

Reviews of Books.

DR. PLUMMER'S THESSALONIANS.

A COMMENTARY ON ST. PAUL'S FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS. By Alfred Plummer M.A., D.D. London: *Robert Scott*. 4s. 6d. net.

A new and scholarly commentary on 1 Thessalonians is sure of a welcome. Not that Dr. Plummer's labours will supersede the work of others in the same field; but it is an invaluable supplement. By clearness of the notes, by spiritual insight, and by copious references, an aid is given to the study of this epistle which will be useful to all. The student who has access to a good library is directed not only to the great standard authorities, but to an immense amount of good work which lies buried in the almost forgotten pages of periodical publications. Others are assured that no position is maintained without ample thought, while the opinions of differing commentators are plainly stated. In a book which demands a reader's acquaintance with Greek, it seems a pity to print the translation of the A.V. It is no disparagement of that rendering to say that the study of the Greek text is better. Without this the author's masterly paraphrase of St. Paul's language cannot be appreciated. The example of his own commentary on St. Matthew might well have been followed. This gives neither; but if either is to be provided, it should surely be the Greek. But so small a matter does not seriously detract from the true merit of an able and suggestive exposition of the earliest of the Pauline epistles.

"THE SEPTUAGINT FALLACY."

THE SEPTUAGINT FALLACY: AN INDICTMENT OF MODERN CRITICISM. By the Rev. W. I. Phillips, M.A. With a Foreword by Prebendary Denison. London: *Robert Scott*. 3s. 6d. net.

Conservative criticism owes Mr. Phillips a debt of gratitude for this little book, the value of which is out of all proportion to its size. Mr. Denison's vigorous attack on German criticism, too, is both clever and "cutting." At the outset we are told that the book has been written for the confirmation of those Church people "who believe *ex animo* in the great standing miracle of an inspiration worthy the name, and taken in its technical sense." The author bravely but ably challenges Dr. Swete's dictum that "In the LXX (the student) has before him a version of an early text which has often differed materially from the text of the pointed Hebrew Bible and of all existing Hebrew texts," and he maintains that these variations are actually "nothing but the mistakes and blunders of a very bad translation of the one and only original Hebrew text ('one and only' because it is not proven and perhaps is quite unprovable that any other text ever existed)."

Taking Dr. Swete's "Introduction" he shows that the LXX is—in Dr. Kirkpatrick's words—"a very heterogeneous bit of work," and we certainly think that he makes good his case. He discusses the verdict of history concerning the LXX briefly but forcefully, shows that the alleged importance of the LXX is quite a modern notion on which recent destructive criticism is really built, and defends the Massoretic text by arguments from which we believe there is no escape. He quotes a "present-day Jew" who says that orthodox Jews "believe that the stories in the Old Covenant book from the very first letter in Genesis to the last in Malachi, without any exception, are real truth, real history of facts that happened just as they are described," and who declares that "it is impossible to admit the slightest difference

between the Hebrew text of to-day and that of twenty-four centuries ago." There is a needed warning against the numerous small text-books which profess to give "the assured results of criticism," and Mr. Phillips instances Adney and Bennett's manual in Jack's *People's Books* series, which we thought particularly mischievous. Our only regret is that the price may prejudice the sale of Mr. Phillips' book, although it is well worth the money to the Bible student.

S. R. CAMBIE.

TWO WAR BOOKS.

WITH OUR HEROES IN KHAKE. By the Rev. Edward Sellers. London: R.T.S. 3s. 6d.

This is one of the most fascinating war books we have seen. It is in a sense a continuation of Mr. Sellers' former work, *With our Fighting Men*, which dealt mainly with the work of the Chaplains, while the present book gives "greater prominence to the experience and work of the Christian men in the ranks and brings the story down to the summer of 1917." Many of the stories so graphically told in these pages are an inspiration to read, and from first to last there is not a dull page or paragraph. It is an encouragement to those who are praying and striving to secure unity among Christian people to read that "ecclesiastical labels disappear at the Front," and to hear of a Communion Service which was conducted by a minister of the United Free Church of Scotland and at which the elements were distributed by a minister of the Established Church of Scotland and a clergyman of the Church of England. Of course it goes without saying that many of the incidents recorded are pathetic in the extreme, and the man or woman who could read this book from cover to cover without being moved must be made of unsympathetic materials. Naturally there is a good deal said about the Y.M.C.A. and other organizations which are doing all they can for England's sons, and it is not surprising to learn that the work of the Y.M.C.A. alone is costing upwards of £600 a day. If there be anywhere a doubting Thomas who wonders if such an expenditure is really worth while, let him read this splendid record of self-sacrificing labour on the part of those who have gone out to do "their bit" for the heroes in khaki.

