

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY. By Leonard Hodgson, D.D. (Nisbet; 15s.).

In these Crowall Lectures, Canon Hodgson aims to show the credibility of the doctrine of the Trinity, and its fundamental practical import for the Christian life. He arranges his lectures round two main theses, one concerned with the nature of revelation and theology, the other with the nature of unity.

Revelation should not be conceived, says Canon Hodgson, as a body of proposition, antecedently undiscoverable by the natural light of reason, but as God's self-manifestation in a series of historic events. Those events and their consequences form a part of our general experience, and the study of them is the work of theology, while the study of our general experience in the light of them is the work of Christian philosophy. Canon Hodgson has written elsewhere of his theory of theology and philosophy and it is not of prime importance for this book. But the theory of revelation in act, as opposed to revelation in propositions is of the first importance, for it controls his whole approach to the subject. There is no doubt that insistence on this aspect of revelation is valuable in a country where the doctrine of literal inspiration has been long and widely misconceived; insistence on revelation as given in a Person, the Person of our Lord, would be more valuable still. Yet it remains true that some of the events in which God has revealed himself were propositional utterances of God the Son made Man, and of the inspired writers, and to neglect these because of an *a priori* theory of the nature of revelation is to truncate the key-series of events of one of its most important components. This is most obviously so when the subject of enquiry is the intimate life of God, with the result that the lecturer's choice of data must seem at once maimed and arbitrary.

In presenting the doctrine of the Trinity, Canon Hodgson shows himself a pluralist in the Cappadocian manner, and urges very necessarily the wrongness of conceiving unity always in a mathematical sense. He is certainly at fault in ascribing to St. Thomas the sin of expressing a 'full-blooded Trinitarianism in terms of a philosophical notion of unity which cannot contain it.' How few people understand that for St. Thomas *Unum et ens convertuntur*. In a generally appreciative account of St. Thomas's treatise we may also note a misunderstanding of the word 'praesupponit' (I. 39. 8) on page 159. St. Thomas repeatedly emphasises that such words are used only according to our human mode of understanding, and the metaphysical refinement of his teaching on the *Principium* assuredly does not earn the stigma of being called 'a relic of subordinationism.' By rights, indeed, Canon Hodgson ought to consider detailed criticism of this type as quite beyond his scope, in view of his own statement that 'I have not the least idea what is meant by either filiation or procession in respect of the divine being.'

A remarkable statement on p. 163 indicates the difficulties under which the writer has worked. 'The Trinity of God's self-revelation is no impersonal system of relations between hypostases in an essence; it is the living, loving communion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit into which we are adopted into Christ. Neither in St. Augustine nor in St. Thomas can their logical apparatus conceal the fact that this is the living reality in which they believe.' For the Thomist, an impersonal system of hypostatic relations is a contradiction in terms. Such a system, as St. Thomas shows, must be personal, and for many of those who 'try to think honestly in terms of the thought of to-day' one of the chief glories and beauties of St. Thomas's treatise on the Trinity is just that demonstration of the oneness of substantial being, relationship and personality in God.

IVO THOMAS, O.P.

DEFENCES FOR THE MIND. By Caryll Houselander. (The Grail, Field End House, Eastcote, Middx. : 1/-).

Miss Houselander moves swiftly and easily from the observation of a kitten's helplessness to the thought of God's omnipotence, the intricate loveliness of a minnow's backbone prompts her to wonder at the mystery of life's origins. Without shrinking from its hard reality, she is equally simple in her approach to the mystery of evil and of suffering. Her charmingly written, allusive little book provides more than 'defences': it opens the mind and prepares it for solid constructive thinking and incites the will to determined action in the light of the truth thus discovered.

E.Q.

The Editor regrets that many reviews are held over for lack of space, and particularly a review-article of Eric Mascall's 'He Who Is,' on the subject of Analogy, which was to have been fittingly included in the present number.

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