

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

HISTORY INTERPRETED.

A GUILDSMAN'S INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY. By A. J. Penty, Author of "Old Worlds for New." London: *G. Allen & Unwin*. 12s. 6d. net.

Mr. Penty is a man with ideas, and he is not afraid to expound them vigorously. His former works have been in the nature of "challenges" to modern notions, and the present volume—his most important piece of writing so far—is nothing if not a challenge. We welcome it, even if we are bound heartily to dissent from its teaching in some important particulars. For one thing, the writer is courageous enough to cut right across the lines of much popular thinking; for another, there is not a dull page in the whole volume. These are great assets in any writer. At the same time we must frankly admit that he appears to ride some of his theories very hard. For example, he is obsessed with the idea that almost all the evil that has come into the world since the break-up of the Medieval system is due to the foisting of Roman law upon the body economic, and he entirely puts aside the valuable elements in Roman legalism. Mr. Penty would deny that some of the things which we deem "valuable" are valuable at all, e.g., the theory of private property, the creation of which he would ascribe to the Roman legal system; for Mr. Penty believes in communal ownership, which he affirms to be the essence of the medieval notion of property. He is so enamoured of the Medieval system of economics—much indeed of which we admire as sincerely as he does—that he will not see its defects; yet defects of a very serious kind it must have had, or it would have persisted to our own time. Perhaps the truth is that there are undoubted elements in Medievalism which ought to be revived; and one of these is the Guild System, that system of economic and business life which it is the object of this book to advocate. Mr. Penty may take heart; to those that have eyes to see, the beginning of the new (that is, the old) order is already here. Within a decade from now we make bold to predict that some form of the Medieval Guild system will have become part and parcel of the national life. And it will be, if wisely directed, all to the good.

In dealing with the sixteenth-century revival, which we know as the Reformation, Mr. Penty is ridiculously unfair. As he can see no good in Wycliffe, so he appears to see no good in Cranmer and the Fathers of the English Reforming School. Froude might have taught him a truer sense of values. True, the Reformation was never more than half completed; the completion of that remarkable movement is left for (it may be) our own day. But, within its own limits, the Reformation was an undoubted blessing, despite the very serious blots which disfigured the movement in its later stages.

In dealing with the French Revolution, Mr. Penty is far less inclined to ride off at a tangent; and much of his interpretative criticism of that world upheaval (for that is what it really was) is useful and true. Later on in his book, especially in the chapters dealing with Parliamentaryism and the Nineteenth Century, the Limited Liability company movement of our own times, and Bolshevism and the class war, Mr. Penty is very good indeed, though we hesitate to follow him blindly. Taken as a whole, this book ought to prove of great use, in competent hands. The writer's earnestness is undoubted; he has read and thought to good purpose; and his book is one to reckon with.

E. H. BLAKENEY.

" JULIAN THE APOSTATE."

THE EMPEROR JULIAN : an Essay on his relations with the Christian Religion.
By E. J. Martin, B.D. London : S.P.C.K. Price 3s. 6d.

There are few more pathetic figures in history than Julian the Emperor—" Julian the Apostate," as he has been called—a man of high principle, great military knowledge and sincere devotion to what he believed to be the truth. Fanaticism in the Roman Empire was not conspicuous ; the Empire had no Church (established), no priestly caste, no religious orders, and the priests were indifferent persecutors, perhaps because they were largely indifferent to the religion they professed—" light half-believers in their casual creeds." But, as Gwatkin says, Julian was an exception to this rule ; " his fanaticism was a riddle to the heathen themselves." Most people, familiar as they are with the Emperor's name, and to the nickname that has clung to him through the centuries, know little about him ; and what they know is taken from the pages of Gibbon, who writes with an ill-concealed admiration for him. Considering Gibbon's decided anti-Christian animus, we need feel no surprise at this ; and indeed there is much that was in its way admirable about Julian. His attempt to side-track Christianity, if not to crush it altogether, is written large on the page of history ; and his failure was complete. Noble views, distorted ; great powers, misapplied ; high aims, wasted. He was a compound of strange contrasts—half-saint, half persecutor ; yet he is without the charm that hangs about the personality of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, with whom he has many points of contact. To Gregory of Nazianzus, Chrysostom and the early Christian writers, Julian was a monster of iniquity ; but historians like Ammianus, and rhetoricians like Libanius—both of whom know him personally—thought differently, though they were not blind to his obvious defects. What was the cause of his utter misunderstanding of the Christian faith ? Possibly, we must ascribe it to his early teachers ; in the hands of wise and sympathetic guides, Julian might have stood out as one of the great Christian Emperors, far superior to Constantine, superior even to Theodosius. Another thing : he judged of Christianity by the lives of some of the great ones of his time, who, professing the religion of Christ, acted in defiance of the Christ-spirit,—men

" Whose life laughed through and spit at their creeds,
Who maintained Him in words and defied Him in deeds."

