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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

Notices of Books.

PEACE, PERFECT PEACE IN LIFE AND IN DEATH. By the Right Rev. J. Denton Thompson, D.D., Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man. London: *Robert Scott*. 3s. 6d. net.

This impressive volume reveals the Bishop of Sodor and Man in a new light. The Church has long been indebted to him for various books on the practical side of the Church's work, but in this, his latest, book he has shown that he possesses in a rich degree the gifts, graces, and powers of an uplifting and inspiring devotional writer. "Peace, Perfect Peace in Life and in Death" is a volume of rare beauty, and would be appreciated at all times, but never more so than in these dark days of restless sorrow and suffering. We have read it with great happiness and appreciation, and with no little spiritual profit, and we warmly commend it to all who are seeking for a message of peace and comfort to their troubled and disquieted souls.

The various chapters have been suggested by Bishop Bickersteth's great hymn, "Peace, Perfect Peace," one of the most valued hymns in Christendom, and the Bishop of Sodor and Man takes the thought embodied in each of its seven verses, and gives us a most illuminating and suggestive exposition upon it. Everyone who values that hymn should read this book, which, for its wealth of illustration, its sympathetic touch, and its tender application to the everyday needs of human life, has rarely been surpassed. The Bishop has himself been through the deep waters of affliction, and he seems to know intuitively the longing afflicted ones have for that which shall bring them peace. The personal Christ is our Peace, and this book tells of Him, only of Him. In a succession of chapters on "this dark world of sin," the "thronging duties" of life, the "sorrows surging round," the anxiety arising from "loved ones far away," the uncertainty of a "future all unknown," and the trials of "death shadowing us and ours," the Bishop shows how the Master comes to each soul with just the message needed to give peace. Then, in a final chapter, the veil is lifted as far as it is possible to do so, and we are shown the beauty, the glory, and the restfulness of "heaven's perfect peace." And it is all so practical. The fault of so many devotional books is that they are merely idealistic; but in these pages the reader instinctively feels that the message is personal, and that it can be appropriated to individual needs. This is no mean merit; it makes the book a goodly heritage indeed.

We have thus far said nothing about the Bishop's Introduction. It is a marvellous piece of writing, and deals in the spirit of true Christian statesmanship with the many problems the War must inevitably suggest to the Christian mind. But the Bishop is no pessimist. He is too good a Christian to be anything but an optimist, but he knows what men are saying, and he applies the true corrective with clearness and skill. This volume has a message for our day and generation, and we sincerely trust it will be read and heeded.

PRESSING PROBLEMS. By the Rev. J. Merrin. London: S.P.C.K. Price 3s. 6d. net.

The "pressing problems" are those which are all too familiar to the clergy of poor parishes throughout England, and are the problems connected with poverty, home-life, housing, motherhood, child-life, impurity, and, above all, drink. Mr. Merrin has been Vicar of St. Philip's, Islington, All Saints', Leyton, and is now Vicar of St. John's, Stratford, and it is obvious that he feels the importance of his subject, and burns with the righteousness of his cause. If this has led him into rather much of exhortation and declamation in a style which reminds us of the pulpit rather than the study, it may fairly be replied that the clergy see more than enough to cause them to exhort and declaim. What effect this has on their readers is another matter. A good deal of time and labour has gone to the compilation of the book, which is plentifully supplied with statistics and information from annual reports of many religious and philanthropic societies, of which, indeed, it is largely made up. Appeal is frequent also to the words or writings of a large number of social writers or workers. These very numerous citations are quite a feature of the book. For the plan and aim of the volume we are full of praise. Mr. Merrin has marshalled a series of damning facts and figures. He points earnestly to horrible evils which the national conscience should appreciate and feel ashamed of. The abominable "homes" and the abominable lives lived in them ought to stir England to action, vigorous and wide-reaching. He returns again and again to the root-evil of strong drink, and has collected much material useful to speakers and preachers on this subject. Indeed, the lesson and appeal of these problems are so strong in themselves that the mere statement of the facts is really powerful enough—in a book for social workers—without its being embedded in a continuous moralizing on the obvious, however earnest or eloquent; and it is just possible the book might have been condensed to half its present size, or less, and have been even more useful for its purpose. A shilling "worker's handbook," consisting of the collected facts and figures as here given, without the addition of the mass of exhortation, which each reader can and will supply for and to himself, should be worth a good circulation, and would be a most convenient companion issue to the present volume. Several striking figures or statements are given more than once in the book, such as the number of old-age pensioners; and a good friend of many readers of the CHURCHMAN is, for some reason, described as the "late" Vicar of St. Mary's, Sheffield. We mention these small points, not in any captious spirit of hard criticism of a book got together and produced by a busy parochial clergyman, but rather to prove that the praise which we do here and now give to the book is not blind and unquestioning adulation. We are, and should be, indebted to Mr. Merrin for the care and effort entailed, and he has the very real satisfaction of having produced a statement of the dreadful social conditions of darkest England which will give point and weight to many a speaker and preacher for many days to come.

THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF THE CHILD. By R. R. Rusk. London: Longmans, Green and Co. Price 1s. 6d.