THE SCOTTISH WOMEN'S HOSPITAL AT THE FRENCH ABBEY OF ROYAUMONT.
By Antonio De Navarro. London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd. 7s. 6d. net.

Mr. De Navarro (who if we mistake not is the husband of Miss Mary Anderson, the gifted actress who left the stage on her marriage, now twenty-five years ago) has done two things in this attractively got up volume. He has in the first place compiled a history of the Abbey of Royaumont which was founded, as the result of the dying wish of his father, by the Crusader Louis IX in 1228. Although the dying monarch wished it to be the home of the Order of St. Victor, his executors established the Cistercian Order in the buildings which the pious Louis and his brothers assisted to erect with their own hands. Some of the beautiful buildings remain, though the great Abbey Church was demolished by order of the Commune in 1791. The history of the intervening years—years both of prosperity and adversity—is graphically told, and the buildings are described as well as illustrated.

Then Mr. De Navarro tells us how his work in connection with the Red Cross brought him into touch with the hospital of 400 beds which has been housed in these historic buildings almost from the beginning of the war. Not the least interesting part of the book is this in which he tells the story of the establishment of the Scottish Women's Hospital and describes the working

of the only hospital in France run entirely by women. It is a story of difficulties bravely faced and of loving service rendered by devoted women whose enterprise well deserves to be recorded.

BIBLE READINGS.

IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD THROUGH CHRIST. By Bertha Fennell. London : *Marshall Brothers, Ltd.* 1s. 6d. net.

Another volume of Miss Fennell's charming and deeply spiritual Bible Readings. There are twelve in all, and each is marked by freshness and originality. The writer has evidently no small knowledge of scientific facts, and this knowledge in a striking and attractive manner is made to throw light upon the spiritual truths which this little volume sets forth. Here is a specimen : " It has been beautifully suggested that the tender harmonies of the Divine Tones produced the exquisite gradations of colour and design in things created. It is a well-known scientific fact that certain sands are peculiarly sensitive to the sound-waves passing over them. When a certain note is struck on a musical instrument in their vicinity, the particles of sand, previously sprinkled on a board for demonstration, will instantly resolve themselves into a symmetrical design, entirely differing from that produced by some other note, but always the same design in unison with the same note. If even sand in the inanimate creation will respond to the sway of musical harmony, may it not well be believed that the glories of the painted butterflies, the colour-gradations of the more sober raiment of the commonest moth, the delicate shadings of the feathers of birds and the fur of animals, and all the beauty of design and colouring worked out in the tiniest shells and molluscs and floral wonders, owe their being to the far-reaching tender harmonies of their Creator's Voice. He commanded and they were created. Instinctively they worked out His wonderful designs with no thought of resultant beauty for themselves : their one aim to fulfil His plan, and, like Moses, they wist not that they shone with His reflected loveliness. ' God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good ' (Gen. i. 31)." From the chapter on " The Voice of God."

In the chapter on " The Adversary," Miss Fennell well says : " No wonder that Satan's aim in these latter days is to hide the Cross of Calvary—to obliterate the thought of any need of a Mediator—to transform himself into an angel of light and learning and ideal aspiration, if only he can cast into oblivion the remembrance of the precious Blood, the one effectual weapon for his overthrow."

The whole book is a mine of solid gold. We trust it may be widely read and pondered.

LIBERAL THEOLOGY.

A LIVING CHRISTIANITY. By Emma Marie Caillard. London : *John Murray* 3s. 6d. net.

This book deals with such topics as Scientific Method, Miracles, Sin and Redemption, Atonement, Christian Society, and the Life to Come from the standpoint of reverent liberal Churchmanship.

" Christian Theology," we are told, " is the science of Christianity." For all other branches of science we recognize development. " A science which could not develop would be dead." But the Christian Church possesses definite and ancient Creeds, which in the present stage of Christian feeling cannot be revised. How then can they be developed? The author says :

" Under the circumstances it seems obvious that the best expedient is to

retain the old formulæ, but to allow without accusation of heresy or dishonesty, as wide and various an interpretation of them as is compatible with a sincere recognition that Christ was absolutely unique in His relation alike to God and to man" (p. 50).

Of the doctrine of Justification by Faith, she quotes with approval Dr. Rashdall's words to the effect that "men are justified by Christ when Christ's influence makes them better men" (p. 75).

Any theory of the Atonement which regards it as a substitution of the innocent for the guilty, is described as impossible and immoral. "It was not the physical death, but the perfect obedience of Christ which gave that sacrifice its atoning value." "Our Lord's Sacrifice is not *instead* of ours, it is the perfect expression and acknowledgment of what ours ought to be, of what in the spirit and strength of Christ, and through the faith which He inspires, which His life on earth perfectly and uniquely exemplifies, they will eventually become" (p. 82).

