

man of his age not to admit the authority of the 'truly catholic' church, in, for instance, the matter of the Scriptures. But on his own showing the 'truly catholic' church must be any church professing the five 'catholic truths.' The result is confusion.

Herbert's answer to the problem of warring sects is equally unhelpful. You have these five great rational truths in common, he says in effect; the points of dispute cannot be determined by reason, therefore they do not matter enough to cause all this conflict. Yet salvation was the goal of all the 'churches'; and Herbert admits that some of these irrational (or supra-rational) matters may be necessary for salvation. Can the disputes therefore be as futile as he would have us believe? No. It is small wonder that deism as a system of thought has perished. Least of all in the inchoate 17th century form we see in Herbert could it satisfy either the reason or the common religious sense of mankind.

It remains to add that the edition of the text and the bibliography seem to be in the best traditions of careful American scholarship. And the binding, paper and printing of the book are not the least of its attractions on this side of the Atlantic in the sixth year of war.

J. H. BURNS.

ST. THEODORE OF CANTERBURY. By William Reany, D.D. (Herder Book Co.; n.p.)

St. Theodore's work is part of the foundations of the Catholic Church in England. He was sent from Rome by the Pope to consolidate what the pioneers had won. And all be it he was from the Levant the English took to him. Yet, though his name is honoured, his life is little known to-day. Dr. Reany's biography is the first in the English language, and being thorough, it is important.

The reader will not find a reconstruction such as is *the Song of Bernadette*, nor will any secret ways of the spiritual life be divulged, the material to work on is too sparse for that; indeed it is difficult to make the bear bones of the Saxon Church live in the twentieth century owing to the inadequacy of the records.

For the background we have St. Bede, 'Scratch a book about the Saxon Church and you find Bede,' might be made into an aphorism. But in this book there is much besides, especially when Dr. Reany deals with the subject of Penitential Discipline, and Theodore's Penitential in particular. His is a popular and scholarly account of Theodore.

The outstanding human, personal, crisis in St. Theodore's life was his quarrel with St. Wilfrid, whom he treated, in all good faith, with much severity. His admission of error and his appeal to Wilfrid for forgiveness were fine examples of humility. It was he who provided the crosses which turned Wilfrid into the great saint he was and which made him wander throughout England and beyond, so that he may be called the Apostle of Mercia, Hampshire and Hol-

land an interesting example of the dross of one saint becoming the gold for the crown of another. Dr. Reany deals adequately with this very human episode.

St. Theodore has not been given his due in the popular imagination, even though Stubbs did become lyrical on his account. The names of Bede and Augustine, Cuthbert, Aidan and Wilfrid loom larger. But it was Theodore who stabilised the sees of England, who brought Greek culture into the land, who consolidated the seven hundred years' reign of the Rule of St. Benedict, who moderated the harshness of the Penitentials. All this will be found solidly established in Dr. Reany's interesting and readable work.

COLUMBA CARY-ELWES, O.S.B.

THE LAND OF PRESTER JOHN. By Peter Baker. (Resurgam Books; 2s.)

The publishers inform us that 'this long (32 pages!) sequence of poems combines an accomplished simplicity of language and technique with an unique vision.' The simplicity is certainly there, but the technique and the vision are to seek. The poet hears voices which enchant his 'survey from greyer thoughts of parish weal and restive congregations' to this sort of unique vision:—

'Turbine and winch, crank and crane,  
Will free us all from labour's endless strain,  
From dreariness and drudge.  
By furnace; factory, forge and mill,  
The people hear, upon the hill,  
The swift, resistless surge.'

I suggest that a daily meditation on the 'greyer thoughts . . . of restive congregations' and a total abstinence from ecstatic italics and exclamation marks would be a less damaging discipline than listening to the voices, who retail a vision not so much unique as uniquely suburban. The author is a captain in the Intelligence.

J.D.

A FURTHER SELECTION FROM THE 300 POEMS OF THE T'ANG DYNASTY.  
Translated by Soame Jenyns. (John Murray; 3s. 6d.)

This continues an earlier volume of selections from a famous Chinese anthology of classical poetry. Mr. Jenyns' translation is less finished than Mr. Waley's and his vocabulary is not quite consistent in tone. Nevertheless his work is good, and these versions in general convey something at least of the unmistakable atmosphere of traditional Chinese culture—order, calm, sensibility, gentleness and refinement. There are useful notes, historical and other.

W.S.

#### PURPOSE IN PAINTING.

THE 'Third Exhibition of Contemporary Paintings' now touring with C.E.M.A. is a rather dull little exhibition. Its catalogue lists