Julian was by temperament a doctrinaire and a fanatic ; had his fanaticism been directed into other channels, how different might have been his history ! His very idealism—perverted by a false estimate of things—led him astray ; as an Emperor he might have been a better ruler had he been a worse man. His whole attempt to create an historical basis for Hellenism—with the Gods of Olympus usurping the God of Truth and Love—produced but chaos, a system as illogical as it was crude. Mr. Martin, in the course of his brief but illuminating survey, has done his best to be impartial, and he has succeeded on the whole ; his version of Julian is likely to remain unchanged, in all its main features, whatever new material comes to light in the future. We are, therefore, grateful to him for his book. The last of the great pagan Emperors must ever have a peculiar attraction for the student of history, and Mr. Martin has, in his little book, done his best to make the figure of Julian live before us, both as a statesman, a would-be reformer, and (in a minor degree) as a philosopher and man of letters.

E. H. BLAKENEY.

THE HULSEAN LECTURES: 1918-1919.

CHRISTIAN FREEDOM. By the Rev. F. E. Hutchinson, M.A. London: Macmillan & Co. 5s. net.

This remarkable little book is in the nature of an extended commentary on the words of Benjamin Whichcote, Provost of King's in the seventeenth century, "I will not break the certain law of Charity for a doubtful doctrine. . . I do believe that the destroying of the spirit of persecution out of the Church is a piece of the Reformation, which God in these times of changes aims at." So far, so good. But we must first be quite sure what we mean by charity, for there is a corrupt charity as well as an incorrupt; and we must also be quite sure that a doctrine *is* doubtful before we allow it to pass unchallenged or unsupported. With any attempts at enforcing, by any known method of persecution (overt, or secret and subtle), what we believe to be truth, we, needless to say, have no sympathy; but there is no lack of charity in "contending earnestly for the faith." We are not quite sure whether Mr. Hutchinson would be prepared to contend thus earnestly, or would prefer to allow all doctrines—even those which, for ages, the Church of Christ has regarded as fundamental—to be a matter of pious opinion; but, *ni fallimur*, he seems to press for a modernist interpretation of certain aspects of what we must regard as Christian truth, with a freedom which has undoubtedly a dangerous side. Surely there are some doctrines which do not admit of debate or question—that is, if the Church is any longer to be regarded as "the keeper of a 'deposit' " once and for all committed to her guardianship and keeping.

Mr. Hutchinson says (quoting from Sabatier) that "the words of Jesus do not find ends in themselves; they are unfitted to serve as a fulcrum for a religion of authority." Yet we read that "He taught as one having authority"; and St. John represents Him as saying that His words are "spirit and life." We cannot very well go behind—or beyond—this significant utterance.

With a great deal of what Mr. Hutchinson says we are, of course, in agreement; he speaks with great clearness and equal charity. But we review the book with a "caveat," because, with all its many good points, the direction in which it moves is certainly away from all the established positions. At any rate, such is the impression left upon us after a careful perusal of its pages.

ENGLISH BIBLICAL TRANSLATIONS.

THE LOLLARD BIBLE, and other Medieval Biblical versions. By Margaret Deanesley. Cambridge University Press. 31s. 6d. net.

This volume is the first of a new series of *Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought*, edited by Mr. G. G. Coulton, who maintains in a general preface that the historian is as definitely bound as the chemist "to proclaim certainties as certain, falsehoods as false, and uncertainties as dubious." The aim of this first volume is "to put the history of English Biblical translations into its European background, and to consider English medieval versions historically from new material."

This volume—handsomely printed—contains fourteen chapters, followed by two appendices and an index. The first chapter deals with the problem of the Middle-English Bible, and the aim of this study (already quoted); the second and third with the prohibitions against Bible reading in the vernacular from the end of the eleventh century to the days of Wycliffe. Chapters v, vi, viii, viii. treat of pre-Wycliffite Biblical study in England; and these are followed by a full discussion of the Wycliffe bible, and the various Lollard versions.

