

BOOK REVIEWS

DR MICKLETON'S SCHOLARLY BOOK

CHURCH AND EMPIRE IN ROMAN AFRICA. P. A. MICKLETON. Melbourne and Sydney, Pp. 151, 40s. 6d.

BEFORE I discuss Dr Mickleton's great book I should like to remind our readers of a distinguished man who gave the best years of his life to the Australian Church.

The past thirty years have seen so hectic that we forget the quality of men who served as before Hitler's madness destroyed so much of our Christian civilisation.

There was innate quality and much acquired quality in the Philip Mickleton whom we knew and revered as the Rector of St James, Sydney, for 20 years, a devoted parish priest, distinguished scholar and world-famous preacher whom so many revered.

He was principal of Brisbane Theological College, Nundah, and Canon of St John's Cathedral, Brisbane.

He had official post was that of Provost of Derby, E. Australia, and was for many years a Comptroller of no less than five Australian and Missionary Dioceses.

But such was the peculiar genius of Australian Church life in Sydney we were not aware of making this deeply spiritual man a bishop or even a deacon nor was he a canon of St Andrew's Cathedral, nor a member of the Diocesan Council.

His friends and disciples in Australia are legion.

Philip Mickleton was a boy at Harrow, a school generation later than Winston Churchill. Owing he acquired a double first, was an M.A., B.D., and D.D. He laid the Anglican Church in his debt by contributing to the Westminster Commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew.

His Hampton Lectures, "The Secular and the Sacred" and Moorhouse Lectures "Principles of Church Organisation" were "The Values of the Christian Ministry" in themselves.

His reputation as a profound scholar, and master of classical English.

What a Dean of Sydney he would have made at the height of his powers! How wide and deep his influence!

During the last fifteen years in retirement in his delightful Sussex cottage with his wife Evelyn beside him, Dr Mickleton has worked at his great book, a study of "Church and Empire in Roman Africa".

As he says, "the very proximity of Roman Africa to Italy and Rome meant that from the first, it should have been pre-eminently most Latin in speech and Roman in life."

However, with the painful rise of Christianity shared the animosity with which the Berber masses native to Roman Africa regarded Rome and its form of the Christian religion, and in so far as they accepted Christianity it was in its Donatist form which rejected Rome and with it the Church of the Empire.

When in the seventh century North Africa was overrun by the Moslem Arabs, the official Church, predominantly of Greek stock and language, went under and the Donatist found in Islam a religion which satisfied their religious aspirations and the stark simplicity of their religious demands.

Dr Mickleton with infinite pains and in nervous language pictures Roman Africa for us. It reads like a novel in its depth and profundity. He tells us of the long period when the "people of Berberia" "We offend the Romans, and are not forgiven by the Romans, because we worship not the Roman gods."

Dr Mickleton tells us all about Tertullian, "the father and the originator of Latin Christian literature." But a flaw in the character of Tertullian which made him a heretic, a Montanist of the opinion that the

world must be abandoned, and even that life must be despised, was a Christian who was

From the times of Tertullian the story presses on for thirty years, a Christian who was successful him as the leading figure in the Christian Africa of the time.

During those thirty years, the Roman provinces were subjected to a cruel and bloody war by the barbarian invaders from the North and the West while Emperor after Emperor rose to power and fell from power, by violence, to be succeeded by a more popular soldier.

Such a Christian Africa against which Cyrenus became a Christian, and in the Church was the answer to the Church and disorder of his times. Cyrenus was a man of inherited wealth and aristocratic lineage.

On his conversion and baptism in 246, he sold his lands and gave the money to the poor but his friends bought back his estates and gave them to him.

Two years later in 248, he was elected Bishop of Carthage, his chosen culture he added a constant knowledge of the scriptures with which he illustrated and confirmed the teaching which was concerned to save.

The ten years of his episcopate (248-258) saw the Decian persecution break down the Church, which in thirty years of peace had grown to such a size that it was in a readiness to accommodate itself to its surroundings.

THE CRUCIAL ENCOUNTER, Leonard Griffith, Hodder and Stoughton, Pp. 128, 4s. 6d.

LEONARD GRIFFITH, minister of London's Fulham City Temple, visited Sydney early in the year and gave two week-ends at the lunch hour sessions, and a series of lectures. He considers fourteen personal encounters of Our Lord with the Church, and in each shows the eternal relevance of the encounter.

One aspect of Our Lord's ministry insufficiently emphasised to Griffith is His personal ministry to individuals. This ministry, frequently of a healing nature, was the treating not of symptoms but of the whole man and this meant reaching to the underlying emotional or spiritual cause.

In this sense, Christ was the pioneer in psychosomatic medicine. He healed the physical to the spiritual.

So each of these studies concerns some modern malady of the mind, such as neurosis, phobia, phlegm, suffering, self-maladjustment, and the endless array of Christ to these. Take, for example, the interesting suggestion that the demoniac had been healed.

By his request that he should follow Our Lord, he was told to return to his own country, "Jesus knew very well that in order to consolidate the faith and personality of the people, the patient must have a further physical and vitally essential process of therapy." The very nature

PRAYERS FOR THE MINISTRY

EMERIT PRAYERS, John Nock, S.P.C.K., Pp. 40, 3s. 3d.

The Recruitment Secretary of the S.P.C.K. has endeavoured to fulfil the need for a suitable collection of prayers and meditations for use in the Ministry of the Church.

He has assembled his task in a most satisfactory way, and has included a number of prayers to all who need prayers in this subject, and for all who seek to understand the more attractive in their observation.

-A.F.L.

The very popularity of Christianity contributed to the poor quality of the Christian life, as most aristocratic adherents, when the Decian persecution broke down the Church as with the Emperor Decian.

The Emperor Decian was notable example of a man who turned to go down with the strong influence. He thought he saw the Christian Church as a potent factor in the spread of religion of the moral and intellectual life of the world would restore the old Roman Faith by expiating the new Faith.

THUS came the terrible persecution which harassed the leaders of the Church. How must the Church treat those who denied Christ when faced with persecution and wanted to return to the Christian Community?

With infinite care, Dr Mickleton analyses the problem and confronts the African bishops. They are not important to the Church of today largely on the account of the dangers without and within.

Gallus succeeds Decian. The deadly epidemic of plague brings an imperial order, ordering that everyone should sacrifice to Apollo Salutaris for the triumph of the pestilence.

Dr Mickleton makes an exhaustive examination of the problem of St. Cyprian's view of the Church in a situation of universal crisis, and a people falling from the Faith, thus largely on the account of the dangers without and within.

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