

## CHURCH BOOK ROOM NOTES.

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LAST month a reference was made in these notes to the increasing activity of those who advocate systematic Confession to a Priest before Communion, and a small guide on the subject was recommended, viz. **Confession.** *The Confessional*, by Canon Meyrick (3d. net). The subject is so important that opportunity is taken this month to draw attention to more exhaustive books by well-known writers.

The object of this book is strictly defined in its sub-title, *The Teaching of the Church of England as Interpreted and Illustrated by the Writings of the Reformers of the Sixteenth Century*. Bishop Drury does not touch upon Confession or Absolution in the Primitive, Mediæval or Modern Church except when it is necessary for the main purpose which he has in view, which is to illustrate the formularies of our Church from the writings of men who were most concerned in compiling them. The first chapter deals with the Reformer's appeal to Scripture, the next two are concerned with their appeal to history, while the fourth takes us to the Church formularies. It shows what the Reformers did as well as what they said, and the various records of the sixteenth century which bear on this matter are passed under review from King Henry's book against Luther to the various revisions of the Prayer Book in the time of Queen Elizabeth. The book is a valuable and scholarly one. It is clear and convincing. It is unfortunate that it is out of print, and only a few copies remain at 2s. 6d. net.

The late Bishop of Chester published in 1912 a very important and remarkable pamphlet entitled *Anglican Pronouncements upon Auricular Confession Fasting Communion, and some other points of disquietude* (1s. net). The Bishop, as every one knows, is distinguished for very great learning, and the quotations from the writings of decided High Churchmen which he has given in this book are of decided value. The Bishop's own words regarding a movement going on in the Church of England now are as follows: "It is my own profound conviction that the issue between the Church of Rome and the Church of England—in so far as we are not yet ashamed of the Reformation, or ungrateful for the emancipation then at a great cost obtained—is 'the supreme quarrel of all.' I am publishing this pamphlet to help in showing the true drift and significance of certain retrograde, mediævalizing tendencies which have for years been industriously at work among us, and serve, not so much (to borrow Pope Pius IXth's metaphor) as a bell inviting the faithful to enter the Church of Rome, but as a door through which Roman practices, methods and opinions are being introduced and domiciled within our own borders, often by men from whom it is a grief to be compelled to differ, on the mere authority of a wilful eclecticism."

The treatise of Hooker on Confession and Absolution is an important addition to the literature on this subject. A certain school of thought are glad to quote Hooker against Puritan extremes, but they are careful to

ignore his weighty and powerful refutation of Romish errors. Hooker's teaching on this question is above partisanship. It is partly **The Sixth Book of Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity.** Biblical and partly ecclesiastical, and while retaining many of the old formulæ, he weighs them carefully and distinguishes things that differ. We commend a carefully edited edition by the Rev. J. Harding (1s. net). This volume, which contains an historical introduction, analysis and appendices, forms the Sixth book of the Ecclesiastical Polity.

This is a book for parents to have and to read, who find any influence brought to bear upon their children in the direction of the Confessional.

As the price is 1s. net the outlay is not excessive. The first chapter is entitled "The Position To-day." The second chapter is an inquiry as to what authority exists in Scripture for the practice. The third chapter is devoted to prove that the authority is not English but Roman, and explains the stages in the Reformed Prayer Books and the teaching of our present Book. The last three chapters are concerned with the moral aspects of the matter. "What effect has the Confessional on the lives of those who resort to it?" "What is the result, so far as the confessor himself is concerned?" "What is its influence upon the penitent of either sex?" These are important questions, and fathers and mothers will do well to study with special care the startling facts which Mr. Buckland brings to light.

Of the smaller Manuals for general distribution, the following can be recommended:—*Confession* by Prebendary Eardley Wilmot in the Mission Series published by the National Church League (price 1d. each or 5s. per 100 net). This Manual is intended for general distribution and the meaning and principles of Confession is considered. Firstly, confession to God, and secondly, to one another. The teaching of the Church is carefully and clearly stated. *Confession According to the Bible and the Prayer Book* by the Bishop of Sodor and Man, in the English Church Manual Series (1d. net), contains a useful summary of the chief facts in the history of the Church regarding the questions concerned in the practice of confession. A close survey is made of the teaching of the Prayer Book and the teaching of the Articles and Homilies. Dangers are pointed out, and some needed warnings are included. *Shall I go to Confession?* by the Rev. W. H. Griffith Thomas, D.D. (½d. each or 4s. per 100 net), is also suitable for wide distribution. Dr. Griffith Thomas has arranged the pamphlet in the form of asking three important questions. "What do we mean by Confession?" and he enlarges upon the answer to this under these headings, (1) Personal Confession of Sin to God; (2) Public Confession of Sins before the Church; (3) Reciprocal Confession of Sins among Christians. He then asks his second question, "Is there no Other Confession of Sins Taught in Holy Scripture?" Under this heading he asks, "What other kind of confession is meant by this question? Does it refer to auricular confession to a priest?" The final question is, "Why is the Bible View of Confession sufficient for all Spiritual Needs?" Number seven of the National Church League Church Leaflet Series also deals with Confession (½d. or 3s. per 100). This leaflet speaks of and gives extracts from the various Ritualistic Manuals which have been issued on the subject. There is a useful extract from the Irish Prayer Book, and special emphasis is laid on the changes in the various revisions of the Prayer Book showing that they were indicative of opposition to all kinds of private confession.