

REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

A CUDDESDON TEXT-BOOK.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND. By E. J. Bicknell. London: *Longmans, Green & Co.* 21s. net.

Mr. Bicknell is Vice-Principal of Cuddesdon College, and this valuable and comprehensive volume is an enlargement of lectures delivered to his pupils. It is something more than an Introduction to the Thirty-nine Articles—it is a handbook of Theology dealing with all the outstanding historical and theological problems of the day. No one can complain that according to Mr. Bicknell the Articles are mere doctrinal controversial formulae, that must be explained in their historical setting with a view to determining the plain literal meaning of every word. They are much more than this. “Creeds and Articles are theological statements of belief. Both alike have been employed as tests. Both are attempts to preserve truth in all its fullness. But while Creeds are a necessity, ‘in a world where all expression of spirit is through body,’ Articles are a consequence, ‘not of the Church’s existence but of the Church’s failure.’” But cannot the same be said of the Nicene and the Athanasian Creed? Did they not originate in consequence of the Church’s failure to maintain whole and undefiled the faith as revealed in the Gospel? We cannot draw the hard and fast distinction here attempted on the authority of Moberly even if we do not attribute to every line of the XXXIX Articles the weight and authority given rightly to the Articles of the Creeds.

Most readers will be delighted by the fair-mindedness of Mr. Bicknell. We disagree with much of what he says on controverted points, but we always find him ready to see the other side, and if he does not give to it the weight it ought to possess he is not blind to the strength of the position. Unlike so many writers of the High Church School he does not anathematize even by implication those who differ from him. He is, however, so attached to his own views that he fails to see that the case against some of them is not to-day capable of being accepted as axiomatic by even leading English theologians. For example, he discusses with marked impartiality the existence and the grounds for their perpetuation of the Nonconformist Churches. He tells us that in different places and at different times vital truths of the Christian faith have become obscured or neglected, “whether it be the need of personal conversion, or the spiritual independence of the Church, or the right place of the Sacraments.” “Only a claim to absolute holiness which the Church of England certainly cannot make could justify a rigid and superior attitude to Nonconformity.” He concludes, however, with the statement, “Every single Christian community was either founded by an Apostle or goes back to one so founded. The Ministry of the Church hands down the commission given to the Apostles. Thus so far as she is faithful to her mission the Church is Apostolic in her aim, her teaching and her ministry. She fails to be Apostolic when she ceases to represent Christ.” With the exception of the dogmatic statement of Apostolic succession of the generally understood type this represents the conviction of most Protestant Christians. He has knowledge of what is implied, for he says “the real line of division depends very largely upon the different conceptions of the outward to the inward.”

We are glad to find in a book coming from Cuddesdon the strong words, "The popular antithesis of Catholic and Protestant is absurd. All true protest against error is based on a knowledge and love of truth. A Catholic love of truth is bound to protest against all error that limits or denies the truth. In a sinful world every man should wish to be at once both a Catholic and Protestant."

When we study his teaching on the Sacrament of the death of Christ we find the ordinary High Anglican view that the Sacraments are the extension of the Incarnation. He writes, "If we say that Christ is present 'in' the sacrament, we use 'in' metaphorically, as when we say that Christ abides in the Christian and the Christian in Christ. Whenever we study the relation between spirit and matter, whether between God and the world, or our souls or our bodies, our reason and our imagination are always baffled. We can only speak in symbolical language borrowed from space." He condemns the view that the gift promised in the Holy Eucharist is in any sense dependent on faith. "Rather the gift is there, objectively; those who approach with faith discern and appropriate it, those who have no faith are, as it were, blind to the gift, and fail to claim it." He places less than his usual weight on the words of the Article, "And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is Faith."

