

## NOTES ON RECENT BOOKS.

MRS. J. B. T. DAVIES, M.A., has completed the third volume of her series, "The Heart of the Bible." The subject of the volume is *The Literature of the New Testament* (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 5s. net). Mrs. Davies is an experienced teacher and brings her educational methods to bear upon the explanation of the origin and development of the New Testament writings for the benefit of those who desire to know the views of modern scholars on the subject. For this purpose she regards it as necessary for those who would read the New Testament right to know the events which took place during the first century both in Palestine itself and in the countries at that time most closely connected with Palestine, as well as something of the religious ideas which ruled the minds of the inhabitants of those countries. A brief but clear account is given of the historical background, including the years of upheaval and of the persecution of the Christians. As the earliest writings of the New Testament are those of St. Paul they are treated first, and his problem of reaching the heathen world is dealt with. Long passages are given to illustrate the various points of his teaching, and they serve to illustrate many phases in the life of the Church of the period. The synoptic problem is dealt with in an interesting way, and the views of scholars are clearly set out. Selections from the Q Document are given, and the relationship of these to the other material used by Matthew and Luke is indicated. Attention is given to the special Lukan tradition, as it contains elements not found in the other Gospels. The special characteristics of St. Mark are shown, and the point is emphasised that he wrote "for suffering men and women, to incite to faithful endurance." The later literature of the persecutions covers the Acts of the Apostles, some portions of Matthew, the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Book of the Revelation. The latest literature of the New Testament is represented by the Fourth Gospel, the letters of St. John and some of the other epistles. The method of the book will prove helpful to those desirous of understanding the results of recent scholarship in regard to the New Testament.

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Among the books suitable for Lent are Miss Evelyn Underhill's *The School of Charity* (Longmans, Green & Co., 2s. 6d. net), which is the Bishop of London's Lent book for this year. It is the first time that he has selected a member of the laity, and he has chosen one who is known as an exponent of mysticism. The chapters are described as "Meditations on the Christian Creed" and follow the line of the Nicene Creed. They proceed from the ruling fact of religion, the Reality and Nature of God, and go on to consider the revelation of these in human life, and then the kind of life that they demand from us and make possible. She says of these meditations that if they seem to dwell "too exclusively on the

inner life and have no obvious practical bearing on the social and moral problems which beset us, let us remember that such a retreat to the spiritual is the best of all preparations for dealing rightly with the actual."

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*Watchers By The Cross*, Thoughts on the Seven Last Words, by the Rev. Peter Green, M.A., Canon of Manchester (Longmans, Green & Co., 3s. 6d. net), is a most helpful selection of passages from addresses which he has given for twenty-two years in succession at the Three Hours' Service in his own Church. The passages show the Canon's gift of bringing out the wide variety of lessons to be derived from each of the Words, and his power of using impressive illustrations. There are some points on which we cannot agree with the Canon's views, but on the whole they will be found thoroughly Evangelistic, and essentially sound in the great fundamentals. It is impossible to select any passage for special mention, but his treatment of the Fourth Word will be found specially helpful.

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Dr. Hubert L. Simpson's *Testimony of Love* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2s. 6d. net) will prove a useful and suggestive series of addresses on The Seven Last Words, and preachers will find in them real inspiration for their Good Friday addresses. We naturally turn to the Fourth Word as the most difficult, and find, as we expected, that his treatment of it is especially helpful. There is something direct and forceful in such a sentence as "The League of Nations threatens to crumple up like an addled egg in the hairy paws of Mars, and the laughter of devils echoes round the world."

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*Theodore, Bishop of Winchester*, is a Memoir of Frank Theodore Woods, D.D., written by his brother, E. S. Woods, M.A., Bishop of Croydon, and F. B. Macnutt, M.A., Provost and Archdeacon of Leicester (S.P.C.K., 7s. 6d. net). It is a tribute written in a spirit of love and appreciation of one who advanced to a high position in the Church, dealing with his work in the threefold character of Pastor, Prophet and Pilgrim. Those who knew him in his earlier days recognised him as a keen and spiritually-minded worker of strong Evangelical sympathies. Those sympathies are not easily shed and they remained with him to the end of his life, but as with many other Evangelicals who are advanced to positions of prominence in the Church, they became overlaid in the course of time with other sympathies developed from contact with those who pay great deference to the episcopal office and by means well known to themselves secure a place of influence from which they can further their own aims. Few men are strong enough to stand against the forces of their environment, and thus it happens that some who begin an episcopal career as strong Evangelicals are led almost without recognising it themselves to adopt an outlook that at one time would have appeared strange to them. It is a significant fact that those