The book is a most careful compilation, and its importance is enhanced by

the fact that it is fully "documented." We should imagine that the writer has left little for other workers in the same field to glean; all the materials for a study of this interesting subject are set out, and we can exercise our own judgment on these materials. The volume is obviously for students and specialists, not for the general public, who will probably have neither time nor patience to plod through the mass of facts relevant to the subject in hand. Miss Deanesley has done her work with great care throughout, and is to be congratulated on accomplishing an important and useful piece of historical criticism.

BISHOP BROWNE'S STUDIES.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN IN ANGLO-SAXON TIMES: and other Addresses.
By the Right Rev. G. F. Browne, D.D. London: S.P.C.K. 7s. 6d.
net.

The essay which gives its title to this little book is, perhaps, the least important in the collection. Still, anything that comes from the pen of the late Disney Professor of Archæology at Cambridge is sure to have *some* importance; and this is true of the essay in question, which deals with a number of subjects interesting to students, e.g., Royal Abbesses and Prioresses (like Etheldreda of Ely), Double Monasteries, Hilda as a trainer of Bishops, Walpurga, and the like.

To our mind the book's chief importance lies in the fact that it contains the admirable essay on "The Cultus of St. Peter and St. Paul." This piece of work is, one need hardly say, done with full knowledge, and its significance to students of early English History is great. Another essay that ought to be of interest just now is on the early connexion between the Churches of Britain and Ireland; and we could well wish Bishop Browne had given us a pendant on the connexion between the Welsh Church and the Church of England. The final essay on Erasmus is meritorious, but tells us little that is new; yet it is effective enough, in its way. We heartily congratulate the veteran Bishop on this book; it is worth getting.

DR. SWETE ON PARABLES.

THE PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM: a course of lectures. By H. B. Swete, D.D., F.B.A., Regius Professor of Divinity, Cambridge. London: Macmillan. 7s. 6d. net.

The lectures printed in this book were delivered as long ago as 1908 before a University audience. These lectures are an excellent example of Dr. Swete's method; attractive in style, lucid in exposition, evangelical (in the best sense) in tone. Fortunate the students who were privileged to hear them! For ourselves, we have read these pages with growing interest and pleasure; indeed it would be difficult to speak too highly of the combined scholarship, reverence, and sobriety of the book. Dr. Swete, with his clear insight into the deep meaning underlying our Lord's discourses on the Kingdom, has set before us the teaching of his Master with a tender persuasiveness that takes us to the heart of things. It is no marvel that the memory of such a scholar and such a man is cherished affectionately in the University of which he was so great an ornament—great as a teacher, great as a guide, great as a finished scholar. Those who know Dr. Swete mainly as a scholar should possess themselves of this little book: it is a fine example of the "temper in which Christian doctrine should be studied and taught."

" THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIANITY "

THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIANITY ; Part I : The Acts of the Apostles.
 Edited by F. J. Foakes-Jackson, D.D., and Kirsopp Lake, D.D. Vol.
 I : Prolegomena i (The Jewish, Gentile, and Christian backgrounds).
 London : *Macmillan & Co.* 18s. net.

This ambitious work is likely to cause no small stir in the theological world. The volume before us is but a small part of the work actually contemplated, for it will be followed very shortly by an edition of the Acts of the Apostles (part criticism, part text and commentary), and it is proposed to extend the series down to the day when the Church obtained official recognition by the Roman Empire. The two volumes of prolegomena (of which Vol. I is now before us), though mainly the work of the Editors themselves, will contain contributions by various scholars—co-operative books are the fashion now-a-days—and among these scholars will be found the Rev. C. Emmet, Prof. Windisch of Leyden, Professors Torrey and G. F. Moore (U.S.A.) and Prof. Burkitt of Cambridge.

The present instalment is divided into three main parts :—(1) The Jewish World, (2) The Gentile World, (3) Primitive Christianity. Part I is largely written by the Editors, but the article on the Spirit of Judaism is from the pen of an accomplished Jewish scholar, Mr. C. G. Montefiore ; part II is wholly the work of two writers, Mr. H. T. F. Duckworth, and Mr. C. H. Moore ; part III is due to the Editors. Besides these main sections, there are five appendices :—(1) The Zealots, (2) Nazarene and Nazareth, (3) The Slavonic Josephus, (4) Pharisees and Sadducees, (5) The Am Ha-ares and the Habermim. The volume closes with a full index.

