

NOTES ON RECENT BOOKS.

IT is not easy to make the history of the development of Christian doctrine interesting to a popular audience, but the Rev. Alan Richardson succeeded in doing so to gatherings at Swanwick and elsewhere, and he has issued in book form the substance of his addresses as a simple introduction to the subject for those who have had no previous technical training in theology—*Creeds in the Making* (Student Christian Movement Press, 2s. 6d. net). At the beginning, he shows that historically Christianity was founded upon the belief in the Resurrection. In the second and third centuries the person of Christ was the subject of discussion. Mr. Richardson says that the modern Protestant interpretation of the word "catholic" as meaning universal—the sense adopted by the Reformers—is certainly unhistorical and that it should mean "non-Schismatic" or "orthodox," yet he has himself to acknowledge that "in the earliest times, as in the letters of Ignatius, the word catholic in the phrase the Catholic Church had simply meant universal." It is difficult therefore to see how the Reformers' use of the term can be unhistorical. It is certainly a more correct use than that which applies the word, and strictly confines it, to a sectional interpretation and limits it to accretions of doctrines in the Middle Ages. The difficult subject of the Trinity is treated with all possible clearness and this is followed by the further elucidation of the doctrine of the person of Christ in the fifth century when the Church was faced with various heresies. "The Church made no creeds and definitions until these were rendered absolutely necessary for the very existence of the one faith by the false speculations of the heretics." The development of the doctrine of the Atonement in its various stages is clearly stated. Of the Moral Theory which is so popular at present he says: "It is very helpful and true as far as it goes, but it is not the whole truth: it does not explain all that the Christian experience of forgiveness contains." There is no one theory of the Atonement binding upon Christians. The closing chapter deals with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and there will be general agreement that "the Church to-day sorely needs to reawaken to the full realisation of the significance of her ancient doctrine of God as Holy Spirit." Mr. Richardson has provided a useful little manual which should prove very helpful to those desirous of giving instruction on the general outlines of the formation of the creeds.

Mrs. Helen M. Cobbold, who has had a wide experience of many branches of Church work, has written "a practical guide for the inexperienced" under the title, *The District Visitor* (S.P.C.K., 2s. 6d. net). It covers all the familiar conditions which are known to parochial workers and deals with the difficulties which even the experienced still find to present problems. The personal equip-

ment of the Visitor is at the outset the principal matter, and although Mrs. Cobbold does not dwell upon the necessity of spiritual fitness she fully recognises that to whatever school of thought a worker may belong, the personal experience of Christ as Saviour is necessary, if the equipment is to be adequate. The advice given is of a most practical character and it can be adapted to parishes of every character.

The Modern Missionary, "A Study of the Human Factor in the Missionary Enterprise in the Light of Present-Day Conditions," edited by J. H. Oldham (Student Christian Movement Press, 1s. 6d. net). Missionaries from various parts of the principal mission fields have set down in the light of present-day conditions the qualities and preparation most needed by those who go out to take part in the work. They represent China, Africa, the Near East and parts of India. The changing conditions of life in missionary lands has led to the development of new qualifications in the Christian workers, and the experiences recorded here will provide those contemplating work overseas with some hints as to the best methods of preparation so as to qualify themselves for the special work they may be undertaking.

Prayers for the Christian Year is the title of a Book of Prayers issued "By Authority of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland" (Oxford University Press, 3s. 6d. net). The Preface explains that the observance of the Christian Year ceased in the Church of Scotland at the Reformation, but it is desirable now that a return should be made to the general practice of Christendom and commemorate the chief facts of the Christian Faith. To enable this to be done with decency and order the General Assembly has had this series of prayers drawn up as a means of guidance for ministers in making their own preparation for leading the worship of the people. Many sources have been drawn upon and our own Book of Common Prayer has contributed no small portion of the contents. In addition to prayers for the principal Church seasons provision has also been made for such occasions as the last Sunday of the year, Watch Night, Peace Sunday, and Harvest Thanksgiving. Many beside the members of the Church of Scotland will find this selection of prayers useful as a guide to prayer. In range of thought and in diction they possess outstanding excellence.

Prebendary Wilson Cash has already shown himself to be possessed of the very useful gift of getting to the heart of St. Paul's thought in some of his Epistles and of interpreting it in clear and instructive terms to his hearers and readers. To his previous books, *Helps to the Study of the Ephesians* and *Helps to the Study of Philip-pians*, he has added *Helps to the Study of Colossians* (C.M.S., 1s. net).

It is the outcome of a series of Bible readings given at the weekly prayer meeting in the chapel of C.M. House. After an adequate introduction and an outline and statement of the contents of the Epistle, each chapter is examined and its chief points set out. The study does not claim to be in any way a complete commentary, but the contents of each address provide an explanation of the thought of the passage considered, and these will be found sufficient not only for private study but also for use with group study circles. Each section concludes with an appropriate prayer. The author says that "the writing of this little book has deepened my belief in the inspiration of God's Word, and if these notes prove of help to others the time and labour spent on them will be fully repaid." The outstanding lesson of the Epistle is contained in Chapter I, verse 18: "That in all things he might have the pre-eminence."

The discovery of the literary remains of Thomas Traherne by Mr. Bertram Dobell is one of the romances of literature. A full edition of the work was published a few years ago. A selection entitled *The Felicities of Thomas Traherne*, chosen and edited with an Introduction by Sir Arthur Quiller Couch (P. J. A. E. Dobell, 3s. net), has now been issued. No one is more qualified than the Editor to give an estimate of Traherne's special qualities, and this selection will be valued as much for its Introduction as for its actual contents. Traherne lived in the difficult days of the seventeenth century, and in verse and prose set out with rich imagery the moral and spiritual truths of the Christian faith as he apprehended them. This selection gives an excellent insight into these special aspects of his thought.

Michaelangelo is one of the great figures of Italian art. Every visitor to Italy is impressed with the magnificence of his work and many are thrilled with delight in the presence of his painting and his sculpture. The Oxford University Press has issued a charming volume, *The Master. A Study of Michaelangelo*, by J. Howard Whitehouse and Colin Roche (10s. 6d. net). The volume is not intended to be a life of Michaelangelo, but it is an endeavour to give expression to the joy which from boyhood onward has been given to the authors by the contemplation of his works. They have acted independently of the views expressed by critics. They have avoided the language of art developed in recent years, which they find meaningless, and they simply give their own appreciation of him as the great creative artist and the almost faultless craftsman. The book is admirably illustrated with representations of the principal works of the artist both in painting and sculpture, and the account of each is written with knowledge and discrimination. As a gift book to any lover of Italian art this volume could not be surpassed.