members of the episcopate who opposed Prayer Book revision were not men who had been closely associated in their earlier days with the Evangelical tradition, but men of a more independent outlook who recognised the mistakes that were contemplated and that are now obvious even to those who at the time favoured some of the extreme features which were proposed. Bishop Woods passed out of a somewhat narrow type of Evangelicalism and with a sense of the dignity of the episcopal order derived probably from those with whom he was cast, left his Evangelicalism behind him and became a protagonist of the more popular forms of Christianity which were occupied with Social Problems and the relationship with foreign churches. In these directions he did useful work and had the reward of the popularity which such work brings. The greater portion of the book is occupied with the record of his work as Bishop, and among his achievements was the division of the large diocese of Winchester, which meant a break with the old associations of the See with Farnham, and a pleasant side of the Bishop's character is seen in the farewell proceedings on leaving the old episcopal residence. The record bears ample testimony to the zeal and activity of the Bishop and it will be treasured by his many friends in memory of their happy associations with him.

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*Ask What I Shall Give Thee.* Compiled by the Rev. Thomas S. Hall, B.D., with a Foreword by the Most Rev. C. F. D'Arcy, D.D., Archbishop of Armagh (The Church Book Room, London, 2s. 6d.) This selection of Prayers is admirably arranged and shows the wonderful variety of applications that can be made of the Lord's Prayer. The Prayers are arranged for four weeks, and the selection has been carefully made from a wide range of sources, including ancient liturgies and the best modern collections. The value of the book will be best proved by its use, and we can strongly recommend it to our readers.

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*After The Celebration of the Oxford Movement: Some Considerations,* by W. Emery Barnes, D.D., Hulsean Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge (Bowes & Bowes, 6d. net), is a booklet which ought to be widely circulated and read as it is a most useful corrective of much of the teaching of the Oxford Movement, and exposes the errors of modern Anglo-Catholicism. It gives the correct interpretation of Church of England teaching on several important points, including the true significance of the Holy Communion.

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*Codex Sinaiticus* (Lutterworth Press, 1s. net) contains Dr. Tischendorf's interesting story of his adventures in connection with the discovery of the *Codex Sinaiticus* which has recently been purchased for the British Museum. It is one of the romances of the Bible Story. Dr. Tischendorf's argument on the authenticity of early Christian Manuscripts is added, and the whole makes a most useful booklet.

## CHURCH BOOK ROOM NOTES.

## WINE OFFICE COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C.4.

**A Great Bishop.**—Many friends will be glad to learn of the re-issue by the Church Book Room of the Life of *Francis James Chavasse*, Bishop of Liverpool, by Canon J. B. Lancelot, at the popular price of 3s. 6d. (postage 6d.). This edition is identical in type and illustrations with the original edition, except that it is on smaller paper and a third of the price. Thus this handier volume brings the message of the Bishop's character and words within the reach of a wider public. Canon Lancelot in his Preface to the edition says that when he started at the request of the family to write this memoir he received three messages from outside. The first was: "He was the people's Bishop: see that you make it the people's book"; the second, "Remember we want to see his *soul*"; and the third, "I am sure that your book will be rich in an affectionate understanding." Canon Lancelot has very adequately produced a biography which covers the three points named to him, and has included a considerable quantity of quotations from the Bishop's journals and letters which reveal the man and his essentially spiritual nature. A number of excellent portraits and other photographs are included, and the book will be appreciated and found lucid and readable by all those who can admire a noble life spent in the service of God and man.

