

Book Notices.

Studies in Theology.—*VI. Sin.* By RANDOLPH S. FOSTER, D.D., LL.D., a Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church. New York: Eaton & Mains. Toronto: William Briggs. Octavo, pp. 308. Price, \$3.00.

One of the most tremendous mysteries of the universe is the existence of sin. Its virulent evil is too lightly regarded in the easy-going evangelism of the times. In the oriental races there seems to be slight consciousness of sin—either in the gods or in their devotees. A thoughtful study of this great mystery, of its guilt and punishment, will lead to clearer conceptions of the love of God in its forgiveness through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Bishop Foster's great work is no mere repetition of stereotyped views. He does his own thinking with striking freshness and originality. He protests at the outset against the false conceptions which Milton and the poets and painters have given of the primitive condition of mankind in a paradise of beauty, having a perfect ecstasy of life without care or trouble. On the contrary he affirms "the world where Adam was made and where he commenced his life was this world as we find it to-day, except not beautified by the touch of cultivation. There were hailstorms and snowdrifts, floods and earthquakes, plenty and famine, before and after our first parents came. They were made for this world; for work and toil and care; for an everyday existence, and not for parade. Adam was new, but the world was old and just as we find it. To make his way through it, what is necessary for us was necessary for him. Hunger and want struck him the first day he lived on earth. He needed clothes and home as much as we do. The same law of labour bound him that binds us. The common fortunes of humanity were his, its imminent liabilities and necessities. He would grow old, his hair would become gray and his eyes dim, and he would need a staff."

Man was created innocent, but that does not include the highest quality of holiness which results from the resistance of temptation and overcoming evil. The author confutes the Calvinistic theory of Hodge and Shedd as to the nature of sin and the inheritance of anything like guilt from our first parent. The latter part of

the volume is devoted to the discussion of punishment of sin, and incidentally to theories of the atonement. The subject, however, is too large for review in a brief book notice and will receive more extended treatment in a future number. Bishop Foster's views are not inconsistent with the Scriptural teaching that sin brought a blight upon nature and penal consequences which through heredity the whole race shares.

From the Himalayas to the Equator. Letters, Sketches and Addresses, Giving Some Account of a Tour in India and Malaysia. By CYRUS D. FOSS, D.D., LL.D., one of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church. New York: Eaton & Mains. Toronto: William Briggs. Pp. 262. Price, \$1.00.

The missionary tours of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church immeasurably surpass those of the first and great missionary apostle of the Gentiles. This book in its way is in spirit a continuation of the Acts of the Apostles. Bishop Foss, accompanied by that devoted friend of missions, Dr. Goucher, made a wide and intelligent inspection of mission work in India and Malaysia. The Bishop gives a graphic account of the scenes which impressed his heart and mind. Of the people of India he says: "No words of mine can convey any just sense of what I felt concerning the measureless and desperate degradation which their heathenism had brought to hundreds of millions of people in this country; nor of the zest and relish with which I turn away from such scenes."

Yet this dark field of heathenism is the most successful mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church. It has now 77,963 communicants, an increase of tenfold in eleven years. The closing chapter is a bugle-call for a forward movement in the cause of missions. What is needed, says the Bishop, is "not so much an awakening of India, but an awakening of America to some adequate sense of the splendour of her present opportunities for swift advances in the conquest of the heathen world." The book contains eighteen admirable pictures of striking scenes in India, and portraits of Bishops Thoburn and Foss, and Dr. Goucher.