

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

THE NEGLECTED PROPHET.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH. Edited by L. E. Binns, M.A.
Westminster Commentaries. London: Methuen & Co. 16s. net.

From the days of his preaching down to this present time the prophet Jeremiah has been the victim of strange neglect and misunderstanding. And yet, as Mr. Binns in his new commentary is careful to point out, some of the sublimest utterances of Scripture were very probably inspired by his work and teaching. Among his contemporaries his patriotism was too idealistic to awaken sympathy. Posterity equally has for the most part found his conception of religion too austere to win universal acceptance. But the choicest spirits of all time have recognized the true greatness of this man. It was he in all likelihood whom the author of the "Servant" passages in Isaiah had in mind as model. Philo held Jeremiah in great reverence. Our Blessed Lord's teaching of the New Covenant is based on Jeremiah's, and, as Mr. Binns says, there is justification for assuming that the prophet was one of the great moulding influences on St. Paul. It seems strange, therefore, that even in our day Jeremiah is so little studied. His book presents fewer critical problems than many others in the Old Testament: the ordinary reader can safely assume its integrity, speaking broadly; it is for the most part free from the bewildering obscurity of parts of the minor prophets. Whence then the neglect? There are at least three causes. First, the book, though sublime and picturesque, lacks that miraculous eloquence which makes so many a chapter in Isaiah irresistibly attractive; second, Jeremiah's message is so intimately bound up with the downfall of Jerusalem, and his own tragic conflict with his short-sighted contemporaries, that any study of his writings demands a patient interest in the rather sordid story of the last days of the Judean kingdom; and third, the present arrangement of the chapters is so capricious to all appearance that a coherent and consecutive view of the prophet's work is impossible without taking considerable pains. Here then is the opportunity for the commentator. A scholar can scarcely do a more useful work than so to present this book to English readers as to win them to that one satisfactory method of biblical study—the method of discovering the prophet's message to our own age and circumstances by studying his message in the light of his own. But with all respect to academic scholarship, the attempt will fail if it be merely academic. We congratulate Mr. Binns on escaping the pitfalls of mere pedantry. His work shows real self-restraint. He is obviously interested in Canon Kennett's theory that Deuteronomy is later than Jeremiah. One could imagine him eagerly arguing in support of this view. Yet he contents himself in this volume with a mere mention of the theory and references to works where it is fully discussed.

On the other hand, in his notes on the text Mr. Binns happily avoids to a great extent the annoying practice of some commentators of arousing the reader's interest in some point only to leave him dissatisfied with the mere crumbs of reference to some inaccessible work. Both in the introduction and the notes Mr. Binns is carefully suggestive, illuminating his comment with frequent applications to present circumstances, or quotations from quite modern writers, being ever at pains to interest and help the reader, whose main interest lies in life to-day rather than in Jeremiah's time. Mr.

Binns meets the three difficulties of which we have already spoken fairly. An introduction to each section, and a citation of Cornill's rearrangement on page lxxvi, help the reader to discover the date of each chapter. If one has any criticism on this point it is only a wish that a little more emphasis had been laid on the value of studying the book in an order impossible in a commentary following the text of EVV. Again, Mr. Binns discusses the history fully and interestingly, conveying always, as has been said, the impression that Jeremiah has a message for us as truly as for his contemporaries. Indeed, it was the striking similarity between the events of Jeremiah's age and ours that seems to have impelled our commentator to his task. The publisher's announcement that the author of this work seeks to deduce lessons "of value for all time, and not least for the age of transition and unrest—in many ways so like the prophet's own—in which we are now living," is fully justified. On the very first pages of the introduction, for instance, the importance of the prophet is illuminated by quotations from Dr. Temple's *The Faith and Modern Thought* and Mr. Oliver C. Quick's *Essay in Orthodoxy*.

