

Book Reviews

CATHOLIC EVIDENCE GUILD PRAYER BOOK. (Sheed and Ward; 6d. net.)

This little book is not the offspring of a sentimental piety, but of a real conviction that apostolic work must be founded on prayer, and especially on some form of corporate prayer. It contains the devotions which have come to be recognised as part of the guild life; and in addition there are prayers, hymns, meditations, and advice on how to use the New Testament as an aid to prayer—most valuable this last, when one remembers how large a part the Bible plays in the work of Guild speakers. The book has the apostolic ring about it, and shows, throughout, the true contemplative spirit.

N.H.

THE MAN AT THE GATE OF THE WORLD. By W. E. Cull. (W. Heffer; 3/6 net.)

We are not certain that Judas Iscariot is in Hell, but we do know that he killed himself: it is, therefore, only sentimental to seek to establish the truth, that Our Lord saved the world, by insisting that His betrayer died a natural death; and because it is sentimental we cannot appreciate the urge of conscience that compelled the author to write 'this story of the Star'—a legend written simply and with reverent care.

R.R.

ANCIENT LIGHTS. By Agnes Blundell. (Sands & Co.; 6/-)

Grave dangers attend the writing of historical fiction, and they are intensified when the theme is religion. The language is apt to be stilted, extravagant, or unintelligible; elaborate descriptions of dress and manners may overwhelm the story; and, worst of all, religious zeal tends to overcome artistic discretion, so that the tale is lost in propaganda. The author of *Ancient Lights* is bothered by none of these difficulties. She simply tells us the story of a Lancashire squire and his son, Catholics in penal times, and lets it point its own moral. She writes with an admirable restraint, which strengthens a very real drama, and with a sincerity that must move Catholics deeply and evoke the sympathy of Protestants. The characters are excellently drawn, especially those of the lovable Sir Nicholas and Mother Anne: the romance is delicate and convincing, and (by no means least) the book is thoroughly English. *Ancient Lights* is one of the finest of our historical novels.

R.R.