more copies of which have been issued, contains a number of well written poems bearing upon the War for the most part. They are pre-eminently readable and show considerable ability, and are pervaded throughout by a deep religious tone. Where all are so good it is difficult to pick and choose, but the following may be mentioned specially: "The Cross Still Stands," p. 17; "White Brother," p. 25; "The Nameless Graves," p. 45, and "Policeman X (alias the Kaiser)" with the epilogue which follows, p. 47. Many of those who have dear ones at the Front, as well as those whose loved ones have fallen, will be cheered and strengthened by much that is written on these pages.

A CHAIN OF PRAYER ACROSS THE AGES: FORTY CENTURIES OF PRAYER, 2000 B.C.—A.D. 1915. Compiled and arranged for Daily Use by Selina Fitzherbert Fox, M.D., B.S. London: John Murray. New Edition. Price 2s. 6d. net.

We are glad to welcome a new edition of this admirable little volume. Dr. Fox has brought together prayers of every age from the time of Abraham to our own, composed by authors of widely different views. They are arranged for twenty-six weeks as Morning Prayer, and for three weeks as Evening Prayer, besides prayers for special subjects, including the various seasons of the Christian Year, Missions, Harvest, the King and Royal Family, the Nation and Empire, War time, etc. Under the last mentioned some very appropriate and helpful prayers will be found suitable for our needs and those of our soldiers in the present War. We regret to find in this otherwise valuable collection of prayers one on p. 267 distinctly for the dead. This, however, need not prevent our appreciation and use of the many appropriate and reasonable forms of prayer in which this little volume is so plentiful.

[We are compelled to hold over the list of Publications of the Month.]