Mr. Binns presents a very convincing and able defence of the literary qualities of the book. His observations on Jeremiah and nature, both in the introduction and a detached note, are valuable and interesting. Yet one could have wished for still ampler treatment. The impress of nature upon all the writers of the Old Testament is a subject of deep interest, and we cannot but feel that Mr. Binns has not allowed himself quite enough scope. He refers to Ruskin on the pathetic fallacy. Ruskin is undeniably confusing, if not confused, on this point. We doubt whether scriptural writers ever fall into the fallacy in the way which Ruskin condemns. The biblical writers seem never to read into nature a fanciful reflection of their own moods, though they boldly use language in which nature is personified as reflecting the mind of God. Probably Mr. Binns saw that his commentary was already swelling to proportions which began to alarm him, for other of the detached notes besides this on nature seem to show that the author felt the necessity of restraining himself. The notes on the text are ample and satisfying. They aim at something more than merely explaining difficulties for the English reader. They notice awkwardnesses and difficulties which the student of Hebrew, alive to critical questions in detail, will alone appreciate. Mr. Binns' soundness of judgment is well shown in two notes on "Sacrifice in the wilderness" and the authorship of xxxi. 31-34: the former also reveals to us what difficulties beset the exact scholarship of men to-day whose sense of accuracy tends to blind them to the fact that the prophets were not always careful to say neither more nor less than they precisely meant. Surely when Jeremiah asserts, "I commanded not your fathers concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices, but this thing I commanded them, saying, Hearken unto my voice," he is not making a precise historical statement to be taken with painful literalness. We do not believe that Mr. Binns' suggestion to replace the translation "concerning" by "for the sake of" is really necessary. The prophet made an unqualified statement which would not perplex his hearers, and the critic who seeks to support on such a text any argument as to the date of the Deuteronomic code is, in our opinion, trusting to a very poor foundation.

It remains but to say that this volume is in every way worthy of the tradition of its series, and to hope that Mr. Binns' work will do much to bring to an end the undeserved neglect under which the great and nobly patriotic Jeremiah, true prophet of the Eternal God, still labours.

J. R. DARBYSHIRE.

WHAT CHAPLAINS SAY.

THE GREATEST RELATIONSHIP. By Rev. A. C. Bouquet, B.D. WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHURCHMAN. By Rev. W. J. Carey. London: S.P.C.K. 2s. net each; or 1s. in paper boards.

These two small volumes belong to a series written by past or present Chaplains to the Forces, edited by Rev. F. B. Macnutt, formerly S.C.F. and editor of *The Church in the Furnace*.

In the first Mr. Bouquet states "the case for religion" with force and insight and discusses the "God-sense" in a very practical, common-sense way. Here is an example—"Life to the man in whom God's Presence has become central assumes a wholeness and completeness. . . . The individual then plays hockey or oils his engine to the glory of God, to the glory of God he types correspondence or makes bricks, to the glory of God he pursues the search for truth with joyful but unrelenting accuracy in the labyrinths of scientific research, to the glory of God he cheerfully wastes his medical skill (as some would think) in a town practice where the bad debts are nearly as numerous as the small patients, or renounces promotion in exchange for exile to some fever-stricken station on the far seas." Again, anent the alleged dishonesty of native Christians, he says—"Would there be any justification for such logic as this?—I once knew an officer in the British Army who was decorated with the M.C. He had not earned it and was a 'washout.' I have also known several other officers who were no good at all. Therefore none of the officers in the British Army are any good, and none of those who have been decorated have earned their decorations": or "officers are decorated for bravery. Therefore no officer who is not decorated can be brave." This, he says, represents "the kind of logic which is often applied to Christian people." He next considers the character of God and lays down the proposition that He is Almighty in the sense that the Universe is ultimately under His control. "It is a strange wild place but it is not out of hand." There is a suggestive chapter on "The Commonwealth or Kingdom of God" and some useful "notes."

Mr. Carey is, as usual, vigorous and plain. He writes briefly on a variety of subjects, e.g.—on Christ "the centre of our religion,"—on the Atonement "so often wrongly explained that it is a stumbling-block to many," on the Holy Ghost "the 'liaison' between us and Christ." He has something straight to say about "Personal Conviction" and much that is useful about the "Brotherhood of the Church": but we observe that apparently his only quarrel with the Roman Church is over the pretensions of the Pope! His remarks on the Sacraments are somewhat "scrappy." We read—"By Christ's own words and Christ's own institution those who partake of the consecrated Elements partake of Him." He might have added—"only after an heavenly or spiritual manner." Moreover, he designates "those five commonly called Sacraments" as "sacramental ordinances." Can we suppose that he has not noticed the significance, in the Prayer Book, of the phrase "commonly called"? Perhaps the best chapter is the last—"The Church's Call to Service": it makes us feel that if we do not agree with the writer on all points, we are one with him in believing that "the only solution of all problems lies in the teaching of Jesus."