This is a reverent and honest attempt to re-interpret or re-express the Christian faith in terms which may be acceptable to modern liberal Churchmen. We believe, however, that Miss Caillard's ascription of the supposed non-fulfilment of our Lord's eschatological words to His human limitation is too hasty. Further, her rejection of all vicarious aspect of the Atonement fails to do justice to the plain teaching of the Bible and disregards the new light that the present war has thrown on the subject.

KHODADAD E. KEITH.

DR. FORSYTH AND IMMORTALITY.

THIS LIFE AND THE NEXT. By P. T. Forsyth, M.A., D.D. London: *Macmillan & Co.* 4s. net.

Dr. Forsyth tells us that he does not propose "to speak about the grounds in this life of a belief in another, but about the reaction of that belief upon this life."

To the critics who say that a passion for immortality "magnifies our egoism," the author replies that the Christian idea of the other life "is not happiness and it is not power, but it is perfection—which is the growth of God's image and glory as our destiny" (p. 128). "Our real and great hope is not that one day we shall die to the world, but that this day we live to others and to God" (p. 25).

Of the patriot who has made the supreme sacrifice of his life, we are told that although his sacrifice does not save him, "yet it may be a moment of his conversion." "We may be quite sure that, if a cup of cold water to a disciple do not lose its reward, so an act of sacrifice for a righteous cause cannot go without its moral value for God, and a corresponding effect on the soul" (p. 42).

It is somewhat singular to find the principal of Hackney College, a Non-conformist Theological College, advocating prayers for the dead. "Prayer," he says, "is our supreme link with the unseen—with which otherwise we have no practical relations" (p. 43).

"It would never have been lost but for the abuses of purgatory, masses and the commerce which the Church made of a magical influence on another world" (p. 46).

Dr. Forsyth does not tell us how such abuses could be prevented if prayers for the departed were to be introduced into the public worship of the Reformed Churches.

This little book is thoughtful and abounds with epigrammatic sayings, but the style is somewhat heavy.

K. E. K.

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

DIVINE HUMANITY. By Alexander Pym. London: *Robert Scott*. 3s. 6d. net.

The author is a layman who has had a good scientific and philosophical training, and exhibits a wide knowledge of modern standard works on Theology. He is also well acquainted with the intellectual difficulties which some educated laymen experience in accepting the claims of Christ. He has written this book to show the reasonableness of Christian faith as an explanation of life. Some of the topics discussed are: the reality and supremacy of the spiritual; the problem of sin and suffering; death and beyond; the world waiting for Christ; the coming of Christ; and the strength and weakness of the Church to-day. All these subjects are handled with such freshness of treatment, cogency of reasoning and felicity of diction that they cannot fail to charm the reader. This is one of the most stimulating books we have read for a long time. The younger clergy will do well to read this volume and to lend it to educated members of their congregations who are perplexed with the critical problems of our time. We have space to give only one quotation and we choose the last paragraph in the book:—

“With Christ as Guide there can be no uncertainty at the parting of the ways, no discouragement in the face of difficulty and disappointment. With unwavering steps we shall pass through raging torrents, across plains and barren wastes, until in the golden glow of sunset our eyes behold the flashing pinnacles of the city of God. There, in the presence of our Master, perplexities will be answered and harsh dissonances resolved. For we ourselves shall have come to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

K. E. K.

THE WOOLWICH CRUSADE.

THE WOOLWICH CRUSADE. September 2 to 16, 1917. Issued by the Southwark Diocesan Council for Munition Areas. With a preface by the Bishop of Southwark. London: *S.P.C.K.* 1s. 3d. net.

It was perhaps just as well that there should be a complete and permanent record of what was attempted in the Woolwich Crusade. Only the names of the clergy actually in charge of the eight “stations” are given us. There may be a misprint, but one of the names does not appear in Crockford. So far as the rest are concerned we have Churchmen of such varied types as “Father” Paul Bull, Rev. J. A. Douglas and Revs. F. C. Davies and H. Foster Pegg, and on the whole “Central Churchmanship” seems to have been fairly well represented. The chapters, entitled respectively “Impressions” and “Lessons,” are not inspiring. In the latter there is this candid admission, “We came to Woolwich for the Crusade to give a message to the workers there. We discovered that we had not yet found the message. The Church does not yet know how to present the Christian truth so as to make it plain and real to the working man and woman. We found also that part of our failure was due to the fact that we did not understand their attitude towards us.” Those who move and minister among the masses will read this record of a serious effort with the deepest interest, and it is to be hoped that the experiences here recorded will be some help to them in their difficult task. What was aimed at and done serves at least to demonstrate the fact that our Church and her leaders are not asleep in this time of testing.