We have said enough to show our appreciation of a work that will be helpful to all students of theology. We know of no work on the Articles so full of present-day references or so likely to provoke thought on right lines on such subjects as Modernism and the historical articles of the Creed. Mr. Bicknell writes with delightful clarity and never loses his temper. He adopts an attitude on crucial points that is not always ours, but in the main few Evangelicals will quarrel with his treatment of root problems. He has no sympathy with Romanisers and condemns Adoration and Exposition, speaks forcibly against Invocation and has made plain that he has a place in the Church of England as a loyal son. If all High Churchmen were like him there would be no crisis in the Church as far as Roman error is concerned.

DR. PLUMMER'S THESSALONIANS.

A COMMENTARY ON ST. PAUL'S SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

By the Rev. Alfred Plummer, D.D. London: *Robert Scott*. 6s. net.

Those who have used Dr. Plummer's earlier Commentaries will know what to expect from his pen. He is employing his well-earned leisure in providing the very kind of Commentary most needed by students. In this volume the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians is treated with all the writer's accustomed and welcome scholarship, clearness and force. After twenty-three pages of helpful guidance in all matters of introduction, come notes on passages, phrases and words, and Dr. Plummer's thorough knowledge of Greek is here put at the disposal of his readers. It is natural to turn to the great passage in the second chapter to learn Dr. Plummer's view, which is that the Restrainer is the Roman Empire. This is an interpretation which, though familiar, is not without its serious, perhaps insuperable, difficulties, even though every other view is set aside as "almost a waste of time" (p. 60). It is curious that, with Dr. Plummer's marvellous acquaintance of the Greek tongue, he has not given more attention to the pretty obvious idea that the Greek verb *κατέχειν* needs an object, especially as the Roman Empire has long ago disappeared. But whether we agree with the author or not, he makes his readers think, and this in a Commentary is surely to be "counted for righteousness." He is to be thanked for and readers are to be congratulated on so valuable an addition to our stock of

first-rate New Testament Commentaries. It is perhaps too much to hope, though it is natural to indulge the wish, that Dr. Plummer should cover all those Epistles of St. Paul which Lightfoot left untouched. In particular, and notwithstanding the available material, it would be a great delight to see something from his pen on the Epistle to the Romans.

W. H. GRIFFITH THOMAS.

DEVOTIONAL ADDRESSES.

SAINTHOOD, RETREAT ADDRESSES. By Rev. Jesse Brett, L.Th. London: Longmans, Green & Co. 4s. 6d. net.

Mr. Brett reminds us in his preface that the times call for great earnestness and definiteness of spiritual life in all Christians, and that in the addresses "an attempt has been made to meet some of the needs from a Catholic standpoint." We have such expressions as "the order of Catholic life," "a Catholic ideal," "the vastness of Catholic life," until we wonder what meaning the author would have us to attach to the word Catholic. Is there any word in connexion with our religion that has been more misused than this? If we remember rightly it was the late Archdeacon Sinclair who in one of his charges dealt forcibly with this misuse. What warrant has Mr. Brett for saying that the prayers of departed saints "for us are in the terms of the magnificent wholeness of the purpose of God through man." How does he know they pray for us? They may, but we do not know. Again, he speaks of our asking their prayers, presumably by petitions addressed to them, but there is no authority for this in Holy Scripture. Different schools of thought have their modes of expression. That being so we are apt to be prejudiced against those who differ from us. Mr. Brett might dislike the language of Keswick. But we gratefully recognize that he may reach some who are used to the teaching of the more advanced Anglican party and may lead them to a holier life in Christ. Perhaps, after all, it is more a matter of expression than anything else, and there is much in these pages that is calculated to develop Sainthood.

THE INCREASE OF GOD. By Rev. A. H. McNeile, D.D. London: Longmans, Green & Co. 3s. 6d. net.