We are not told what other volumes are to be included in this series, but if when they appear they are up to the standard of these first, they will serve a useful purpose.

THROUGH CATHOLIC EYES.

THE AMERICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH INTERPRETED FOR ENGLISH CHURCHMEN.

By Arthur Whipple Jenks, D.D. *S.P.C.K.* 3s. 6d. net.

Recent events have done a good deal to arouse interest in the American Church, and we have quite lately had two books dealing with the subject. It is well that English Churchmen should know something of the history and work of the daughter Church in the United States. They will learn from Dr. Jenks' book in brief outline how that Church originated and developed, and what are its present conditions and organization. It is unfortunate, however, that the author has so great an animus against Protestantism and the word Protestant. This feeling pervades the greater part of the book and finds expression again and again. He tells us (p. 33) that "From the end of the eighteenth century the Church in the United States has been under challenge to uphold her claims to be Catholic and not Protestant." For a body endeavouring to uphold such a claim it must be rather an embarrassment to be entitled the "Protestant Episcopal Church," and Dr. Jenks glides lightly round this somewhat delicate position, suggesting that "The title by which the Church became legally known seems to have come into use accidentally rather than by deliberate design" (p. 27). But he does not tell us of the opposition which was aroused by and frustrated the attempt to alter the title. It is not only to the word, however, but to all it connotes that Dr. Jenks objects. He stands for the necessity of Bishops as a guarantee of the spiritual life, and upholds such ceremonies as Benediction, Reservation, the use of incense, vestments, "altar" lights, etc. While claiming that these and the theological system they represent are to be found in the Protestant Episcopal Church, he has nevertheless to admit that they are not general, and that they make way with difficulty.

Dr. Jenks gives an account of the difficulties which attended the efforts to secure an episcopate for the American Church and how, finally, recourse was had to the Scotch Bishops who consecrated Dr. Seabury, making, however, as far as it was possible to do so, a condition that he should introduce the Scottish form of the Communion Office. We learn also some of the historical causes which operated against the spread and popularity of the newly formed Church. These historical causes account in a measure for the numerically insignificant position of the Church in the United States, but only in a small measure. There are forty-two million members of various professing Christian Churches in America, and of these the Protestant Episcopal Church claims only a little over one million. The Lutherans more than double that number; so do the Presbyterians. The Baptists and the Methodists each claim seven millions of members. The fact is that a free and educated laity has little use for a sacerdotal Church. They have no objection to Episcopacy. Probably, other things being equal, the overwhelming majority would prefer it. But the lesson which America has to teach us is that a Protestant laity, if they must make a choice, will even endure the loss of Episcopacy rather than surrender that spiritual liberty and simplicity of worship of which Protestantism is the charter and safeguard. W. G. J.

MR. "QUICK'S CHURCH PRINCIPLES."

THE TESTING OF CHURCH PRINCIPLES. By Oliver Chase Quick. London: *John Murray.* 5s. net.

The author has written in haste. Paradoxical as it may seem, herein lies the chief value of the book. Upon questions of urgent and current controversy many with little leisure or learning form rapid judgments, express their

opinions, and record their votes. Mr. Quick, with a little leisure for writing and a learning which is much more than a guarantee against stupidity, but without following to the finish every line of argument, helps us to understand what is running in men's minds. Avoiding the peril of including all such persons in one category, we perceive that many ardent advocates of Church reform and adherents of the "Life and Liberty" movement are urged by dissatisfaction with the Prayer Book, the status of the clergy, the position of the National Church, and the exercise of authority in reference to Modernism.

Excellent reforms are frequently maintained by inadequate or erroneous reasoning. The Enabling Bill must be valued by its own intrinsic worth. The hopes of some supporters may not be fulfilled. Here we offer no opinion of our own. But if constitutional changes are desired in the Church as the only means of reverting to the Prayer Book of 1549, with a consequent alteration in the Church's doctrine of Holy Communion, of securing the isolation of the clergy from the laity as teachers of the Faith, of making the Holy Communion the chief service of the Church, and refusing to the indifferent the privileges of Christian Baptism, marriage, and burial, then some of us will certainly inquire whether we are drifting. If the baptismal basis of the franchise is to be rejected in favour of the communicant as a further means of reaching these aims, we shall be well advised in holding to the former.

