

death. He shows us in the cross that altar where the lifting up of the Lord's hands was the evening sacrifice of the world. He comes to us as we knock blindly against the wall for entrance, and says to us, "I am the Door." He comes to us in the wilderness where there is no way, and says to us, "I am the way." The form that has been obscured and made unlovely for us, he reveals as fairer than the children of men. He awakens that spiritual life that lifts us above the mire and the clay. Wafts and odours and melodies steal upon us ere we know. We are swept by the winds of God into the kingdom of righteousness and love and peace. We say at last, after all our wanderings and all our sins against love,

"Oh I to love and be beloved by Thee
Is the great mystery of felicity."

And we know at last that unbelief in Christ is the sin of sins. It may well be the sin that is beyond forgiveness. He has died to bestow. And he softens the heart into repentance unto life. This repentance is not of this soil. Remorse is of nature, but repentance is of grace. Repentance is a tree of the Lord's right-hand planting. Truly repenting and truly believing we are released from the past. Dark as midnight we know it to have been, and chiefly dark because through its long hours we ignored and rejected the Son of God. Nay, we did more; we were partakers of his death.

"Oh! Jesus my hope, for me offered up,
Who with clamours pursued thee to Calvary's top;
The blood thou hast shed, for me let it plead,
And declare thou hast died in thy murderer's stead."

The faint saffron of the coming dawn begins to rise, and our hearts are sore with gratitude, and yet full of hope. We have entered into the deeper and holier childhood. For, as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.—The British Weekly.

Flame.

A log of wood in the grate smoking and smoldering holds fire and gives some heat. A lamp burning in its socket, flickering in expiring spasms also has some fire and gives a little light, but neither will light up the room unless there is flame. There is a great deal of present-day religion, and for that matter, past-day religion, too, that resembles the log and lamp—it lacks flame. Our Lord said Christians were lamps and commanded them to shine. But there is no shining unless there is first flaming. There are lots of Christians who do not spread light to any perceptible degree—the darkness is not affected by them. No one is impressed by their piety, though, perhaps, it is not denied they are Christians. The impression left on others is a neutral one, for they are lacking in that brightness which arrests the notice of the world. There is great power in simple goodness to produce conviction in the hearts of men. The evidential value of a pure and unselfish life is very great. It will never grow less, for as long as a moral sense and the instinct of goodness remains in the common soul, men will bow reverently before a holy and beautiful life. The argument of such a life is greater than the argument of many a book for the divine origin of Christianity. But why then is not the world convinced and converted? It is because our religion is lacking in flame—in burning and shining. It takes an extraordinary life to arrest attention and sway the people. Commonplace Christianity is unimpressive and non-luminous. An average Christian has very little influence over the mind of the world; it is only pre-eminent saints who gain this. Perhaps it was not always so, but in our day when there is a great deal of noble living outside the church and a high ideal of character cherished by thousands who never bow the knee to our Lord, it is only those who bear visible and evident marks of the Lord Jesus upon them that can affect others in any marked degree. It was said that no one could be under the same umbrella for a few minutes with Edmund Burke and not feel he was the greatest man in all England. Pre-eminence always makes itself felt, and in religious experience and sanctity no less than intellectually.

The lack in our Christianity lies in the direction of fervor. There is much soundness of principle, and often a high level of morality, and yet there is not an impressing quality in it. It needs warmth, glow, enthusiasm, mere correctness of living, without spiritual earnestness, availing little with men. There is a contagion in zeal. Heat spreads. Light always reveals its presence. Our Christianity needs flame. But let none think they can get flame without consuming oil and burning wick. The flaming life is not an easy, self-gratifying life. It means a spending of one's self; shining necessitates burning. John the Baptist was a shining light, and there was a burning in his soul which explained the shining. Power never comes in any other way. The work that counts, whether in the school or studio or workshop or laboratory, costs pain and struggle and the consuming of the energy of body and mind. A novelist tells us that no chapters of pathos or tragedy in any of his books which have moved his readers to tears were not first wept over when they were written. The supreme need of our life is—flame.—The Commonwealth.

The Weakness of Pulpit Prayers.

By REV. FRANK B. SLEKPER.

A wearisome prayer in the pulpit, full of worn-out, vague or meaningless platitudes, is a sin. It is a waste of time and spiritual energy during the hour of holy service. Martin Luther said that "the best half of study is prayer." The divinest part of public worship is the prayer of the preacher, if it lovingly, comprehensively voices unto God the great needs of his congregation. Nothing else will so prepare an audience for an excellent sermon as this act of purest and helpful devotion.

