

NOTICES OF BOOKS OF HOMILETIC VALUE.

THE PROBLEM OF RELIGIOUS PROGRESS. By Daniel Dorchester, D.D. Revised edition with New Tables and Colored Diagrams. New York: Hunt & Eaton; 1895.

In its edition of thirteen years ago this book proved exceedingly valuable to the ministry and to intelligent laymen. The problem it presents is one, yet manifold.

"Is the world growing worse or better? Is Christianity declining or advancing? Is Protestantism, or 'Evangelical' Protestantism, dwindling or expanding in Europe, in the British Isles, in the United States, and in the world? What conclusion does the world's statistics, or the world's consciousness and life, justify as to the actual trend of modern society?"

The author premises three hypotheses:

"1. Under some kind of religion the world is better than under no religion.

"2. Under Christianity the world is better than under Paganism.

"3. Under Protestantism the world is better than under the Roman Catholic or the Greek churches."

In a work of almost 800 pages the author presents Protestant Christianity in contrast with irreligion, with other religions, and especially with Roman Catholicism, and triumphantly vindicates his claim that it is the source and cause of the world's progress, and that its beneficent work has in the present century surpassed that of all the other centuries. He makes the following important statement:

"Questions relating to science and faith, the city perils, divorce, crime, lynchings, pauperism, intemperance, wages, the purchasing power of money during the last fifty years, the anarchistic spirit, and other kindred topics, have received such treatment as could be given them within the limits of this volume."

In its present revised and enlarged form the book is practically indispensable to the minister and Christian worker who would not be behind the age.

CHRIST AND CRITICISM: Thoughts concerning the Relation of Christian Faith to Biblical Criticism. By Charles Marsh Mead, Ph.D., D.D., Professor in Hartford Theological Seminary, New York. Anson D. F. Randolph & Co.

This little book was first issued more than two years ago. It is by a well-known divine, at once sound in his thinking and liberal in his disposition. The aim of the author is to aid in getting at the truth regarding the Bible, by pointing out "some of the limits beyond which the theories of the critics can no longer rightly ask to be accepted by Christians." Up to these limits Professor Mead would tolerate the theories, tho he might disapprove them. He seeks to

help the Christian to a rational assurance of the divine authority, of the Sacred Scriptures. Higher Criticism, which in its proper form has always been a legitimate part of Biblical introduction, he of course approves and commends as both necessary and profitable. What Professor Mead thinks of the extreme methods and the vagaries of the Higher Critics, may be learned from the Preface to his present work. Concerning a former book of his—"Romans Dissected, by E. D. Realsham,"—which has been regarded by many as "a *reductio ad absurdum* of the analysis of the Pentateuch," he says:

"The real object of 'Romans Dissected' was not so much to refute any particular theory concerning either the Old Testament or the New, as to showing generally that critical disintegration of a book by a mere inspection of its contents, style, and linguistic characteristics, unconfirmed by external testimony, can not be depended on as giving us the truth—or, in fact, anything more than plausible conjecture—concerning the date and authorship of the book. And this object may, I think, be regarded as gained."

RADICAL CRITICISM: An Exposition and Examination of the Radical Critical Theory Concerning the Literature and Religious System of the Old Testament Scriptures. By Francis R. Beattie, Professor of Systematic Theology and Apologetics in the Louisville Theological Seminary, and Author of "An Examination of Utilitarianism" and "The Methods of Theism." Chicago: New York: Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company.

This much more extended work than Professor Mead's deals with the same burning question from a different point of view. Both writers distinguish the legitimate sphere of Higher Criticism, as Literary Criticism in distinction from Lower or Textual Criticism. Professor Mead, taking a friendly, or at least non-partisan, attitude, undertakes with New England liberality of thought to show how large a latitude may be given to the New Critics; Professor Beattie, in connection with a church that finds itself called upon to deal with the evil results of the New Criticism, approaches the subject from the polemic, or at least apologetic, side, and aims to show the baselessness of the "Radical Criticism," and to prevent, so far as may be, the demoralization that would result from its spread and supremacy. This book is a vigorous treatment of the subject covering a wide range of topics. The subjects of its Four Parts are as follows: PART I. Introductory, giving definitions and distinctions. PART II. History of the Critical Movement. PART III. Exposition of Radical Higher Criticism. PART IV. Critical Examination. While having this positive and aggressive aim, Professor Beattie's book is characterized by admirable spirit, philosophic calmness, and systematic treatment throughout.