Space does not permit an analysis of Mr. Quick's arguments. He should not have permitted himself to attribute the general self-satisfaction in regard to sin to the Protestant teaching of three and a half centuries, and he needs to be careful lest in the toleration of Modernism he opens the door to Socinianism, Spiritualism, or Christian Science. When he declines the authority of Holy Scripture as the dead voice of the past, he should remember that these writings contain the original deposit of our faith, and that the water is never purer than as it comes from the spring. But, though we criticize his work, he must be reckoned with. An easy charm of style fascinates many. Evangelicals must read and weigh this book, for it will carry great influence and provide a storehouse of argument for those whose type of Churchmanship is not ours.

A ROMAN PERVERT.

MEMOIR OF KENELM HENRY DIGBY. By Bernard Holland, C.B. London: Longmans, Green & Co. 12s. 6d. net.

It is rather late in the day to resurrect Kenelm Digby, since he has been dead nearly forty years. Coming of a distinguished family and the son of an Irish clergyman, and this brought up in an Evangelical atmosphere, he became, before the birth of the Oxford Movement, a Roman Catholic—like many perverts—of a somewhat virulent type. As a writer he was never popular and his verses were not of a high order. His most notable book was *Mores Catholicæ*, in eleven volumes, and the writer of this memoir is candid enough to admit that it would not pay a publisher to reproduce it and he wants some wealthy man to come forward and bear the cost! We rather suspect he will be disappointed. The compiler of this memoir is delightfully frank. Take this as an example—"We may hold in principle, and with all our heart and mind, that the Church centred in the Chair of Peter is the one Catholic Church, outside which is no safety; but in practical discussion with non-Catholics, it is, perhaps, wiser to maintain it as the Central Church, without which there never has been, and never will be, any possibility of real unity." Comment is needless. It is not likely that a man who made but little impression on his own age can be made to effectively serve the interests of the Roman

Church to-day. It is almost amusing to be told that "content and social peace, so far as they can be found at all in this world by the 'exiled sons of Eve' will nowhere be found save in the Catholic religion." How was it that the Roman Church missed her chance in the Great War?

S. R. CAMBIE.

REFLECTIONS ON RECONSTRUCTION.

THE CHURCH AND RECONSTRUCTION. By Stuart C. Parker, B.D. London: *Robert Scott.*

Mr. Parker, who, if we mistake not, is a Nonconformist, offers us in these pages some suggestive and inspiring reflections. There is no sectarian bias anywhere, and all that is written will be as acceptable to the average Churchman as to the dissenter, and indeed applies with equal force. He has some plain words upon the attempt to reach the non-churchgoing crowd by "attractive" services. "However the Church may face the problem of non-churchgoing, it must not seek to do so by entering into an undignified and futile competition with secular institutions." He devotes a chapter to the "Church and Press." He feels that the Church must make a larger use of the Press than it has done hitherto, and some, at least, of his proposals are well worth consideration. He discusses the vexed question of Reunion, but there is no indication that he sees the almost insuperable difficulties that lie in the path that leads to that most desirable end. On the one hand we have the arrogant claims of the Anglo Catholic party, and on the other the apparent indifference—with, of course, a few exceptions—of the great body of Free Churchmen. The title of this chapter—"Pending Reunion"—seems to indicate the fact that in Mr. Parker's opinion something in the way of agreement must be reached. The last chapter is a call to the work of witness-bearing as the business of every Christian, and a task not to be left for the representatives of organized religion. Taken as a whole, Mr. Parker has given us something to think about and much that can be translated into action.

HIGHER FLIGHTS.

HIGHER FLIGHTS FOR AIRMEN. By Rev. W. T. Money, M.A., Chaplain R.A.F. With Introduction by Lieut.-Gen. the Hon. Sir H. A. Lawrence, K.C.B., Chief of Staff to Earl Haig. London: *Robert Scott.* 1s. 6d. net.

Anyone looking for a suitable gift for a man in the Air Service will hail the appearance of this little manual, in which Mr. Money lucidly and simply explains the meaning of Confirmation, the value of Prayer, and the purposes of Holy Communion. There are three illustrations, a Psalm for the Knights of the Air, and a suitable Collect. We heartily commend this little volume, so urgent in its appeal and so scriptural in its teaching.