Effective public prayer is not a matter of education. Education must be the deep foundation, for no ignoramus knows how to lead the worship of the saints. But the minister's petition in the pulpit unto a throne of grace must be born of peculiar inspiration, of deep love and emotion and through knowledge of his people. If these be lacking mere intellectuality will formulate a prayer as cold as ice. To study the ever-changing kaleidoscope of human life; to keep in close touch and sympathy with the "horny-handed sons of toil"; to go into homes of affliction where hearts are full of suffering; to seek to help the weak and fallen unto Christ; to combat the error and infidelity of the world; to work for the promotion of righteousness—if all these, and more that we have not place to mention, do not teach the preacher how to pray he is the dullest of scholars. The ever changing variety of human life ought Sabbath by Sabbath to afford the greatest variety to the pulpit prayers.

I am well aware of the sacredness and delicacy of this subject. It is unsafe to apply arbitrary definitions and rules to a matter so divine and important. Sometimes "fools rush in where angels fear to tread." But necessity compels us. Sunday by Sunday we must offer public prayers that are good or indifferent or poor. The responsibility is sufficient to arouse the soul of the preacher in every spiritual way toward God and toward men. I spend six hours or more in carefully writing the substance of my Sunday forenoon sermon, that every thought and sentence may be thoroughly wrought out. Shall I do this for my pulpit prayer? Would it not lack spontaneity and impressiveness? Would not the congregation see that it was formal and stilted? Yet the pastor, Sabbath morning, should take special time to think over the needs of his people, and go to the sanctuary with these burning in his soul. He should fully know that his public prayer that day answers to the specific wants of his congregation. There will be enough and more than enough to pray about and unceasing variety. And if the angel of thought give the poetry of heaven to his tongue, all the better. It will enrapture the worshippers with the invisible glory of God and Christ and paradise.—The Standard.

New Books.

Three Years with the Children. By Anos R. Wells.

This book contains 156 "talks with children" enough to provide one each Sunday for three years. The element of variety is not lacking in them. There are stories, black-board talks, exercises for the children, conversations, children's sermons, plans for the primary Sunday School class, etc. Mr. Wells' reputation as an expert in Sunday School work is a guarantee of the valuable character of the book. Its aim, to help pastors and teachers to get in helpful touch with the children, is a highly important one. "No art says Mr. Wells, is so beautiful and necessary, no art is so profitable as that of talking to children. No art is so easy if the spirit is right, no art is so difficult, if the spirit is wrong. His aim has been to make the book in every way practically useful, and those who test its value will find, we think, that the author has not missed the mark.

Published by Fleming H. Revell Company, Toronto. Price \$1.25.

An Exposition of Old Testament Sacrifices. By Rev. D. McKenzie, B. A., Toronto.

This work discusses the subject of Sacrifices in fourteen chapters under the headings: The Religion of Sacrifice; Principles of Interpretation; Common Characteristics of Mosaic Sacrifices; Burnt Offering; The Meal Offering; The Peace Offering; The Sin Offering; The Trespass Offering; The Sacrifice of the Covenant; The Passover; The Sacrifice of Isaac; Noah's Sacrifice; The Sacrifice of Cain and Abel; Sacrifice of Christ. The book is characterized by a lucidity of style and a simplicity of statement which adapts it to the comprehension of the ordinary reader. At the same time the discussion is not superficial in character, but one which will be appreciated by the most thoughtful as a valuable contribution to the literature of the subject. We regard Mr. McKenzie's treatment of this interesting and important, though difficult, subject as in a high degree satisfactory. It is simple, scholarly and sane. The author's standpoint may be regarded as conservative. It is however not the conservatism of prejudice or bigotry but of a mind open to the truths of Scripture and of philosophy. The analogies traced in the concluding chapter between the Old Testament sacrifices and that of Christ are of special interest.

The book is published by William Briggs, Toronto, price \$1.25.

The United Kingdom: A Political History. By Goldwin Smith, D. C. L.