This little book deserves the warm commendation the Bishop of London accords it in his preface. We say this without of course pledging ourselves to approve of everything Dr. McNeile says. • For instance, on the subject of "Parties" he has a chapter which seems to have delighted the heart of the Bishop of London! Very often those who condemn what they call the "party spirit" are themselves the most violent partisans. It is the other man's "party-spirit," not their own, that they condemn. It is the old story—"Orthodoxy is my 'doxy,' heterodoxy is your 'doxy'!" We believe Dr. McNeile is correct in saying that St. Paul would not wish us to scrap our differences if he were here. But on the whole we very much prefer this book on Christian growth to Mr. Brett's, even though we may be reminded that comparisons are odious.

OTHER VOLUMES.

FAERIE TALES FROM BIBLE STORY. By a Country Clergyman. London: Elliot Stock. 5s. net.

"A Country Clergyman" is indeed a versatile person. He has published a Hebrew Grammar and Lexicon, written at least one Novel as well as some theological works of distinct value, and has here gathered together some Faerie Tales from the Bible and other sources, telling them in a way

that shows that his versatility includes a knowledge of the child-mind. This is just the book for which many parents are constantly looking.

* * * * *

WHAT HAPPENS AT DEATH. Shall we know ourselves and others in the Hereafter? By a Country Clergyman. London: *Elliot Stock*. 3s. net.

Another volume from the same busy pen, and one worthy to take its place alongside, if not in front of, a good many that have been written to comfort stricken souls in dark days. The writer states the case for identification in the future life with lucidity and force and with an all too rare fidelity to what is written in *The Book*, speaks of the Better Country and the problem of pain and suffering. He gives some remarkable instances of Faith Healing, and by no means the least useful section of the book is the final essay on Prayer.

* * * * *

THE CHILDREN IN CHURCH. Twenty-five addresses to Young People. By the Rev. H. J. Essex, M.A., Chaplain of the Bethany Orphanage, Bournemouth. London: *Robert Scott*. 3s. net.

As the Curate said of the egg at the Episcopal breakfast-table—"Parts are excellent," so we may say of this collection of sermons preached to children. Though carefully phrased there are indications here and there of the ecclesiastical position of the preacher, but at the same time there is a great deal that is suggestive and the language is simple and homely and the illustrations telling.

* * * * *

Prebendary Fox has done good service in reprinting a letter of Richard Cecil—one of the most spiritually minded of the eighteenth-century Evangelicals—bearing on the question of peace. The "Peace" to which the letter refers was probably that made with Russia after the battle of Copenhagen in 1801, and Cecil's letter bases upon it some choice thoughts concerning "the peace proclaimed from above through a Redeemer, sung by angels at His birth, purchased by His death, and by which He opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers." At a time when we are expecting the signing of the Peace Treaty which is to end the Great War, the republication of Cecil's letter is specially opportune. It is issued as a neat pamphlet, *A Word on the Peace*, by Mr. C. J. Thynne, price 2d. Some of Cecil's wise "Sayings" are given as an appendix.

* * * * *

It is by no means easy to write a serviceable history which will fix and retain the attention of young children, and at the same time inform and amuse them. Such a task demands at once a mastery of the subject and a working knowledge of a child's mentality, two qualities not always found combined in the same writer. Miss Florence L. Bowman has both qualifications in ample measure, and in her *BRITAIN IN THE MIDDLE AGES* (*Cambridge University Press*, 3s. net) has produced an admirable little work. No picturesque detail which might add to the interest of the narrative is omitted, and it is hardly too much to say that the history reads like a good story well told. The story of King Alfred and of his interviews with Asser and again the battle of Hastings lend themselves to the authoress' method, and are narrated with spirit and good dramatic effect. The account of the making of a knight is also excellent. The period treated ends with the discovery of America by Columbus.

* * * * *

The stream of poetry by soldiers of the great war continues to flow. The *SONGS OF LIFE AND LOVE* (*Arthur H. Stockwell*), by Edward Leader, late of the Coldstream Guards, are immature as might be anticipated by the announcement that all except seven were written before the author joined the Army in his eighteenth year. Many of them, however, are very spirited, and the volume as a whole shows promise of riper and more considered work.