This is an excellent book—one of the best we have seen on the subject, and one which every clergyman and every teacher will find of the greatest

value. The five lectures which make up the book were, in the first place, intended to have special reference to Sunday-school work, and were so delivered in Dundee in autumn last; but they are packed with stimulating and illuminating ideas which will aid all who speak to children, or have day-schools within their "spheres of influence." The clergy—especially the younger clergy—should have this book.

Mr. Rusk is brave, crisp, sometimes startling, always helpful in his observations. Religion is not a matter of knowledge, it is a mode of life. Not the whole of the Bible story can be taught, nor should our teaching be confined to it. Religious life of to-day should be brought in; speeches by Lord Hugh Cecil and Mr. Lloyd George are given as examples—and very good ones, too. Again, religion is not instinctive. Reverence and wonder are to be fostered; no attempt should be made to appeal to fear. Home influence is all-important. Sunday-schools should be, first of all, places where children worship. It is a great error to work for and force sudden "conversions" in children. Teaching material must be carefully arranged and suitably graded. Methods are examined, and some old, and newer, favourites are rejected. A teacher is no longer an animated interrogation mark. The Herbartian method needs adaptation. There must be "telling" in teaching, and story-telling is often the best way. Teaching by catechism is not approved. The whole book is a well-informed and clearly thought-out effort to present new ideas, and there are very few indeed who cannot learn from it. An excellent present for a Sunday-school teacher.

JOHN WYCLIFFE; ALSO JOHN DE TREVISA. By the Rev. H. J. Wilkins, D.D.
London: *Longmans, Green and Co.* Price 5s. net.

The author is Vicar of Westbury-on-Trym, now part of Bristol, but formerly an ancient collegiate church with a Dean and Prebendaries. He has made a painstaking inquiry into the connection between Westbury and Wycliffe, who was for a time one of its Prebendaries, and has made a similar research into the work of Trevisa, who also was a Canon of Westbury. The book is of 100 pages, of which a great many are occupied with lengthy documents, interesting enough in their original language and in translation. Dr. Wilkins takes the greatest care in arriving at a decision as to the length of Wycliffe's tenure of his Canonry, a point which has been disputed. The book is naturally of chief interest to those connected with the historical parish of which it treats.

THE ROLL-CALL OF SERVING WOMEN. By Mary Frances Billington.
London: *Religious Tract Society.* Price 3s. 6d.

This book, as might be expected, covers a good deal of ground. Starting with a brief survey of the conditions of social life before the war, it goes on to describe the excellent work done by women in the various departments of usefulness which have opened up at such short notice: nursing at home and abroad, relief administration in all its branches, needlework guilds for all sorts and conditions, up to the manufacture of munitions—these are ways in which women are responding to the call in the hour of need. It is well that the story should be told, and it has been told well.

THE FIRST TWO VISIONS OF DANIEL. (No. 1 of "Aids to Prophetic Study," issued under the auspices of the Prophecy Investigation Society.) By the Rev. E. P. Cachemaille, M.A. London: *C. J. Thynne*. Price 1s. net.

Mr. Cachemaille is well known as an authority on, and a deep student of, prophecy. He is a warm advocate for the old historicist interpretation held by the school which, in more senses than one, may be called "historic." The four parts of the Image in Daniel ii., and the four Beasts in Daniel vii., are taken to be the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman Empires, the latter reaching down in its divided state to modern times. The author follows Sir Isaac Newton in thinking that the ten kingdoms occupy the Latin or Western portion of the Roman world, the portion, *i.e.*, that did not belong to any of the other three which went before. The rise, progress, and fall, of the Papacy is traced in connection with the "Little Horn" of Daniel vii., and we earnestly wish that all those who are in danger of being fascinated and won over by the seductions of Romanism could read and digest what Mr. Cachemaille has to say on this point. At the end of the book there is a Harmony of the first two visions of Daniel with which the volume has dealt. We congratulate the author on his production.

THE DIVINE PROGRAMME: SUGGESTIONS FOR ITS STUDY. By the Rev. Canon R. B. Girdlestone, M.A. London: *C. J. Thynne*. Price 1s. net.

This little volume forms No. 3 in the series of manuals issued under the auspices of the Prophecy Investigation Society. Like all that comes from the pen of Canon Girdlestone, the present contribution is marked by profound scholarship of the conservative type. The author declares that in the Holy Scriptures a programme is to be expected, and the programme is traced carefully through the succeeding books. The past is taken as the key to the future; and the book concludes with a concise summary of the programme. "The Chronological Notes on Daniel" and the hints on "How to Study the Apocalypse," are specially valuable.

BIBLE PROPHECIES AND THE PRESENT WAR. By Marr Murray. London: *Hodder and Stoughton*. Price 1s.

The author addresses himself to such questions as "Are the British the Lost Tribes?" "Are the Germans the Assyrians?" "The Kaiser as Anti-Christ"; "Armageddon." The work falls into two parts: (i.) "The Prophets and the Present Day"; (ii.) "What Are We to Expect?"

DIVINE CLUES TO SACRED PROPHECY. By the Rev. E. H. Horne. London: *C. J. Thynne*. Price 1s. net.

This volume declares itself to be a study in principles, and is the second impression of pages written fourteen years ago. The writer suggests six divine clues which, taken together, are found to be sufficient to open up a wide field of profitable prophetic study. The work is illustrated by a number of diagrams.