

BOOK NOTICES.

Living Epistles; or, Christ's Witnesses in the World: also an Essay on *Christianity and Skepticism*. By the REV. E. H. DEWART, with an introduction by the REV. WILLIAM ORMISTON, D.D. Cr. 8vo., price \$1. Toronto : S. Rose ; and Methodist Book Rooms, Montreal and Halifax.

The author of this admirable work has rendered valuable service to the Church and to the cause of religious literature by its publication. It grapples with some of the gravest problems of the times. It discusses with keen analysis the prevailing causes which weaken the influence and retard the progress of religion in the world. In an introductory chapter, the present religious condition of the world passes under review. While the potent moral influence of Christianity is duly recognized, its failure to fulfil the glorious purpose for which it is designed is pointed out and deplored. Among the causes producing this result are shown to be a degree of conformity to the world on the part of Christians unbecoming the high vocation wherewith they are called ; a want of harmony between the daily life and the professed creed of many Christians ; and faults of spirit and temper which injure Christian influence. With great force and fervour of language, the author urges the conclusion,—the echo of the wise preacher of Israel—that Scriptural holiness is the great want of the Church and of the world, and presents with great cogency practical motives and considerations which should inspire us to live a higher Christian life.

The second part of the volume consists of a valuable critical essay on Christianity and Modern Skepticism. It points out with clear dis-

crimination some of the main causes of the prevailing doubt and disbelief of the times. Chief among these are shown to be the agnostic and anti-theistic theories of physical science which are accepted in many quarters on very slender evidence,—or, rather, upon a few plausible conjectures. A series of cogent objections to these materialistic theories are given in such a condensed form as makes this essay the most complete and satisfactory, yet succinct, treatment of the important topics discussed that we have anywhere seen.

The mode of treatment is worthy of the importance of the subject of this volume. The successive chapters are a close-wrought argument, firmly linked as an armour of chain mail. The grace of the style is no less conspicuous than its strength,—appropriate imagery, especially bold and poetical metaphors, sparkling like the gilt chasings on a knight's coat of mail. It too often happens that religious and didactic books are so tame and spiritless in style as to present no literary attractions to the reader. There is no merit in this, but decidedly the reverse. To this, to some extent, is due what John Foster describes in his celebrated essay as the objections of men of taste to evangelical religion. In this volume, with a vigour of style no less than that of Foster, and with a grace of expression far superior, the beauty of holiness, the divineness of duty, the excellence of heavenly wisdom are portrayed and enforced. The book is cast in no narrow or sectarian mould. It treats of topics wide in their interest as Christendom, and commends itself to the Christian reader, to whatever branch of the Church he may belong. The graceful introduction by Dr. Ormiston is