

Book Notices.

The Witness to Immortality in Literature, Philosophy and Life. By GEORGE A. GORDON, minister of the Old South Church, Boston. New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Toronto: William Briggs. Price \$1.50.

For two hundred years and more, the Old South Church has been a beacon of religious and intellectual light. The present volume treats with consummate skill one of the profoundest problems of the universe. It gathers from the past the testimony of the greatest spirits of the ages, to the doctrine of the immortality of man. In its pages "the divine voice is heard along the high-ways of history, caught by the loftiest spirits of the race, and passed onward through their resonant humanity, touching the individual soul with the original utterance of God all but completely blended with the grand responses and reverberations of the grateful heart of mankind."

Not everyone can range for himself through the almost boundless domain of literature. Hence the world owes a debt of obligation to men who, like the author and Matthew Arnold, spread the knowledge of the best thinking of the highest minds among the people. Our author interprets, first, with deep insight, the testimony of the old Hebrew prophets upon the doctrine of immortality. Not dimly and vaguely does he find it set forth in psalm and prophecy, but with strong and positive assurance. He next summons the testimony of the great poets of all time. From Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Browning and Tennyson, he cites the strong corroboration of that primal instinct of the race grasping after God and immortality. The voice of philosophy, of faith and reason, is next summoned. In Sokrates, Plato and Origen, from Butler, Kant and Lotze, deepest confirma-

tion of this immortal yearning is found. The argument of St. Paul is expanded and unfolded, and in the teachings of Jesus Christ is found its highest demonstration. The whole book is characterized by an elevation of thought and a strength and beauty of diction in keeping with the august theme treated. The author quotes the following grim, strong poem of W. E. Henley:

"Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever God's may be
For my unconquerable soul.

"In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud;
Under the bludgeonings of chance,
My head is bloody, but not bowed.

"Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the horror of the shade;
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

"It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishment the
scroll:
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul."

Of this Mr. Gordon says, "this surely is the desperate expression of a faith intrinsically great. The primacy of soul could hardly receive more powerful utterance, and the man who is so certain of the soul should not find it difficult to rest in the deepest certainty of God."

The New Testament; or, The Book of the Holy Gospel of our Lord and our God, Jesus the Messiah. A literal translation from the Syriac Peshitto version, by JAS. MURDOCK, D.D., Boston: H. L. Hastings, Scriptural Tract Repository. Toronto: Wm. Briggs. Octavo, pp. 507. Price, \$2.50.

Mr. H. L. Hastings' introduction to the Peshitto Syriac New Testament has all the fascination of romance. In a thoroughly scholarly way, and with ample study of the best authorities, he recounts the