We need not complain of any lack of variety in this book ; and of novelties there is abundance. When we are told that the leading idea of this volume (or, rather, series of volumes) is to continue the work begun by the late Bishop Lightfoot in editing documents historically as well as critically, we wonder what the great bishop would have said to the book which is supposed to carry on his scholarly traditions. For we are profoundly sure that he would not, could not, have identified himself with the principles that seem to underline the teaching of that book. As far as we can see, it might have been written by disbelievers in revelation. The supernatural element is evacuated from the pages of this book, which appears to us (though we hope we do the authors no injustice) frankly rationalistic. There is, of course, much that is valuable and true ; fresh light is, from time to time, cast on historical questions that have been a puzzle to commentators ; due advantage has been taken of the researches of the last fifty years to elucidate many difficult passages. We gladly acknowledge this ; what we regret is the " animus " that seems to be shown by the editors in estimating the rise of Christianity. The picture they give us of the earliest days of that wonderful movement is so different from what we have been taught hitherto to believe, that our surprise is not unnatural. It is not the shock of novelty that troubles us, it is the ethical and religious implications of this new reading of history. This is most noticeable in the section on Christianity. We are told, for example, that the sonship of Jesus is not emphasized in the " earliest strata " of the Gospels. Needless to say, the Johannine Gospel is allowed little weight in endeavouring to arrive at a " critical " conclusion ; for the hundreds of references to Mark, Luke, or Matthew, there are barely a dozen references to John. This is more than a flaw ; it seriously vitiates the argument as a whole. Had the writers studied some of the later writings of Prof. W. M. Ramsay, one might hope that they would have seen their way to modify their views. One is conscious all through the strictly " editorial " sections of this

book that subjectivity of treatment has superseded in large measure that exact regard for the facts which is looked for in a book of this kind. True it is that facts are dealt with and weighed; but not *all* the facts; and the inferences deduced from the selected facts are open to grave question. We must also protest against the undue manipulation of the N.T. documents in the interests of a theory which may, for the moment, be dominant but is not likely to be permanent. The doctrine of continual redaction and re-redaction, when applied to ancient writings, is carried a great deal too far: under the influence of such a solvent, these documents tend to lose all authority, and we are continually thrown back upon conjectures and hypothesis. Many of these conjectures are highly problematic, to say the least, and sometimes rash: but rash conjecture is the result of defective understanding. We will go so far as to say that, if the theories of Messrs. Lake and Jackson are sound, the view of Christianity which the Church has held for nearly two millenniums is a dream. The keynote of their doctrine is struck in the preface: "It is becoming increasingly certain that Christianity in the first century achieved a synthesis between the Greco-Oriental and the Jewish religions in the Roman Empire. The preaching of repentance and of the Kingdom of God begun by Jesus passed into the sacramental cult of the Lord Jesus Christ." Is that all? Would Paul, would John, have subscribed to so one-sided a view of things?

Saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs Answer, "No."

We are sorry to have to state our opinion that the views of these two clergymen of the Church of England—unless we have seriously misunderstood them—cut right across that Historic Faith "once for all delivered to the Saints." There is much that is admirable in their book; but that it represents, fully and finally, the truth about the beginnings of Christianity we do not believe.

READINGS IN FRENCH LITERATURE

CAMBRIDGE READINGS IN FRENCH LITERATURE. Edited by Arthur Tilley.

Cambridge University Press: 8s. net.

This book is handsomely printed, and attractively bound, but the price is abnormally high even in these days. For what does it contain? Just over 200 pages of "Selections," and 23 Illustrations (in half tone); nearly all the latter have been chosen, naturally, from French masters. They are well enough, but they could have been spared without loss to the book, and perhaps with a reduction in its cost. The selections are all very attractive, in their way, but they might easily have been made more representative, especially in the case of latter-day writers. Nothing here of Anatole France's delicate work, nor of Pierre Loti's. Victor Hugo is given four pieces, in verse only: could not a place have been found for some fragment of his prose? Verlaine is unrepresented, and so is Lecomte de Lisle, to say nothing of Zola, Daudet, and a round dozen others we could mention. However, the author holds out hopes of publishing a companion volume, in which some of the gaps may be filled. A few well-chosen notes—on the lines of Palgrave's "Golden Treasury"—would be no bad thing; we think they would add to the usefulness of the volume.