**The Confessional.**—The practice of auricular confession is being pressed very strongly in the Church to-day as a normal part of the life of the devout Christian. Manuals and leaflets are being published and widely circulated in a number of parishes. One leaflet which has been sent to us states that "If your conscience is troubled by your sins the Prayer Book urges you to make your confession in the presence of a Priest because he has authority from God to give you Absolution if you are penitent." The pamphlet contains a list of a number of sins which the penitent is instructed to read and meditate over. He is then told: "When you are tired, stop, and say the prayer at the top of the last page. On another day go on with the questions where you left off last time." After this meditation he is instructed to go to the Priest, kneel down in the appointed place and commence his confession with "I Confess to God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, before the whole company of heaven, and before you, Father," etc. Some of the questions which are asked are, of course, quite unobjectionable; some, however, as for example on the seventh commandment, are undesirably suggestive, and some deal with comparatively trivial matters such as "Have I stayed too long in bed in the morning?", "Have I taken more than I ought to eat?"

In view of this literature, information on the subject should be circulated, and we recommend Canon Meyrick's excellent pamphlet, *The Confessional* (3d.), an essay written by him some years ago. The fourth impression of this is now in print with a Preface by Dean Wace. Canon Meyrick's method of dealing with the question is the historical one, and shows that the purest and noblest ages of the Church were entirely free from the benumbing influence of auricular confession and absolution, and that the latter system does not help towards a religious life but is destructive of manliness of character and delicacy of feeling, deposing the conscience which is given by God as His guide to each man and woman, and enthroning in its place another authority which paralyses the rightful authority. Canon Meyrick was an able scholar,

a loyal member of the English Church and an experienced parish priest, and his condemnation is not that of a partisan. Other leaflets on the Confessional obtainable from the Book Room are *Shall I Go to Confession*, by Dr. Griffith Thomas (*1d.*), *Confession* in the Church Leaflet Series ( $\frac{1}{2}d.$ ), and *Auricular Confession*, by Archdeacon Thorpe (*1d.*). For those who wish to study the matter further, we would mention the Report of the Conference held at Fulham Palace in 1901-2, edited by Dean Wace. This contains the Minutes of the Conference and the evidence brought forward. Some second-hand copies are obtainable at the Book Room, price 1s. (post *4d.*). There is also Bishop Drury's *Confession and Absolution*, a few second-hand copies of which are obtainable, price 3s. post free. Bishop Drury's sub-title to his book is *The Teaching of the Church of England as Interpreted and Illustrated by the Writings of the Reformers of the Sixteenth Century*, his object being to illustrate the formularies of our Church from the writings of the men who were most concerned in compiling them. The book contains an Index of authors quoted, Scripture Texts, and also a general Index.

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**Martin Luther.**—We are glad to be able to announce the republication at *1d.* of Dean Wace's address on *Martin Luther : His Part in the Reformation*, which was originally given at a meeting in the Queen's Hall, London, under the auspices of the World's Evangelical Alliance at the 400th Anniversary Commemoration of the Protestant Reformation in Europe. The pamphlet is well printed in a good type, and is suitable for sale in our Book Racks. The first page of the cover contains an excellent photograph of the Dean.

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**The Catholic Faith.**—This manual of instruction for members of the Church of England by the Rev. W. H. Griffith Thomas, D.D., a new impression of which was published in 1929 when the book had reached a circulation of 50,000, is again practically out of print and a new impression is called for. The manual (published in paper cover at 1s. 6*d.*; cloth boards 2s. 6*d.*, postage 5*d.*) represents an endeavour to answer two questions: (I) *What is the Church of England?* (II) *What does the Church of England Teach?* The answers to these questions are found, first, in the Prayer Book and Articles considered in their plain and obvious meaning. An attempt is then made to indicate the fundamental principles of the Church of England, to show how those principles are expressed in the formularies of doctrine and worship, and to point out what the principles imply and involve in the life of those who are bound by them. It is also shown that the Prayer Book and Articles need consideration in the light of their origin and compilation, and in view of the circumstances which gave birth to their present form. The Church of England formularies are thus seen to be the direct outcome of great movements of thought and life in the English nation. The book, which is divided into three parts—*The Catholic Faith and Individual Life; The Catholic Faith and Church Life; and The Catholic Faith and Current Questions*—will be found of use to all Church people wishing to know what it means to be a Christian in association with the Church of England; what is involved in belonging to that body of Christians which is called by the title; and by what arguments they may be able to justify their position whenever required to do so.