This important work embraces two volumes of 550 and 480 pages respectively. The publishers have given it a setting in keeping with its high literary character. The

binding is substantial, neat and attractive, and the paper and typography are of a quality to inspire a sense of luxury in the reader. Professor Smith's work is correctly described as "a political history." It is not, except incidentally, a history of the British people along the lines of their social, intellectual or religious development. The aim of the work, as we are told in the preface, is "to give the ordinary reader, so far as was in the author's power, a clear, correct and succinct view of the political history of the United Kingdom as it appears in the light of recent research and discussion." This aim has been kept steadily in view throughout the work and has been admirably realized. The development of the political life of the British people has been traced from the beginning of its history to the present generation and in the various steps and conditions, from the tribal through the feudal to the monarchical and constitutional forms of government now attained. Gradually the feudal conditions are eliminated, and the national conception comes into realization in the reign of the first Edward. This conception of nationality, first realized in England, is extended, partly by conquest and partly by peaceful union, until Wales, Ireland and Scotland are embraced in the United Kingdom. The development of constitutional government, with the increase of democratic influence and the authority of Parliament, are traced through the Tudor and Stuart periods, and farther on the expansion of these political ideas in the colonies planted by British enterprise and fostered under the freedom secured by British political institutions. Goldwin Smith's reputation as one of the first stylists of his day makes it unnecessary to say that in point of literary excellence the work is of the highest character. To enlarge one's stores of information as to the history of one's own nation under the guidance of a scholar so competent to instruct and a writer so able to please is indeed a pleasant task. Published by the Copp, Clark Company, Toronto. Price, \$4.00.

Two Books on China: "Village Life in China," by Arthur H. Smith, D. D.,—"Chinese Characteristics," by the same author.

The events which have taken place in China during the past year, the great extent of its population, the uncertainties and the portentous contingencies connected with its future have united to arouse the curiosity of the thinking and reading world and to quicken general interest in reference to a country which, in spite of its ancient character and long history, is to western nations more truly a terra incognita than any other portion of the earth. The author of these books is a missionary who has spent twenty-two years in China, and he writes of things which have been daily under his observation. Dr. Smith does not, however, consider that a score of years spent in China is a sufficient qualification to write intelligently about the country and its people. He is indeed quite modest in his pretensions and fully acknowledges that neither he nor any other westerner is able to tell more than a small part of all the truth about China. Writing in a prefatory note to his Chinese Characteristics (published originally as a series of letters in *The North China Gazette*) Dr. Smith says: "They [the letters] are not meant as a portrait of the Chinese people but rather as mere outline sketches in charcoal of some features of the Chinese people as they have been seen by one observer. They may also be considered as studies in induction, in which many particulars taken from the experience not of the writer only but of various other individuals at various times are grouped." Dr. Smith's books are, however, not the less but the more valuable because their author does not pretend to universal knowledge of China and the Chinese. The information given, the reader is able to receive as the trustworthy account of an attentive and intelligent observer and of one who takes it to be his business to present facts rather than theories. One feels that in the description of the village life, its institutions, usages and public characters, and the account given of the family life, it is, at least as far as the writer goes, the real China and the real Chinese people that are being presented. In the "Characteristics" the facts and discussions bear evidence of careful observation and cautious discrimination. Dr. Smith's books are probably the most interesting books which have been written on China. They are interesting not only because of the matter which they embody, but also for the charm of the author's style, which carries the reader along from chapter to chapter with almost the fascination of a romance. If Dr. Smith has not enabled his readers to understand the Chinese, he has at least given many of the reasons why it is so difficult for westerners to get an adequate idea of that wonderful people and their country.

These books are published in excellent form by the Fleming H. Revell Company, Toronto. Price for *Village Life in China*, \$2; for *Chinese Characteristics*, \$1.75.

New Testament Greek Syllabus, by A. T. Robertson, D. D., Professor of New Testament Interpretation in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. 1900. Chas. T. Dearing, Louisville. 99 pages. Price, 50 cents net.

This is an introduction to New Testament Greek Syntax. The book assumes college training in Greek, undertakes to introduce one to the New Testament idiom, briefly applies historical and comparative syntax to New Testament Greek, seeks to explain the fundamental principles of Greek Syntax that are often taken for granted, and aims to put the student in a position to use effectively more extended treatises such as *Whier, Buttmann, Blass*, etc. The text of Westcott & Hort is used as the basis. It was designed specially for the Junior Class in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, but some demand for a more general circulation has arisen. The book is adapted directly to *Hadley & Allen's Greek Grammar*. But it can be used equally well with *Goodwin* or read and studied separately by one familiar with ancient Greek. Ministers and laymen, who have a knowledge of ancient, but not New Testament Greek, will find it serviceable. The book has been warmly commended by a number of very competent scholars in New Testament Greek, including Prof. Thayer of Harvard, Prof. Warfield of Princeton, Prof. Rozall of Wake Forest, etc.