

Book Reviews

incompatibility between liturgical and personal prayer, while for the Christian no such thing as purely subjective or 'private' prayer exists.

C.C.H.

THE TRIAL OF JEANNE D'ARC. A complete translation of the text of the original documents, with an Introduction by W. P. Barrett. (With twelve illustrations; demy 8vo.; Routledge; 15/-.)

This text of the trial of Jeanne d'Arc was drawn up not long after her death. As M. Champion observes, its aim was principally apologetic. It was intended to assure any who might be troubled with doubts—and doubts existed even among the English—as to whether she was really a dangerous, depraved, unholy woman (in fact a witch) and condemned by Cauchon and the Inquisitors only after a most scrupulously legal procedure. Strangely enough—though indeed it is not so strange if one takes the trouble to read it through—it is the most convincing of all the historical data concerning the life of a woman we have come to honour as a saint.

It is a legal record and therefore there is much dull formarty about it likely to discourage the reader at first. Trivial details, irrelevant repetitions, pompously formal letters; the conscientious recorder has spared us little. Yet in the end we are thankful that he did not, and thankful, too, that Mr. Barrett has given English readers the complete text without any alterations. Her biographers and interpreters have done the work of selecting the more interesting passages and translating them into more dramatic forms quite well enough. It is a new and very interesting experience to read it through, from beginning to end, and come to one's own conclusions.

In spite of its legal form it is a very human document. The story of her life unfolds slowly, her judges subjecting every detail of it to a most meticulous scrutiny. The result is a picture of her that is clear and authentic, with pious biographers will never be able to spoil. Thanks to the compilers of this text, she will always remain one of the most exquisitely human of the saints.

In his Introduction Mr. Barrett explains the setting briefly. He used as a basis for his translation the text established by Jules Quicherat, though he acknowledges his indebtedness to M. Champion for various readings. It is a pleasure to be able to say, after comparison, that his translation combines fidelity to the original text with thoroughly readable prose.

A.M.